

Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, report, academic year 2025-2026

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Moving to Oxford and finding your favourite spots

Before I could start enjoying Oxford and its magical atmosphere, I had to tackle maybe the hardest part of the fellowship: the visa process and finding accommodation. Looking back, it would have been good to allow more time for these arrangements and the housing search. I wrote a separate blog post specifically about searching for accommodation. This covers the essentials of moving to Oxford in more detail (in Finnish): <https://www.stipendiblogi.fi/muuttovinkkeja-oxfordiin.html>

When I finally found a flat (that was of course ridiculously expensive), at least it was warm, dry, and otherwise very comfortable. From North Oxford it was easy to get to the city centre, Port Meadow, the Reuters Institute, and Green Templeton College that all Reuters Institute fellows were affiliated with. Green Templeton soon became a great place both to spend time and to study. It was a bit like a living room and a second home in the city centre, where you were always welcome to spend time. People often say that the Oxford experience is incomplete if you do not belong to a college. I think Green Templeton College was a wonderful college: small enough to feel approachable and exceptionally welcoming. Of course, the older colleges have a very special atmosphere too, but it was easy to visit them as well.

Towards the end of my fellowship, Green Templeton's landmark observatory underwent a major renovation and was closed. The observatory's second floor had a charming common room. Fortunately, I was able to experience the college while the observatory was still in use, as I consider it the heart of the entire college. I look forward to seeing the renovated observatory in its new look in the years to come.

In addition to Green Templeton's own library, my favourite libraries included All Souls College Library (for which I had to apply for access), Radcliffe Camera, Weston Library, and the Humanities Library. Everyone develops their own routines when it comes to libraries and places to work in Oxford. It is worth trying out different locations, as they all have very different atmospheres. The basement of Blackwell's bookshop also offers some decent desk spaces for working. It became my favourite during the intense summer heatwaves. It was one of the few places with air conditioning!

Studying at the Reuters Institute

For all three terms, the Reuters Institute fellowship programme primarily ran from Wednesday to Friday. This meant that the beginning of each week could generally be used as you wished: for studying, attending lectures, conducting interviews, or simply reading. Fellows funded by the Helsingin Sanomat Foundation are usually the only ones who remain at the Institute for all three terms. Over the course of the year, this means experiencing three different cohorts and academic terms. There are many farewells, but even more new acquaintances. For me, the best part of the fellowship was the incredible international network of journalists that I got to know over the academic year.

The Reuters Institute fellowship consists of lectures and activities organised by the Institute as well as seminars led by the fellows themselves. The programme is largely shaped around the interests of each fellowship cohort. Every fellow for example invites a guest speaker to the Institute, gives a lecture on a topic they are professionally interested in, and actively participates in the sessions organised by others. In addition, the Institute hosts guest lectures, events, and time with the research team during the weekly Friday Journal Club. Each term introduces you to new journalists and researchers from around the world, allowing you to learn from their areas of expertise.

Among the highlights of the events programme were attending the launch of the Digital News Report, participating in the Trust Conference in London, and joining Reuters Institute events such as AI and the Future of News.

In addition, fellows can attend lectures that are open to the wider university community as well as those reserved exclusively for members of the university. It is worth following the lecture and events calendar closely, as Oxford attracts leading figures from many different fields on a weekly basis. All events are nowadays listed here: <https://events.ox.ac.uk/> The most memorable guest lecture for me was a keynote given by Professor Danah Boyd, whose work I admire. In this sense, a fellowship year can be shaped very much according to your own interests by choosing which activities and lectures to prioritise.

Each fellow works on their own fellowship project at a pace determined largely by the length of their fellowship. My project focused on strengthening media literacy as a journalistic practice in the age of content creators. I completed most of the reading for the project during the first Michaelmas term. During the second Hilary term, I conducted ten expert interviews. The final Trinity term was devoted to writing the fellowship project and preparing for the showcase, alongside the core lecture programme. I submitted the first version of the report in the beginning of June. Following feedback, the second version was completed by early July. As I write this in September 2026, I am currently waiting for my project to reach the publication stage. If the report itself is complete from your side, publication can still take time depending on how many other projects are awaiting final revisions and release.

It was a unique opportunity to immerse myself in my research topic for almost a year without the simultaneous demands and pressures of working life. The year allowed me to relax and reset mentally. For that, I am deeply grateful to the Helsingin Sanomat Foundation.

Living in Oxford

As a city, Oxford is extraordinarily green and even magical with its many layers of history. Over the course of the year, there was time to explore different colleges, libraries, parks, and neighbourhoods. The city is lively, and everything takes place within a relatively compact and easily accessible area. Most people cycle everywhere regardless of the weather. For me, getting used to driving and cycling on the left took some time. Eventually, I adjusted so well that I now annoy Finnish pedestrians by overtaking them on what they consider the wrong side.

Oxford is also a wonderful place during breaks in the busy academic terms. Christmas in Oxford was quieter than usual and genuinely charming.

One of the pleasures of living in Oxford is its proximity to London. The journey to Paddington Station takes as little as 51 minutes. I happily took advantage of London's vast cultural offering throughout the year. One of the great joys was being able to attend a concert and still make it home comfortably for a good night's sleep afterwards.

I warmly recommend you to delve into the charming atmosphere of Oxford (and London) in your own way, if you get this incredible once in a lifetime chance to spend almost a year in Oxford and at the Reuters Institute.