



WADHAM COLLEGE Middle Common Room (MCR)

Dear Wadham Graduate Fresher,

On behalf of the Middle Common Room Committee (MCR) and the entire MCR community, I would like to welcome you to Wadham College and the University of Oxford.

Let me start by explaining what the MCR is. As you will soon discover, many common things take up uncommon names in Oxford: college staff in charge of cleaning become “scouts”, the invoices sent to you by college become “battels”, and the student body that represents postgrads becomes “the Middle Common Room”. Traditionally, a college has a Junior Common Room (JCR) for undergrads and an MCR for postgrads. Wadham, instead of having a JCR, has the Wadham Student Union to represent both undergrads and postgrads, as well as an MCR to represent (and cater to) postgrads exclusively. In a way, this means you have a double layer of support here, but the MCR will be your first point of contact for most things college-related.

When you applied to Oxford you might have even been surprised to learn that the University is decentralized through 38 different colleges. Like many other postgrads and international students, you may have been drafted into your college because you set no preference when applying or because your semi-random preference did not accept you (their loss). If this is the case, I’m here to tell you that you’re in luck. Fate has just landed you in the most friendly, vibrant, and welcoming community in all of Oxford, with an amazing physical structure to boot. At Wadham, you will get to be among 400-year-old historical buildings, have fancy dinners at a great hall (with great food to match), and enjoy a vast amount of peaceful green areas, all the while having the modern and spacious McCall-MacBain Graduate Centre to study and socialize in.

The Graduate Centre is where you will find the MCR living space (also just called “the MCR”), which is second to none in Oxford, with its own library, a student-run bar, and ample space for hosting various events. Speaking of events, let me mention some of what the Wadham MCR offered its members last year: a fully catered brunch every Sunday during term-time; around three parties per term (BOPs), which attracted people from all over the university; an end-of-term solstice masquerade; an open mic night and a folk music night; Easter and Ramadan celebrations; weekly movie nights; one wine tasting per term, as well as a whiskey tasting; and, finally, big external events, such as ice-skating, paintball, and go-karting.

All this was provided either free of charge or heavily subsidized for our members. And for your first week here in Oxford (week 0), we are preparing Fresher’s Week which will have a number of fun activities to help you get to know each other (as well

as returning Wadham postgrads) and get settled in. Some of Fresher's Week is composed of mandatory induction events ran directly by college staff, but the social parts organized by the MCR are optional, as, of course, goes for any other MCR activities through the year.

If last year is anything to go by, some of you will disappear into your courses after Fresher's Week, some of you will show up randomly like that fun uncle you only see three times a year, and some of you will make the MCR your second home. And any of these options is completely fine. I just ask that, before you settle in with whatever level of engagement you're comfortable with, keep an open mind and participate as much as you can in the first weeks, when everybody and everything is new and it is easier to make friends. I can say with confidence that participating in college life through the MCR contributed immensely to last year being one of the most exciting and fulfilling in my life, and, by the end of this academic year, I hope you can look back and see it the same way.

Best of luck in your studies; the Wadham community looks forward to welcoming you in person during Fresher's Week! In the meantime, if you have any questions about the MCR or Fresher's week, you can reach me at mcr.president@wadham.ox.ac.uk.

See you soon,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marcelo Melo', written in a cursive style.

Marcelo Melo

Wadham MCR President

September 2023