



## **The Exeter College Summer Programme at Exeter College in the University of Oxford**

### **What Is the Individual Research Tutorial (IRT)?**

With the IRT, you will pursue research in a topic chosen by you and develop an extended research essay under the direct tutelage of an expert appointed specifically to guide you in your study.

At the heart of Oxford's highly regarded teaching practice are the conversations that take place between students and teachers who are experts in the subject being studied. These 'tutorials', for each of which a written piece of work is presented, allow students to develop their own ideas under the direct supervision of a tutor. Students can push themselves personally and direct their own learning, all the while being supported by a dedicated teacher. The IRT offers you the opportunity to participate in this personalised form of research-led teaching that has helped Oxford maintain its position as the world's top-ranked University for the third successive year (THE Rankings 2017, '18 and '19). This is an exceptional opportunity for you to undertake self-directed research under the guidance of an Oxford academic with expertise in your field.

After you have secured your place on ECSP, you will have the option of submitting a research proposal describing your chosen area of study and, if approved, you will meet your tutor in 6 x 1hr sessions over the course of the Programme and produce a final essay or report. In addition, you will be included with the other IRT students in an introductory class on conducting self-directed research, and a mid-session class on shaping your findings into a final research paper. The IRT is taken in place of one of your ECSP lecture courses.

Different disciplines work in different ways, but all tutors will set work to be done in advance of your tutorial. In the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences you will most likely be asked to produce short essays and, for example, write literary reviews or legal commentaries; whereas in Science and Engineering you may well be given problem sets. Your tutor will guide your research by providing suggested readings and offering an array of special topics to pursue, all to support and direct your study. In addition, they will give you direct, individual help on how to organise your ideas into a persuasive argument. You can expect to undertake about 15 hours per week of independent study for each tutorial. Due to the personalised nature of tutorials, it is very important that you are well-prepared and willing to engage with your tutor in discussion.

### **Support and Resources:**

The Academic Director will provide on-going support and guidance in the weeks leading up to the start of ECSP until its conclusion. In addition, regular tutorials allow progress to be very closely monitored and, if necessary, for additional support to be put in place. Students taking this option will also be given access to the Bodleian Library, Oxford University's main research library.

### **Assessment:**

Depending on the tutor and the specific area of research you engage in, you will be assessed either on the weekly pieces of work (a grade being given for each; final grade an accumulated average of all marks) or on the final research essay or paper that you submit.

**Prerequisites:**

You will be expected to demonstrate prior knowledge of your chosen field of research, a high degree of self-motivation and engagement with your subject and the ability to work independently. The IRT would be particularly well-suited to students working towards an undergraduate thesis or thinking of graduate studies. Academic areas most suitable for the IRT are the Humanities (Literature, History, Languages, Art History, Classics) and Social Sciences (Politics, Economics (not econometrics), Law, Anthropology, Geography, and International Relations). There will not be an opportunity to pursue laboratory work.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Tutorials rely on the exchange of ideas. Over the course of your six tutorials you will develop the skills and confidence to present and defend your opinions, accept constructive criticism, listen to others, evaluate a number of points of view, develop evidence and sustain your own argument. Regular and rigorous academic discussion facilitates learning and opens up a depth and detail of understanding that simply isn't possible through lectures alone. Tutorials are an ideal way to explore ideas, cast light on new perspectives and develop your ability to think both critically and for yourself. The ability to respond, discuss and argue rationally are skills that will benefit you not just in Oxford but at your home University and in life in the future. In addition, the research you pursue here will provide the ideal basis for any undergraduate thesis you may intend to submit at your home university. It will also give you unparalleled experience of supervised research that itself is the strongest preparation for postgraduate research.

**How to Apply:**

There is a two-step application process:

- (1) Submit an IRT Proposal Form.
- (2) Pay the £500 Individual Research Tutorial Fee. This fee is non-refundable and is paid in addition to your Programme Fee.

Please note, to be eligible to apply for the Individual Research Tutorial you must have been admitted to ECSP and paid your Programme Fee.

The Academic Director will then begin the work of finding you a dedicated tutor. Once a tutor is found, you will be introduced by email prior to the start of the Programme to begin working together to frame your research title, receive a preparatory reading list and set dates for your first and subsequent tutorials.

The IRT is subject to the Academic Director's approval and the availability of an expert in Oxford to guide your research. Submission of an IRT proposal and payment of the supplementary fee is not therefore a guarantee of acceptance. We will do our very best to pair you with a suitable tutor, but if we are unable to do so we will give you the option of either modifying your research proposal or substituting the IRT with a second lecture course and refunding your £500 Research Track Option Fee.