

WILLIAMS-EXETER PROGRAMME AT OXFORD UNIVERSITY

Director: Professor G. Sam Crane, 2024-2026

THE PROGRAMME

Williams College offers a year-long programme of studies at Oxford University in cooperation with Exeter College (founded in 1314), one of the constituent colleges of the University. Williams students will be enrolled as Visiting Students at Exeter and as such will be full undergraduate members of the University, able to access all of its facilities, libraries, and resources. As Visiting Students in Oxford, students admitted to the Programme will be fully integrated into the intellectual and social life of one of the world's great universities.

Although students on the Programme will be members of Exeter College, entitled to make full use of Exeter facilities (including the College Library), dine regularly in Hall, and join all College clubs and organizations on the same terms as other undergraduates at Exeter, students will reside on Ephraim Williams House Campus, a complex of four buildings owned by Williams College, roughly 1.4 miles north of the city center. Up to five students from Exeter College will normally reside in Ephraim Williams House each year, responsible for helping Williams students to integrate into the life of the College and the University. The Director of the Programme - a member of the Williams faculty, appointed for two years - also lives on EWH campus, in one of the buildings. The Director oversees the academic program, and serves as the primary academic and personal advisor to WEPO students in Oxford. A continuing Administrative Director is on campus during regular business hours. A night porter patrols the campus premises between 6 pm and 6 am.

Students enroll for the full academic year, which consists of three eight-week terms of instruction: Michaelmas Term, Hilary Term, and Trinity Term. Students are expected to arrive on a specified date in late September for a week of WEPO orientation, followed by a week of Exeter orientation.

For many students, work will start during the summer, when they will be given (by their tutors) an often long list of books and articles to read. There is simply no time during the short term to work through such a list, so accepted students should count on devoting a portion of their summer to the necessary preparations. Typically, students will have to write their first tutorial paper *before* the term starts (during the 0th week, called 'Nought Week'), based on some subset of their summer reading. Like everything else at Oxford, this too will vary with the subject-matter and the tutor.

Students are expected to remain in residence until the completion of all academic work as determined by their tutors. For those students whose tutors have established that academic work should continue into week 9, residency must be maintained until the completion of academic work in week 9. When a tutor determines the schedule of academic work at the beginning of the term, that schedule is non negotiable.

There are two five week vacations between terms, during which students may be expected to continue reading as preparation for their upcoming tutorials. There is no residency requirement during the vacation period, and students are encouraged to travel.

To earn academic credit through WEPO, students must be in residence in Oxford for three full terms (from the beginning of week 0th to the end of week 9th). Any student who arrives late or departs early from Oxford without the Director's written permission (given only in truly exceptional, *unpredictable* situations), will not receive term credit, *even if the student submits all required work prior to departure and even if the student's tutors do not object to early departure.*

For more general information on the Williams-Exeter Programme, go to exeter.williams.edu.

THE TUTORIAL SYSTEM

Undergraduate instruction at Oxford University is largely carried out through individual or small-group tutorials, in which a student meets weekly with their tutor to present and discuss an essay they have written, based on an extensive amount of reading undertaken from an assigned reading list received at the beginning of each term. In addition to the weekly tutorial, students are strongly encouraged to attend a course of lectures offered by the University that corresponds to the material being addressed in the tutorial. The lectures, however, may be offered in a term different from the one in which the student is taking the tutorial. For that reason, students are encouraged to obtain, as early as possible, from the relevant faculty (department), the complete list of lectures planned for the academic year. This list will usually not be available before mid to late September, but previous years' lecture lists are usually a reliable guide to what is to follow..

Each student will plan a course of study for the three terms of the academic year in consultation with the Director of the Programme. In his or her capacity as the Tutor for Visiting Students at Exeter College, the Director, working closely with Exeter's subject tutors, will arrange the teaching for the students, monitor student progress, be in regular contact with the student's tutors, supervise the examinations that students sit at the end of each academic term, and report on each student's academic progress to the Senior Tutor at Exeter College as well as to the Williams College Registrar. Usually, all WEPO tutorials are recorded as 300 level courses, but in some circumstances, a 400 or even a 500 level designation will be more appropriate. The course level will be established by the Director, in consultation with the relevant tutor and the chair of the relevant academic faculty (department). All tutorials at Oxford are letter-graded; there is no Pass/Fail option.

Students are required to enroll in two tutorial courses during Michaelmas term and two tutorials during Hilary term (each consisting of eight individual tutorial meetings and generally requiring the preparation of eight essays). During Trinity term, students may choose to enroll in either one or two tutorial courses. Although some students take the minimum of five tutorial courses, most have enrolled in two tutorials per term for a total of six tutorials over their time at Oxford.

Bear in mind that your initial selection of tutorials may change, for good reasons. You may want to continue working with the same tutor on roughly the same subject-matter, but at an increasingly sophisticated level (this is the type of work that Oxford students would do); or you may realize, after the first term, that you would be better served by taking a very different set of tutorials than the one you planned. Although there are no “add/drop” periods at Oxford (once a student has made a commitment to a particular tutorial, and the director has then secured a tutor to teach that subject, the student cannot back out), the tutorial selection works on a term-by-term basis. You will meet with the Director mid-term in Michaelmas to select your Hilary tutorials, and mid-term in Hilary to select your Trinity tutorials.

GRADES AND CREDIT

Grades for each tutorial course reflect the work done in all eight tutorial sessions, including their related essays, considered together, as well as the grade for the final examination. Tutorial essays and discussions are typically not assigned a specific grade. Final examinations last three hours and are always sat in the ninth week of term, following the eight weeks of instruction. For some tutorial courses, tutors may elect to offer the student the option of a final paper or project in lieu of an examination or may decide that the final project or examination is not necessary. This decision is made by each tutor, and is not a subject of negotiation.

Upon satisfactory completion of the requirements for the Williams-Exeter Programme at Oxford University, students receive academic credit for a regular Williams academic year, with each eight-session tutorial (plus final examination, if required) counting as the equivalent of 1.6 regular semester courses taken at Williams. Grades eventually become a part of their Williams transcript and will be included in the computation of Grade Point Average. There is no Pass/Fail option for Oxford tutorials.

Tutorial courses in Oxford may be used toward fulfilling the divisional distribution requirement; a student may earn a maximum of three distribution requirements, with no more than one from each division, for the year. All tutorial courses at Oxford meet the Williams College “Writing Intensive” designation, except for those in the studio arts, mathematics, statistics, computer science, and the natural sciences.

Tutorial courses in Oxford may also be used to meet major requirements. Students are encouraged to check with their department chair(s) to confirm official department policy.

THE COURSE OF STUDY

In addition to the opportunity to pursue British and Commonwealth Studies, Williams students in Oxford will be able to pursue tutorials in fields in which Oxford is particularly noted (Economics, English Literature, Mathematics, Modern History, Philosophy, Politics, Classics, Theology, the Natural Sciences, etc.). Exeter College also has fellows that are committed to teaching Williams students in three fields: English Language

and Literature; History; and Medical Law and Ethics. Each fellow is appointed for three years, and their sub-specialities vary.

In some faculties (departments), specific tutorials can be taken during one term only (for example, Old Norse can be taken only in Michaelmas, and most Further Subjects in History can be taken only in Hilary). The relevant lectures may turn out to be scheduled in a different term from the one in which the tutorial is available. It is therefore imperative that students consult the relevant Faculty (departmental) webpages to make sure when the lectures they need to hear are actually offered.

It must be noted that laboratory or field work is not normally available to WEPO students. Science majors seeking major credit for tutorials in the sciences should discuss this situation with their major advisors. Moreover, as of 2022/23, many natural science departments have decided against supporting visiting student programmes at Oxford even in the tutorial-only form. This often includes WEPO students.

A full list of courses of study, offered by subject, can be found at: [ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses/course-listing](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses/course-listing). Detailed descriptions of all the courses listed in can be found on the websites of respective departments or faculties the links of which can be found at: [ox.ac.uk/about/departments-a_z](https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/departments-a-z). You should certainly read the webpages of the programmes (departments) you are especially interested in.

Typically, a course of study is divided into Preliminaries (foundational papers/courses for first year students) and Further Options or Further Subjects (for second and third year students who passed examinations on Preliminaries). Preliminary tutorials are easier to get, but WEPO students, if well-prepared in the subject-matter, often find that Further Subjects are more interesting.

NON-CREDIT FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY

In addition to their regular tutorial courses, students may begin or continue the study of a wide range of foreign languages on a non-credit basis through a variety of arrangements available through the University as well as a number of other educational and cultural institutions in the city of Oxford. Please note that regular Oxford University language courses are not open to visiting students. Available language instruction will not be for credit, and will need to be paid for. The cost is reasonable (about 200-300 pounds for a term), and students may put funds from their Programme Cultural Subsidy towards such study. However, the intensity of such language study is considerably lower than at Williams: there are usually only two contact hours a week, in a single slot, and usually available online only.

APPLICATION

Admission to the Programme is competitive, focusing on academic motivation, promise and accomplishments, intellectual independence, personal maturity, and on the suitability of the proposed course of study for what is available to visiting students at Oxford. Students must apply to the The Office of Global Education and Study Away by the prescribed deadline (January 15). Prior to applying, they should consult with the department or program chair of their intended major(s). Any questions students might have about curricular offerings at Oxford can also be raised with the Director of the Programme in Oxford.

All applicants must identify two Williams faculty members who are willing to provide references. Because of the emphasis at Oxford on weekly written work for each tutorial course, at least one of those faculty members should be able to offer an assessment of the applicant's writing ability. (However, this is not required if the student intends to study only mathematical or natural sciences at Oxford.) It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the application is complete and submitted by the deadline. Please start the application early, so that you have a clear sense of all requirements.

The Admissions Committee of the Williams-Exeter Programme at Oxford University will carefully review all applications and select 40-50 students to interview in February. The Committee consists of 3-6 voting members, all of whom are Williams academic faculty, representing all three divisions. The Director of the Study Away program serves as a non-voting member. The committee is chaired by the WEPO Director who will be ultimately responsible for the admitted cohort.

After the interviews, the Admissions Committee will select 26 students who will be offered places in the program, and create a short waiting list. All admissions to the Programme are subject to approval by Exeter College. Students can expect to be notified of acceptance before Spring Break.