

Frequently Asked Questions and other Practical Details

General FAQs

Q – What is The Zacharias Trust?

A – The Zacharias Trust is the European, Middle Eastern and African (EMEA) branch of Ravi Zacharias International Ministries. The EMEA Headquarters are based in Oxford, England but we also have smaller teams based in various countries throughout the region.

Q – Are there any age limitations to attend Summer School?

A – We are not able to accept reservations from anyone under the age of 18 years old.

Q – What is your refund/cancellation policy?

A – We can offer you a refund if we have been able to resell your ticket. Your refund will be 90% of the original ticket price, with 10% being non-refundable to cover administration costs.

Q – Do I need a passport to get in to U.K?

A – Yes, if you are travelling to the Summer School from any country outside the U.K. you must have a valid passport to enter the country. If you do not already have a passport, we strongly recommend that you start the application process well before your planned trip.

Q – I have a valid passport, but do I need a visa to get into the U.K?

A – If you are an American, Canadian or a European Union citizen you do not need a visa to enter the U.K. (unless you plan to stay longer than the 6 months or intend to work here). If you are a citizen of another country, you might need a visa. For further information about which nationalities require visas please visit <https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration>

Q – What is the weather like in the U.K. during July?

A – It is very unpredictable! The weather in England can be very changeable – for example, during the 2012 Summer School temperatures were low and it rained for much of the week; however in 2013 and 2014, it was quite warm and sunny! Therefore, we recommend you come prepared for cold and hot temperatures as well as wet weather too. As a rough guide, July temperatures tend to be in the region of 20-25 degrees Celsius (68-80 degrees Fahrenheit).

Q – What is the currency in the U.K?

A – In the U.K. the currency is pound sterling (£). Unless you are in the airport, you will not be able to use your US dollars or Euros. However, you can change your money at the airport or at certain banks in Oxford during business hours. Most shops will accept all major credit and debit cards, although some will not accept American Express.

Q – Do you offer any scholarships or bursaries to attend Summer School?

A – We regret that we are unable to offer any scholarships or bursaries for the Summer School. However, some delegates have raised money themselves, (e.g. from local churches), in order to come.

Q – Where can I find more information about Oxford?

A – An excellent general website on Oxford can be found at www.oxfordcity.co.uk
There is an Oxford City Tourist Information Centre which can be found at 15-16 Broad Street, Oxford, OX1 3AS. Telephone: +44 (0)1865 252200

About the Accommodation

The Summer School is intended to be a residential week. We do have a very limited number of non-residential places and those who choose this option are invited to make their own alternative arrangements for accommodation.

Q – Where will I be lodging?

A – If you make a standard residential reservation you will be accommodated in a room at Merton College, most of which are en suite. However, a small number of rooms have a private bathroom and toilet located outside the room.

Q – When can I arrive?

A – Your bedroom will not be available before 15:00 on Sunday 8th July

Q – Can I share a room with someone?

A – We do have a very limited number of shared rooms at Merton College. However, these are reserved for married couples (for whom there is a special rate). Due to the limited number of these rooms, we are only able to make them available to married couples, unless in specific circumstances.

Q – Are there any age restrictions? Can my baby/children stay in my room?

A – We are not able to accept reservations from anyone under the age of 18 years old due to a policy Merton College has. Therefore, babies and children are not allowed to stay in the college rooms.

Q – What will the bedrooms be like?

A – Accommodation in college in this historic setting enables you to be in the heart of Oxford, and to fully participate in the Summer School experience. Merton College offers both traditional and modern student study bedrooms. Accommodation is split between the different quads and the rooms offer beautiful views across the college and grounds. The bedrooms are comfortable, clean and adequately equipped. However, please bear in mind that they are student rooms as opposed to hotel rooms. Linen, towels and tea and coffee making facilities are provided as standard. You will receive a welcome pack on arrival that will contain shampoo/soap etc. however this will not be replenished during the week. Wi-Fi is available throughout the college, although the signal strength may vary depending on whereabouts in the college you are. Please note that if you require a hairdryer, you will need to bring this with you (along with the necessary voltage adapter for the U.K)

Q – Is there air conditioning?

A – There is no air conditioning in the Dining Hall or bedrooms. If the weather is unusually hot, there may be a limited number of fans available which can be borrowed on a deposit system from the college. This would be on a 'first-come, first-served' basis.

Q – Are the rooms easily accessible?

A – The lecture theatre, dining hall and chapel at Merton College are all accessible, and there are several bedrooms on the ground floor. Some of the older bedrooms are located at the top of narrow, spiral staircases so if you have any special mobility requirements, please inform us when you register so that we can allocate you a more suitable room for your needs.

Q – Will there be telephone access in the bedroom?

A – The bedrooms do not have telephones.

Q – Is there internet access at Merton College?

A – Yes, the college is equipped with Wi-Fi. You will be issued with log in details on arrival.

Q – Will I need an electrical adapter and what size?

A – If travelling from outside the U.K. you will need a 3-pronged voltage adapter for ALL electrical appliances. It is very important to note that the electricity supply in England is different (higher voltage) to that of many countries. *You must make sure that the adapter you buy is able to convert from the British 240 volts down to that of your appliance.* Please be aware that if your adapter is not capable of **converting** voltages then this can cause fire and/or destroy your equipment. **This is particularly important to note if you intend to use hairdryers, heated hair appliances or kettles.**

Q – Will there be room service?

A – There is no room service available as it is an Oxford University College, rather than a hotel. If you would like food outside of meal and refreshment times there are plenty of shops, cafés and restaurants in the centre of Oxford, just a few minutes' walk away from Merton.

Q – Will there be access to a refrigerator, microwave, etc?

A – There are no refrigerators, microwaves or other cooking facilities available to delegates at Merton.

Q – Is there a gym or pool that can be used at Merton College?

A – There is no gym or pool facilities onsite at Merton

Q – If I select the non-residential option, can you reserve my hotel room for me?

A – We are unable to make hotel reservations. If you are planning to stay in a hotel we strongly recommend you book your place well in advance as Oxford hotels are extremely busy during the summer months. Please see a list of recommended hotels at the end of this document.

Q – Is there somewhere on campus to wash clothes?

A – If you do need to do any laundry while staying at Merton, there are washing machines and dryers onsite. Delegates are required to bring their own laundry detergent and cards can be purchased from the lodge with a value of £3.00 or £6.00 (with a wash and a dry cycle costing £1.50 each)

Q – What is the emergency contact number on campus? What hours will this phone/desk be available?

A – The lodge is manned 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and can be contacted on +44 (0)1865 276310

Q – What time is check-out at Merton?

A – Check out is no later than 10.00am on Saturday 14th July

Q – I would like to extend my stay in Oxford after Summer School has finished. Can I stay at Merton College?

A – Rooms at Merton College are not available either before or after Summer School. If you plan to extend your stay in Oxford, please make other accommodation arrangements out with the Summer School week. Accommodation in Oxford is very busy during the summer months so we advise you to book well in advance.

Q – When do you recommend I arrive?

A – The first programmed event of the Summer School will begin at 16.00pm on Sunday 8th July at the Oxford Town Hall. We advise allowing enough time to check in to the college/your hotel and drop off your luggage before making your way to the Town Hall.

Q – Will there be someone to help me with my luggage when I arrive at my accommodation?

A – There will be staff available to greet you at Merton College who can assist you with luggage and any questions you may have. If you decide to book alternative accommodation then it is very likely that there will be hotel staff on hand to assist you with your luggage.

Q – What time do we leave on Saturday 14th July?

A – The last timetabled session is on the Friday evening (13th). Most hotels will require you to vacate your room by 11am **at the latest** on the day of departure – Saturday 14th July.

Dress Code

Q – Is there a dress code for the week?

A – There is no strict dress code during the days. As British weather is very changeable we would recommend you bring clothes suitable for all weather conditions. In particular, we would suggest you bring a waterproof jacket and/or umbrella, and a pair of comfortable walking shoes (the best way to get around Oxford is on foot). As mentioned again further on in the FAQ document, the Oxford Summer School does involve walking outdoors between a few different venues, so we recommend that you bear this in mind when choosing clothing. We ask delegates to follow a smart/formal dress code for the evening meals, so you will need to bring something appropriate for this e.g. A jacket and shirt for men or skirt/dress/trouser suit for ladies.

Meals

Most meals will be served in Merton College Dining Hall, but our opening gala dinner will be at the Oxford Town Hall on Sunday 8th and we will be closing the week with a farewell dinner at St Aldate's Church on Friday 13th. Dietary requirements can be catered for if we have these details in advance.

Q – Will meals be offered cafeteria, buffet or "a la carte" style?

A – Breakfast is served buffet style, whilst lunch and dinner will be a mix of buffet and plated, with a set menu. Lunch and dinner will start promptly at the designated times.

Q – What if I have special dietary requirements?

A – Special dietary requirements can be catered for if, and only if, we are informed in advance. Please make sure you include any relevant details when registering.

Q – If I am a non-residential participant, can I still take all my meals in Merton College?

A – Lunch and Dinner will be provided for you in the Dining Hall of Merton College. However, breakfast won't be. You will need to make sure you have breakfast at your hotel or lodging before coming for the morning worship time (at St Aldates Church).

Q – Is it ok to skip a meal if I want to eat out at a restaurant on a particular night?

A – Yes, you can make your own arrangements for meals if you wish, but please ensure that you sign out using the sheet provided on the desk at St Aldates, so that a member of staff can take your place at the meal (as we have a set number of places at each meal). There is no financial reimbursement for delegates who decide to miss a meal.

Programme & Lecture Sessions

Q – Where will the lectures be held?

A – The lectures will be held in two main locations: (1) St Aldates Church, and (2) Merton College

Q – How do we travel to and from the venues?

A – Both venues are in the city centre of Oxford with a 10-minute walking distance between them, so travelling between venues during the day will be very quick and easy. If you have mobility problems, please let us know so that we can help you.

Q – Will we be given session notes?

A – At initial registration you will receive a folder containing useful information about your stay, along with a map of Oxford, notepaper to write on and a pen. The folder will also contain a brief summary of each talk/seminar taking place throughout the week. One or two speakers may produce a brief outline of their talk if they feel this will be of benefit, but we encourage everyone to take their own notes as part of the learning process.

Q – What about the timetabled events that do not take place at St Aldates or Merton College?

A – Throughout the week we may also visit other locations/venues. You will be given clear instructions, both on arrival to the Summer School and on the day of each individual event, as to where to meet and at what time. As above, please let us know of any mobility problems and we will help you to get to each location.

Q – Is there a photo and a recording policy?

A – We will be recording the talks in order for them to be made available online after the event to all participants. We request that you do not record the sessions yourself, whether on video or audio. There is no policy on photography, however we ask that participants are sensitive in the teaching sessions and limit their photo taking at these times.

Q – Is there childcare available during the sessions?

A – Unfortunately, we are not able to provide any childcare at all during the week.

Q – Do I have to be at a certain academic standard to be able to attend the Oxford Summer School?

A – No, anyone is welcome to attend the Oxford Summer School, as long as they are at least 18 years old. Some of the topics covered are more academic than others, but the course is intended to be suitable for anyone who is interested in the subject material.

Q – Do I need to do any reading in preparation for the Summer School?

A – No, there is absolutely no need to do any research before attending the Oxford Summer School. However, if you would like to, you are more than welcome to read up on the topics before coming. Many of the speakers are published authors and their books are available at all major bookstores (they will also be available for sale during the Summer School.)

Q – Can I gain credit for an academic course by attending the Oxford Summer School?

A – No. Whilst many of the speakers at the Oxford Summer School do regularly lecture at universities, the Summer School itself is not accredited by any academic institution.

Q – Can I plug my laptop or tablet into an electricity supply during the talks?

A – No, most of the venues do not have easily accessible plug sockets and, therefore, if you wish to take notes with your laptop/tablet please charge the battery prior to attending the lectures.

Q – Is there an opportunity to talk to a speaker about a particular apologetics / pastoral question?

A – There are designated “On the Spot” sessions on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday night in which delegates are encouraged to ask any questions that they would like answered. In addition to this, if there is time, a number of the lectures will include a short time for questions. There is also an opportunity to talk to some of the speakers during mealtimes and coffee/tea breaks, and there will be a chaplain available and on hand all week.

Transport Details

We recommend flying to London Heathrow or London Gatwick airports (in normal road conditions London Heathrow is about 60-75 minutes from Oxford, whereas Gatwick is around 100-150 minutes away). Transfer from the other London airports (Stansted Airport, Luton Airport, and London City Airport) is more complicated. You will need to arrange your own transport from the airport to Oxford. In planning your journey, please make sure you allow time to collect your baggage and come through passport control.

Q – What times should I book my flights for?

A – We recommend you book your incoming flight to arrive in London by 13:00 at the latest on Sunday 8th July. For your return flight, most flights to the US depart in the morning so you may have to leave early and miss breakfast. If you do stay for breakfast on the final morning (Saturday 14th July), we recommend that you book a flight leaving no earlier than 15:00 to allow sufficient time for travel and check-in.

From London Heathrow Airport to Oxford

By Car

Journey time: approximately **55 minutes** (depending on traffic)

Journey Distance: 45 miles (75 kilometers)

Cost for chauffeur service (return): Approx. **£170-£200** return

Here are the details of the companies that we regularly use:

Baldwins of Oxford Chauffeur Cars

Telephone: +44 (0)7768 583822

Email: baldwinsoxford@gmail.com

Cost: approximately **£87** one way (this is a special discounted rate for RZIM Zacharias Trust delegates so please let them know you are here for our summer school to qualify for this price)

Findlay Chauffeur Service

Telephone: +44 (0)1865 736800

Email: info@findlaycs.com

<http://www.findlaycs.com/>

Go Green Taxis

Telephone: +44 (0)1865 922222

Email: bookings@gogreentaxisltd.co.uk

<http://www.gogreentaxisltd.co.uk/oxford/>

Onward Travel Solutions

Telephone: 0044 203 4788892

<https://www.airporttaxi-uk.co.uk/>

By Bus

Please double check all transport details yourself as this information may change by the time you travel

Total journey time from Heathrow to Oxford: approximately **1h30**

Cost of period return ticket: **£30**.

The **Oxford Bus Company** operates a direct bus service between Heathrow Airport and Oxford which stops just a 4 minute walk away from Merton College. We recommend getting off at Oxford High Street.

Website: <https://airline.oxfordbus.co.uk/>

Telephone: +44 (0)1865 785400

- During the day, buses run every 20 minutes from the central bus station at Heathrow (for terminals 1, 2 and 3) and terminal 4. Services are less frequent during the late evening and night.
- Bus journey time to Oxford: 1h30. Cost: £30 return (sterling, euros and US Dollars accepted).
- From **terminals 1, 2, 3 and 4** catch 'THE AIRLINE' bus from the Central Bus Station. For timetable information and further details go to **www.oxfordbus.co.uk**
- From **terminal 5**, catch 'THE AIRLINE' bus outside the arrivals concourse.
- **When the driver loads the bags onto the bus, you will need to request to get off the bus at Queens Lane (stop J1) if you are happy with the 4 minute walk to merton, or Gloucester Green (pronounced Gloster) if you would prefer to take a taxi to Merton.**

From London Gatwick to Oxford

By Car

Journey time: approximately **1h30** (depending on traffic)

Journey Distance: 85 miles (135 kilometers)

Cost for chauffeur service (return): **£260-£270** return

Book a car to collect you from the airport and take you to your accommodation. Here are the details of the companies that we regularly use:

Baldwins of Oxford Chauffeur Cars

Telephone: +44 (0)7768 583822

Email: baldwinsoxford@gmail.com

Cost: approximately **£140** one way (this is a special discounted rate for Zacharias Trust delegates so please let them know you are here for our summer school to qualify for this price)

Findlay Chauffeur Service

Telephone: +44 (0)1865 736800

Email: info@findlaycs.com

<http://www.findlaycs.com/>

Go Green Taxis

Telephone: +44 (0)1865 922222

Email: bookings@gogreentaxisltd.co.uk

<http://www.gogreentaxisltd.co.uk/oxford/>

Onward Travel Solutions

Telephone: 0044 203 4788892

<https://www.airporttaxi-uk.co.uk/>

By Bus

Total journey time from Gatwick to Oxford: approximately **2hrs 15minutes**

Cost of period return ticket: **£37**.

The **Oxford Bus Company** operates a direct bus service between Gatwick Airport and Oxford which stops just a 4 minute walk away from Merton College. We recommend getting off at Oxford High Street.

Website: <https://airline.oxfordbus.co.uk/>

Telephone: +44 (0)1865 785400

- There are hourly services during the day from both North and South terminals.
- Bus journey time: approximately 2 hours 15 minutes
- From the **North terminal** catch 'THE AIRLINE' bus from **Lower Forecourt**. For timetable information and further details, visit **www.oxfordbus.co.uk**
- From the **South terminal** catch 'THE AIRLINE' bus from the **Lower Forecourt**.
- **When the driver loads the bags onto the bus, you will need to request to get off the bus at Gloucester Green.**

Please double check all transport details yourself as the above information may change by the time you travel

How to get from London city centre to Oxford

By Rail

If you are travelling from London **city centre**, as opposed to the airports, we recommend that you get the train from Paddington station to Oxford. To avoid carrying your luggage on the Underground trains, you may prefer to get a taxi to Paddington. There are two types of train that travel to Oxford and each departs around every half an hour. The faster train only stops at Reading en route and is quicker (just over 1 hour). The slower train stops at many of the smaller stations en route (Reading, Goring, Radley, etc) and takes around 90 minutes. Please speak to the ticket office to ensure you get on the right train.

Train timetable information can be found at www.nationalrail.co.uk

Telephone: +44 (0)3457 48 49 50

On arriving at Oxford railway station, the easiest way to get to your accommodation is by taxi.

By Bus

An alternative to the train is the bus from **Victoria Coach Station** in London to **Gloucester Green** in Oxford (pronounced Gloster). These leave every 20 minutes and the journey takes approximately 1hr 40 minutes.

For more information visit <https://www.oxfordtube.com>

Local transport in Oxford

The Zacharias Trust team will be on hand at all times during the week to help with travel queries and give advice and assistance. If you are staying at a hotel or B&B the reception staff will also be able to assist you.

By bus

Oxford is very well served by local bus routes. The following website is very good and gives details of routes, fares and timetables - <http://city.oxfordbus.co.uk/smartzone/>. We also recommend downloading the SmartZone map, found on the web page above, to give a clear guide of which buses serve each area of the city.

We advise buying a one week SmartZone pass for £15.99. This will cover all of your local bus travel for the duration of the week. You can purchase a pass from the Gloucester Green Travel Shop next to the bus station in the city centre, or you can sign up online at oxfordkey.co.uk and then simply ask the bus driver to top up your card when you get on the bus.

By taxi

There are a very large number of local taxi companies servicing Oxford. Please ensure that you only use licensed taxis as opposed to unmarked private cars. You can hail a taxi from most areas in the city centre, and your hotel/B&B will be able to call one for you if you are travelling from your accommodation into the city.

Non-residential Hotel Options

The Oxford Spires Four Pillars Hotel, Abingdon Road

0.7 miles from St Aldates Church and Oxford Town Hall - 15 minute walk or 8 minutes by bus
Facilities include leisure club, free car parking, restaurant, bar, and lounge area. The hotel also has very good bus links directly to St Aldates Church.

Website: <http://www.oxfordspireshotel.co.uk/>

Tel: +44 (0) 1865 324 324

The Old Bank, High Street

0.4 miles from St Aldates Church and Oxford Town Hall - 7 minute walk or 2 minutes by taxi
The Old Bank is one of Oxford's finest hotels. Attached to the hotel is the Quod Brasserie serving food throughout the day. All bedrooms are fully air-conditioned and have complimentary Wi-Fi. Secure on-site parking is available free of charge.

Website: <http://www.oldbank-hotel.co.uk/>

Tel: +44 (0) 1865 799 599

The Oxford Hotel (Peartree)

3 miles from St Aldates Church and Oxford Town Hall - 45 minute walk or 20 minutes by bus
The Oxford Hotel is situated a little further out, but this is reflected in the nightly rate. Facilities include health club with swimming pool, free parking and Wi-Fi, good bus links to the city centre, and restaurant.

Website: <http://www.thehotelcollection.co.uk/hotels/the-oxford-hotel/>

Tel: +44 (0) 1865 489 988

Hawkwell House, Iffley

2.5 miles from St Aldates and Oxford Town Hall - 35 minute walk or 20 minutes by bus
Hawkwell House has the look and feel of an English countryside hotel, but with the convenience of being just 15 minutes from the city centre of Oxford. Facilities include free on-site parking, complimentary Wi-Fi throughout the hotel, a restaurant, bar area and garden with BBQ terrace.

Alternative accommodation in Oxford

81 Banbury Road, Oxford - A guest house run by Tim and Miriam Maughan, who are friends of the ministry. Telephone +44 (0) 1865 557 236 to book. Cost includes a delicious cooked breakfast! 20 minute walk/5 minute bus to St Aldates Church and city centre.

Cotswold Lodge Hotel – <http://www.cotswoldlodgehotel.co.uk/> (20 minute walk/5 minute bus to St Aldates Church and city centre).

Oxford University – College rooms - The University will often rent out rooms in the many city centre colleges during the summer months. They vary in price and standard but you can search <http://www.universityrooms.com/en/city/oxford/home> to find out what is available for the dates of your stay.

Best Western Linton Lodge - <https://www.bestwestern.co.uk/hotels/best-western-linton-lodge-hotel-83647> (15-20 minute walk/10 minute bus to St Aldates Church and city centre).

The Buttery – <http://www.thebutteryhotel.co.uk/> (Very central location, 5-10 minute walk to St Aldates Church)

The Galaxie Hotel - <http://www.galaxie.co.uk/> (30 minute walk/10-15 minute bus to St Aldates and city centre)

Old Parsonage Hotel - <http://www.oldparsonage-hotel.co.uk/> (10 minute walk to St Aldates Church)

Malmaison Oxford - <https://www.malmaison.com/locations/oxford/> (5-10 minute walk to St Aldates Church)

The Bocardo Hotel - <http://www.thebocardo.co.uk/> (5-10 minute walk to St Aldates Church)

Mercure Oxford Eastgate Hotel - <http://www.mercure.com/gb/hotel-6668-mercure-oxford-eastgate-hotel/> (5-10 minute walk to St Aldates Church)

Remont Oxford - <http://www.remont-oxford.co.uk/> (45 minute walk/10-15 minute bus to St Aldates Church)

Holywell Bed & Breakfast - <http://www.holywellbedandbreakfast.com/> (10-15 minute walk to St Aldates Church)

The Tower House - <http://www.towerhouseoxford.co.uk/> (10 minute walk to St Aldates Church)

YHA Oxford – <http://www.yha.org.uk/hostel/oxford> (15 minute walk to St Aldates)

This is just a very small selection of the accommodation on offer in and around the city of Oxford. Many other alternatives can be found by using sites such as www.booking.com, www.laterooms.com, www.tripadvisor.co.uk and www.trivago.co.uk.