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Astrophoria Foundation Year – Materials Science with Foundation Year Course Information Sheet

The Astrophoria Foundation Year is free for students and is designed to be a one-year intensive academic course which will bridge any gaps between school and our academically challenging undergraduate courses.

The programme is carefully designed to build and develop your study skills, subject knowledge and academic confidence. Students that pass the course will be awarded a nationally recognised Certificate in Higher Education (CertHE) qualification.

If you pass the course at the required level, you will be automatically admitted into Oxford as an undergraduate student if you wish to be, without the need to re-apply.

Students who have applied for Materials Science with Foundation Year at the University of Oxford take part in the Foundation Year Chemistry, Engineering and Materials Science (CEMS) course. Students who pass their foundation year at the required level then progress onto the undergraduate course in [Materials Science](#). For more information about the undergraduate part of your course please see the appropriate [course information sheet](#).

The CEMS course is designed to give you a solid grounding in key areas, with particular focus on the assimilation of the underlying concepts in these topics so that they can be effectively applied to solve real-world problems.

You will follow a subject specific pathway taking modules relevant to the subject you aim to study at undergraduate level, alongside essential maths modules. You will develop subject specific problem-solving skills and undertake an independent mini project.

Alongside your academic subject programme, you will take the Preparation for Undergraduate Studies course. This will help you develop the core skills that will enable you to thrive on a course at undergraduate level, whether at Oxford or another university.

These modules will provide support in building general academic skills including:

- Academic writing
- Communication skills
- Broader personal development through a society and culture course and academic mentoring

Please note this Course Information Sheet refers only to the Foundation Year section of your course, for more information about the undergraduate section of your course please see the appropriate [course information sheet](#).

Typical week

During your foundation year you will be expected to attend at least five hours of lectures and classes per unit per week, participate in regular meetings with tutors to discuss work, carry out independent research and participate in laboratory work. All CEMS students follow two or three units per week.

Your time will be spent both on academic work for your CEMS programme and work related to the Preparation for Undergraduate Studies course.

In each term you will study modules which will lead to your degree pathway. In your final term you will complete a written project on a subject related topic of your choice, deepening your subject interest and building your skills in independent study.

Tutorials are usually for around two students and a tutor. Classes and laboratory sessions are slightly bigger, they may vary depending on the modules that you choose. There are likely to be around four students in a class or laboratory session, however when the whole CEMS cohort is together, this may include up to 12 students.

Lectures are a larger format again, and are likely to be delivered to the foundation year cohort (up to 50 students) as a whole.

Most tutorials, classes, and lectures are delivered by staff who are tutors in their subject. Some teaching may also be delivered by postgraduate students.

To find out more about how Oxford's teaching year is structured, visit our [Academic Year](#) page.

Foundation Year course structure

Term 1

Courses	Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction for practical based science: measurement and error analysis • Maths for physical sciences 1 • Physics, mechanics and optics • Physical Chemistry 1 • Preparation for Undergraduate Studies (including General Academic Skills, Communication Skills, Society and Culture) 	Examinations: Written papers

Term 2

Courses	Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maths for physical sciences 2 • Physics, magnetism, electricity with DC circuits and waves • Physical Chemistry 2 • Preparation for Undergraduate Studies (including General Academic Skills, Communication Skills, Society and Culture) 	Examinations: Written papers

Term 3

Courses	Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subject specific problem solving• Written project• Preparation for Undergraduate Studies (including General Academic Skills, Communication Skills, Society and Culture)	Examination: Written papers Coursework: Written project of 10,000 words plus illustrations

Fees

Our Foundation Year courses are free of charge and there are no course fees. All tuition is provided free of charge. Students admitted to the Foundation Year courses will also receive an accommodation bursary and another bursary for other living costs.

Due to this financial support, we would typically encourage you not to take out student finance for the Foundation Year (however you will need to apply during your Foundation Year for student finance if you continue to study at Oxford by progressing to a degree course).

Some students may be encouraged to apply for a student loan of £0 during their Foundation Year to enable them to receive additional financial support in the form of a Disabled Students' Allowance (which also means they do not need to reapply in year 1). Applicants who may be in receipt of a DSA and secure a place on the programme will be contacted by the Foundation Year Team to discuss this.

If you continue to study at Oxford by progressing to a degree course, you will need to pay the course fees and cover your living costs (in most cases this is paid by taking out student loans). Visit the undergraduate course pages or the [fees and funding webpages](#) for more information about undergraduate fees and funding.

Living costs

Our Foundation Year courses are free of charge and there are no course fees. All tuition and accommodation costs are covered by the University of Oxford. Students admitted to the Foundation Year courses will also receive a bursary of £5,920 for other living costs.

Living costs for the academic year starting in 2024 are estimated to be between £600 and £1,030 for each month you are in Oxford. Our academic year is made up of three eight-week terms, so you would not usually need to be in Oxford for much more than six months of the year but may wish to budget over a nine-month period to ensure you also have sufficient funds during the holidays to meet essential costs.

Living costs breakdown

	Per month		Total for 9 months	
	Lower range	Upper range	Lower range	Upper range
Accommodation (including utilities)	Provided free of charge for the foundation year.			
Food	£315	£495	£2,835 ¹	£4,445
Personal items	£190	£320	£1,710	£2,880
Social activities	£40	£95	£360	£855
Study costs	£35	£85	£315	£765
Other	£20	£35	£180	£315
Total	£600	£1,030	£5,175	£9,270

Additional fees and charges

There are no compulsory costs as part of the Foundation Year CEMS course. Visit the course page for [Materials Science](#) to see more details about any fees and charges related to the undergraduate course.

¹ Please note, this figure is likely to be lower for Foundation Year students as some of your food is likely to be covered in your accommodation, which is paid for by the programme.