



From the Senior Tutor

August 2025

Dear Graduate Fresher,

If you haven't already, you will shortly be receiving a letter by email, which provides information about your arrival in Oxford, and about the last few administrative matters that need attending to. This letter also included the name of your College Adviser at University College. We would like to take this opportunity to explain to you the role of the College Adviser.

Every graduate student is allocated a College Adviser who is a senior academic member of the College. This advisor is in addition to your departmental/faculty supervisor who is appointed by the University, and who is responsible for directing your academic work. Your College Adviser is available as an additional source of help and advice, which may concern academic matters in a broad sense (your Adviser's field of study will usually be similar, but rarely identical, to your own). Importantly, your College Adviser may be approached for guidance in the event that you experience an academic difficulty that you prefer not to take to your supervisor(s), or in the unlikely event that you have a disagreement with your supervisor(s). Likewise, if you have a financial or personal problem, then in addition to the College Welfare Team your College Adviser can also provide an avenue of approach to the College administration.

You may at any time, and without giving detailed explanation, ask for a change of College Adviser; similarly, your College Adviser may ask for another member of academic staff to take over one of their students if they feel that there is a conflict of interest. Examples of potential conflicts of interest would include circumstances in which the College Adviser becomes part of a student's departmental /faculty supervisory team, is acting as the student's Director of Graduate Studies, or takes on the role of acting as an assessor for a student's Transfer of Status milestone (an interim assessment examination undertaken by research students). Your College Adviser may also be replaced in the event that your initial College Adviser leaves the University or takes a sabbatical.

We expect College Advisers to meet their advisees as early in the academic year as possible, ideally during Welcome Week. We will encourage your College Adviser to contact you, but if you do not hear from your College Adviser then please contact them directly and arrange a meeting. Thereafter, you may or may not feel the need to meet with your College Adviser regularly in person or virtually, but we encourage you and your College Adviser to at least communicate by email each term. For graduate research students, your College Adviser would also usually attend your annual Graduate Review, (graduates on taught courses may also request a formal Graduate Review, should they wish to have one). In summary, if you have a problem at any time that you would like to raise with your College Adviser then you should feel free to contact him or her directly.

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