



WOLFSON
COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



Supporting Black British postgraduate students at the University of Oxford

A case for support



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Introduction

Talented graduate students are essential to Oxford University's academic mission and play a key role in driving the University's world-leading research. They use the combination of knowledge, leadership skills and intellectual confidence they gain at Oxford to make a difference to society, through academia and other highly skilled professions.

Among Oxford's outstanding graduate students there are a number of British students of Black African and Caribbean heritage. We recognise that Black British graduate students are under-represented at Oxford, however, making up just 1.9% of UK graduate students enrolled at the University. We want to redress this imbalance.

Making more dedicated funding available is the greatest opportunity to increase the number of Black British graduate students at Oxford. A fully-funded scholarship programme would allow exceptional

Black British students the chance to embark on graduate degrees, regardless of their financial means. It would also help ensure that the UK can continue to educate and nurture the world's greatest minds.

This proposal sets out how we hope to achieve that. We would be delighted to discuss any elements of this document in greater depth – thank you for your consideration.

“Young Black British students are some of the most talented young people in the country. By raising money for dedicated scholarships, we want to ensure that no Black British students are deterred from applying to Oxford by financial barriers.”

Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education, Professor Martin Williams



Postgraduate study at Oxford

Oxford is proud to be a top global academic training ground, producing some of the world's most outstanding graduate students. The University is ranked in external polls as a world-leader, and has come first in the *Times Higher Education World University Rankings* for the last four years.

We provide our graduate students with access to world-leading academics across all disciplines and an exceptionally stimulating learning environment consisting of the finest resources and facilities. Oxford graduates can be found as leaders in every field: treating disease, founding businesses, teaching children, building infrastructure, creating art, strengthening civic life, resolving conflicts, drafting laws, and advancing the frontiers of human possibility.

An individual's ability to study at Oxford should not depend on their personal financial means, but on their academic potential. Yet many graduate students are unable to take up their offers of study at Oxford for financial reasons, as state support dwindles and students carry an ever-weightier burden of undergraduate debt. Only 50% of new graduate students enjoy the security of being fully or even partially funded through scholarships. This is a loss of intellectual capital that we – as a university and as a country – can ill afford. As the world needs expertise more than ever, so graduate education is more important than ever.

As an institution, we offer an unparalleled graduate experience. Graduates receive the best supervision and teaching, and superlative facilities. These assets are enhanced by the collegiate environment, which allows every graduate student to be part of a small, multidisciplinary academic community within the larger University.

Wolfson College is Oxford's largest dedicated graduate college and is in partnership with the University on this initiative. Black British students supported through the scholarship programme would be affiliated with Wolfson, which has a proud tradition of supporting Black British graduate students. Below, Lesley Nelson-Addy (a current Wolfson student) and Joevas Asare (a Wolfson alumnus) describe their research and experiences in Oxford and at the college.

“Wolfson has always been one of the largest and most international of Oxford's colleges. We look and feel like the world. But we also want to look and feel even more like contemporary Britain. These scholarships will ensure that brilliant young people like Lesley and Joevas are able to make the very best of their natural talents and the opportunities for young Black British people in today's Britain. We need them more than ever.”

Sir Tim Hitchens, KCVO, CMG, President of Wolfson College

Educating the teachers and leaders of tomorrow



Lesley Nelson-Addy

DPhil Education, Wolfson College

Lesley is currently completing her PhD in Education and she is looking at the experiences of Black British students who study English and History at elite universities across the UK on a Wolfson-Marriott-ESRC Graduate Scholarship. She is also an English PGCE Curriculum Tutor and is an examiner and supervisor for the Master's in Learning and Teaching course. Lesley taught English in two local Oxfordshire state secondary schools for five years. She has also developed her interest in education research and has recently contributed to a chapter in the book *IFTE Dartmouth: The Future of English Teaching Worldwide and its Histories*, edited by Andy Goodwyn and others. The chapter is entitled: 'Back to the future: the restoration of canon and the backlash against multiculturalism in secondary english curricula'. Lesley has also presented at the 2020 ASCL Diverse Leadership conference on the importance of racial diversity in student leadership in schools.

'Wolfson is a brilliant college – very welcoming! I honestly feel like I have made friendships for life within my first year of being at the college. Even though there is a good representation of global racial and ethnic diversity within the college, this scholarship will definitely support with increasing the representation of national racial and ethnic diversity. It will offer more chances to Black British students in the UK, who have considered applying for a postgraduate course, but have found the cost too high. The scholarship is one of the many steps we should be taking to make postgraduate study more accessible to Black people in the UK.'



Joevas Asare

MSc Economics for Development, Wolfson College alumnus

'My educational journey has been immensely progressive. I never aspired to study at Oxford or a top university; however, I am glad that I did. Studying the MSc Economics for Development at Wolfson equipped me with knowledge and confidence, which I use within my career and to make a positive difference in the world. Without my studies at Oxford, my journey would not be the same. During the MSc I was awarded an ODI fellowship, whereby upon graduation I served as a UK sponsored Economic Advisor to several governments in East Africa. I now serve as an Economist at the LSE-Oxford International Growth Centre, where my role is primarily to build relationships between academic researchers and policymakers in Africa, to enable evidence-based policy making.

As a young Black male, growing up in London entailed unique challenges that threatened not only my confidence, but also my progress. Fortunately, with the support from my family and community I learnt that the roots of my identity cannot be anchored in prejudice; attending Oxford as an economics scholar signalled that truth. My achievements, including graduating from Oxford, contradict the stereotype young Black men in London often face. In saying the above, I cannot be the only example of this. There is immense talent in the Black British demographic but a lack of sufficient support to nurture it. Oxford has an opportunity to lead in providing the necessary support to under-represented communities, which enables others, like me, to achieve greatness through education.'



Investing in tomorrow's leaders

To give more of the most talented Black British students the opportunity to undertake postgraduate study at Oxford University, we need to be able to provide more funding. The generosity of our donors has allowed us to create many open-field scholarships, but we are seeking dedicated support for Black British students, to allow them to study and work without financial hardship.

The costs associated with funding full scholarships vary, but most courses are similar to the sample costs outlined below. These tables also show how the final costs of funding a scholarship accrue over a four-year period, where relevant. Some courses have higher fees, such as the Master of Business Administration at the Saïd Business School and the Master of Public

Policy at the Blavatnik School of Government. If the scholarship programme is endowed in perpetuity, positive action must cease once the imbalance has been resolved. The programme would then need to be made available either to other under-represented groups or to all students.

Students receiving a scholarship would be required to submit an annual report to the University. This would outline how the scholarship has benefitted their studies during the academic year and describe how their course is going. We would share their experiences with you each year, so you can follow their journey at Oxford and gain an insight into the opportunities the scholarship brings.

Course type	Course fee	Living costs	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Endowment costs
	2021-22	2021-22	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25		
General course costs								
Most one-year master's courses	£23,373	£15,744	£39,117	-	-	-	£39,117	£977,914
DPhil 4 years	£15,651	£15,744	£31,394	£32,806	£34,288	£8,769	£107,257	£784,861

Figures assume a 6% annual inflationary fees increase, and a 3% annual inflationary living costs increase. From 2024-25, a 5% inflation to living costs will be assumed.



Summary

The benefits and experience gained from attending a leading university cannot be overestimated. By investing in British postgraduate students of Black African and Caribbean heritage at the University of Oxford, you will play a crucial role in ensuring that the brightest minds are provided with the opportunities to make a real difference to the world we live in. It is essential that the most talented students have the opportunity to flourish at Oxford regardless of their financial means.

Our goal is to be able to provide full financial support packages for all postgraduate students who are in need and qualify. Philanthropic support is absolutely critical in this quest. Every gift, large or small, will have a life-changing impact not only on the individual, but in the wider world where our students will work and where their research will have an impact.

We hope you will join us in our mission to ensure that a diverse group of talented students can access this wonderful opportunity. The University of Oxford would be delighted to name the postgraduate scholarship programme in your name or a name of your choice. In addition to naming opportunities, the University would wish to recognise your commitment on web pages and in publications (subject to your agreement), which acknowledge the generosity of individuals, trusts and companies in helping to support students and academia at Oxford.



Recognising our donors

Since its founding, the University of Oxford and its colleges have been shaped and sustained by the patronage of visionary individuals, groups and organisations, who share our commitment to advancing human knowledge. In turn, Oxford is committed to providing lasting recognition for its benefactors.

Some of the forms of acknowledgement include:

Continuing engagement

Oxford's engagement with its benefactors can include invitations to University events, such as Encaenia, the annual ceremony in which Oxford awards honorary degrees to distinguished figures in politics, business, academia and the arts, and where major donors are recognised. Benefactors can also receive invitations to special gatherings related to their interests and benefaction; acknowledgment in key publications; and updates on the impact of their philanthropy.

The Vice-Chancellor's Circle

The Vice-Chancellor's Circle recognises benefactors who have provided generous support of between £250,000 and £1.5 million to the collegiate University. The circle engages members in the life and work of the University, and meets each year in Oxford.

The Chancellor's Court of Benefactors

Philanthropic contributions which total more than £1.5 million by an individual benefactor or £3 million by an organisation, once received in full, may enable the Chancellor to invite the benefactor to join the Chancellor's Court of Benefactors (CCB). The court meets annually in Oxford for the ceremony of admission, business meeting and dinner.