

The Provost's Scholarships, Worcester College Oxford – Frequently Asked Questions

Q.

What is the formal eligibility criterion?

A.

The Australian Provost's Scholarship is available to candidates in the final year of an undergraduate degree at one of the following universities: Australian National University, Melbourne, Monash, New South Wales, Sydney.

The New Zealand Provost's Scholarship is available to candidates in the final year of an undergraduate degree at the University of Auckland.

Other Universities may join the scheme in future years.

Q.

So do I have to have *completed* my undergraduate degree before coming to Oxford?

Not necessarily – you need to be in your final undergraduate year at the time of application. In some cases, this might mean that you take the Oxford year as a “pause” before returning to your home university for a final semester or set of units.

Q.

Am I a suitable candidate for the Provost's Scholarship?

A.

If you have a strong undergraduate academic record to date and a proven desire to contribute broadly to the intellectual, social and cultural life of Worcester College – for example by way of sport, drama, music, debating, community or charitable work – then yes.

Q.

What academic disciplines can I study?

A.

Provost's Scholars will be drawn from a wide range of humanities and social sciences disciplines. Because of the unique nature of the scholarships as a transition between undergraduate and graduate work, and across two Oxford academic years, at this time it is not possible to accept scholars who wish to pursue disciplines in the sciences.

Q.

Can you explain a little more about how I choose my subjects?

A.

For the first two terms, each of which last for eight intensive weeks of study, you will take a **major tutorial weekly** and a **minor tutorial fortnightly**.

Provost's Scholars will devise their own programme of work in consultation with the Director of the Visiting Student programme. *Your application should give an indicative idea of the fields of study you wish to pursue, but you need not make detailed proposals at the application stage.* A huge variety of subjects are possible: have a look at this page to see a long list of examples

of bespoke courses that others have taken on Worcester College's Visiting Students Programme:

<http://www.worc.ox.ac.uk/applying/visiting-students/academics/choosing-your-tutorials>

(please note that this sample list includes some Science courses that will not be available to Provost's Scholars.)

Q.

What is the workload?

A.

A weekly essay (typically of about 2000 words) for each tutorial, supported by a programme of reading. So you will write 12 essays in each of the first two terms. In addition, you will have the opportunity to attend relevant lectures that are made available to all students of Oxford University.

Q.

Am I guaranteed to be able to study exactly what I want?

A.

We do everything we can to assist in your devising a bespoke series of tutorials that we can deliver, but there are inevitably certain constraints: (i) we will need to find a tutor with expertise in the subject (often this will be a Fellow or Lecturer at Worcester College or another College within Oxford University; sometimes it will be an advanced graduate student with particular relevant expertise) and (ii) we will need to be sure that your prior academic experience qualifies you sufficiently to make the best of the tutorials (so, for example, you should note that we teach classical and foreign language literature in the original, not translation, and that many social science courses depend on some prior experience of mathematics and quantitative methods).

Q.

Can I mix my disciplines?

A.

Absolutely – it is not uncommon for our Visiting Students to take one tutorial in, say, a literary or historical subject and another in a political, philosophical or economic one. Others, however, develop a programme of more closely inter-related tutorials.

Q.

And what about the “research project”?

A.

Having completed two terms of tutorials, you will be well placed to devise the research topic that you will undertake in your third and final term after our summer. You will also receive one-on-one tutorials for this. The project is likely to develop out of your tutorials, so we do not require you to say what it will be at the application stage – though if you think you have a clear direction towards a research project, feel free to write about this in your application letter. You will not be held to what you propose!

Q.

Why is there no qualification at the end of the year?

A.

Your essays will be marked, to give you an indication of the level at which you are achieving, but the aim of the Provost's Scholarships is for you to have a year of pure learning and an immersion in the Oxford experience without the constraints of a prescribed syllabus and the pressures of examinations. You have been tested and examined all your life: this is a unique opportunity to study for the sheer joy of learning.

Q.

Will I be a full member of the College and the University?

A.

Yes, you will in fact be a member of both the undergraduate Junior Common Room and the graduate Middle Common Room, with access to all their facilities and the opportunity to participate in all their activities. Equally, you will be a member of Oxford University, with full access to faculty libraries, the extraordinary resources of the Bodleian Library, the IT network, lectures, the Oxford Union, and university level clubs, societies and sporting activities.

Q.

Are all my fees paid?

A.

Yes. The Provost's Scholarship will pay the full cost of College and University tuition. This is worth £30,000.

Q.

Am I guaranteed accommodation?

A.

Yes, You will live in College alongside our matriculated students. Your Scholarship covers the cost of accommodation during term-time. You are likely to require accommodation in the Easter and Summer vacations, at least when you are not travelling, and this will be provided, paid at a daily rate out of your stipend. Worcester has some of the best food in Oxford, the cost of which is subsidised, and for which you will pay out of your stipend.

Q

Is my airfare paid?

A.

Yes, for one return flight to Australia or New Zealand. You will need to meet other travel expenses from within your stipend.

Q.

How much is the stipend?

A.

£10,000, paid in four quarterly instalments.

Q.

Will I need a visa?

A.

Yes, but we will assist you by providing the necessary paperwork to show that you are a student here with financial support.

Q.

And health insurance?

A.

We will provide assistance with this.

Q.

How do I obtain an application form for the Provost's Scholarship?

A.

There is no application form. You need only write a letter to the Provost's Selection Committee, setting out how you would propose to use the Scholarship, and why your proposal should command the interest of the Committee. As explained in the Provost's Scholarship Brochure, you will also need to submit your curriculum vitae and to ask your referees to email their references directly to the Provost by the closing date.

Q.

Must I be an Australian or New Zealand citizen or permanent resident to apply for the Provost's Scholarship?

A.

Yes.

Q.

I have other hopes for next year. Can I apply for the Scholarship, and defer it or decline it if I receive it?

A.

No. In the course of their interviews, short-listed candidates will be invited to confirm that they are prepared to accept the Scholarship if they are selected.

Q.

I graduated last year. Am I eligible to apply?

A.

Yes, though you should be aware that the primary intention of the Scholarship is to provide an opportunity for students to spend a year in Oxford immediately after graduating, as a transition before either beginning a career or pursuing a higher degree, so you will need to make an especially strong case in order to be short-listed.

Q.

May I submit samples of my writing, artwork, music, etc. with my application?

A.

No, though in some circumstances the Selection Committee may ask short-listed candidates to submit work.

Q.

How long should my proposal be?

A.

There is no prescribed length. Your proposal should address with some specificity what you propose to do, and why. If you do not make a compelling case, you will not be invited for an interview. At the same time, bear in mind that each member of the Selection Committee must read many applications, and may be put off by an unnecessarily wordy proposal.

Q.

Will you accept my application after the published application deadline of 30 April?

A.

No, applications received after the deadline will not be considered. For the receipt of references, a few days' grace may be given, but you should endeavour to ensure that your referees submit on time – and do thank them for their effort on your behalf!

Q.

What will happen if I am shortlisted?

A.

You will be invited to attend an interview in Sydney at the end of May. We will reimburse travel expenses of candidates from outside Sydney.

Q.

How can I get an answer to a question not answered here?

A.

Have a good look at the Worcester College Oxford website and, if you still can't find an answer, email provost.pa@worc.ox.ac.uk.