

Registered Visiting Students and Associate Members at SCIO Semester Programmes

The difference between RVS and AM statuses

There are two possible participation statuses for students in the Scholarship and Christianity in Oxford (SCIO) semester programme: Registered Visiting Student (RVS) status and Associate Member (AM) status. All students must choose one of these status: it is not possible for a student to have both.

All successful applicants will be admitted into the SCIO programme as AMs. The University of Oxford and Wycliffe Hall allot SCIO a limited number of places for RVSs. **With the approval of their study away office, students may apply for one of these RVS places by completing the relevant section of the application form on TerraDotta.**

Students who need a visa to study in the UK **MUST** apply for RVS status, as it will be problematic otherwise to secure a visa (to determine if a visa will be necessary, please complete this questionnaire on the UK website: <https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa>). If such students are successful in their application to the programme they will simultaneously be told that they have secured RVS status.

Any other student **MAY** apply for RVS status and, if there are more applicants than places, priority will be given, in the following order, to students who:

1. have particular needs (for example, a blind student may benefit from having access to University support services or a student with limited mobility might benefit from living at Wycliffe Hall which only RVSs can do)
2. will study in a STEM discipline while in Oxford for which RVS status would be advantageous
3. have other reason for seeking RVS status.

Such students will be informed of the outcome of their application for a place on the programme as soon as their RVS application materials have been reviewed, and will be informed of the outcome of their application for an RVS place as soon as possible after the application deadline advertised on the GlobalEd website (excluding any extension). A waiting list will be in place in case any student who has been offered an RVS place does not accept the offer.

SCIO pays the University of Oxford and Wycliffe Hall on students' behalf to give them access to resources. As can be seen from the table below, RVS status gives students more University privileges and is therefore more expensive.

The total sum students pay covers all their SCIO costs, that is: accommodation, tuition costs (for tutorials, discussion classes, seminars, field trips etc.), wellbeing support, and some social activities, regardless of their status.

Student's access to particular tutorial tutors does not depend on their status (i.e. they do not get better tutors if they pay more). The difference in status is more significant for some STEM students, rather than to humanities or social science students, because of differential access to teaching materials.

University of Oxford

University of Oxford lectures

University of Oxford teaching materials

Access to the physical buildings of the Bodleian Library

Access to licensed material for which the Bodleian Library is a subscriber (electronic data including journals, e-books, reference databases, etc.)

Borrowing privileges from the Bodleian Library

Access to Bodleian manuscript collections

Access to Faculty, Departmental, and Divisional Libraries

Borrowing privileges from Faculty, Departmental, and Divisional Libraries

Registered Visiting Student

Full access to University online and in person lectures

Access to online lecture notes, problem sheets, reading lists, course handbooks related to University

Access to all physical buildings of the Bodleian Library normally open to undergraduates

From any location for most material (e.g. other University buildings, student accommodation, cafés, etc.). A small amount of material can be accessed only from computer terminals within Bodleian library buildings because of restrictions imposed by licensors.

No. Bodleian books are reference only.

Only with special permission granted on the basis of particular need.

Access to all Faculty and Divisional Libraries normally open to undergraduates

Yes, on the same terms as matriculated undergraduates

Associate Member with Bodleian Library Card

Access to University online and in person lectures which are open to the general public

Some limited access is possible in some faculties/departments which make this material openly accessible

Access to all physical buildings of the Bodleian Library normally open to undergraduates

All material can be accessed only from computer terminals within Bodleian Library buildings. Material cannot be accessed from other University buildings, student accommodation, cafés, etc.

No. Bodleian books are reference only.

Only with special permission granted on the basis of particular need.

Access to all Faculty and Divisional Libraries normally open to undergraduates

No

Ability to be considered for University sports teams	Yes	No
Access to University Counselling Service	Yes	No (Professional counselling help is available on payment of an additional fee)
Access to University Language Centre	Yes	No
Access to University IT support	Yes	No
Access to personal Oxford email address (via Wycliffe Hall)	Yes	No
Access to University Careers Service	Yes	No
Access to student-led University clubs	Yes	Often
Free access to University museums, gardens, arboretum, etc.	Yes, including to special exhibitions	Normally, though a charge may be levied for special exhibitions

Wycliffe Hall	Registered Visiting Student	Associate Member with Bodleian Library Card
Use of Wycliffe Hall common room, dining room, chapel, gardens, library etc.	Yes	Exact details of use being confirmed
Wycliffe Hall status	Student Member	Associate Member
End of semester certification	Transcript and prose report from Wycliffe Hall, University of Oxford; credits are transcribed onto student's home institution transcript	Grade report and prose report from Wycliffe Hall; credits are transcribed onto student's home institution transcript
Ability to play on Wycliffe Hall sports teams or college teams with which Wycliffe has an affiliation	Yes	Yes
Access to Wycliffe wellbeing support	Yes	Yes

Here are some example student situations to help you choose which status would better suit your needs.

I'm taking humanities courses. I like to get up early and get into the library where I work best. What's the better status for me?

Your subjects will work well with the AM status, as lectures are less important in those subjects, and there is less reliance on centrally provided information: you'll receive most of your information via your tutor. Because you like getting out and about and like working in libraries you'll be able to do your reading there happily or download material to consult off-line.

I like working at night and mainly work in my room or social spaces like cafés. I am studying psychology. What's the better status for me?

With your tutorial subject, you'll benefit from access to lectures, so the RVS status is better for you. This is particularly so since you work best when libraries are closed and consequently you benefit from remote access to the journal literature for which you need to have RVS status. If you chose AM status you could still have a fruitful time in Oxford, but you'll need to work when libraries are open or be organized enough to download material on a library visit and then consult it when you're off-line.

I hope to play sport at a high level. I'm taking a range of courses from a range of disciplines. What's the better status for me?

Only with RVS status will you be eligible to try out for a place on various University sports teams, so we'd recommend RVS status for you. As an RVS student, you'd be able to get remote access to books and journals, so your work will be easier to fit around a sports team's schedule.

I like to play sports but mainly as a social activity. What's the better status for me?

If you want to play a sport on a level other than varsity, you can choose either status. There are many college sports opportunities open to AMs (rugby, soccer, tiddlywinks, etc.). AMs and RVSs can play in teams associated with Wycliffe Hall and its partner college, Queen's, and this provides many social and sporting opportunities.

I'm interested in music and drama. Do I need to have RVS status to pursue those in Oxford?

No. Almost all performing opportunities are open to students of both statuses, and there are also opportunities in Oxford but outside the university. On the other hand, if you're interested in things like University music masterclasses or University lectures by Visiting Professors of drama then you'll need to be an RVS to attend. Musical students of either status will find a wide variety of musical ensembles open, from singing evensong in college chapels to playing in orchestras to involvement in musical theatre. Students interested in theatre will find drama clubs open to them and the University Playhouse has a busy schedule of professional performances.

I'm a STEM student but I'm on a tight budget: must I be an RVS?

No. You can come as an AM, but you won't have access to University lectures that go with your course, nor to accompanying lecture notes and problem sheets. For some students that works well, but others really value having the online material, especially as they get used to the Oxford way of approaching STEM (research literature, not textbooks).

I see a counsellor regularly on campus and want to continue that when I'm in Oxford so that I can be confident that my studies will go well. Which status is better for me?

Either status works for you. We have general wellbeing support available from within our staff but for specialist and regular counselling you would have to look outside the SCIO staff. RVSs can use the University of Oxford Counselling Service at no extra charge (though there is normally a waiting list for non urgent appointments). For AMs, SCIO staff can point you to specialist practitioners whom you could consult, paying their professional fees. Most SCIO students remain members of their home university while they're at Oxford. If this applies to you, you could continue to meet your campus counsellor remotely while you're in Oxford and some students find that continuity helpful.

Will I get to meet more Oxford students if I'm an RVS?

You won't have access to University classes or lectures (other than public lectures) if you're an AM, so RVSs will meet more Oxford students in academic settings. However, AMs will have plenty of opportunity to meet students and other Britons and international residents in social settings, including clubs and societies, and churches, through volunteering etc. Whatever your status, you'll get

to meet students and staff at Wycliffe Hall, and make life long friends among the other SCIO students.

I understand that tutorial tutors are the same whatever my status. Is that also true of advisers for undergraduate research essays and British culture courses?

Yes. Your status won't affect which tutors or seminar leaders or research advisers you are taught by. The only difference in personnel is that RVSs can attend University lectures and University classes, so they will meet more Oxford professors there. All the one-to-one teaching and things like field trips and small discussion classes are organized separately from University lectures and are done by the same tutors, whatever your status.

I need a visa to study at Oxford: what status is better for me?

Any student who needs a visa must have RVS status. This is because your visa application will be sponsored by the University of Oxford. At the time of writing, one semester students from the US, Canada, and some other countries do not need a visa. If you are not from the US or Canada, please check here to see if you need a visa to study for a semester in the UK: <https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa>. It is your responsibility to ensure that, if you need a visa, you apply for RVS status. Regulations change often and SCIO staff cannot give visa advice.

My medical condition means that I need specialist equipment to read effectively. What status should I choose?

Either is possible – and you may have your own equipment which meets your needs: but if you want specialist help from the University Equalities Service which would allow you to reserve special reading lights and magnifiers, you will need to be an RVS. Your application for an RVS place will be given priority.

SCIO, Oxford, 24 March 2022. Information correct at time of issue.