

# OXFORD UNION DEBATE DETAILS

## 1) Time

These are the timings for the evening:

18:30 - 19:00: Pre-Dinner Drinks  
19:00 - 20:25: Pre-Debate Dinner  
20:25 - 20:30: Photograph  
20:30 - around 22:30/23:00: DEBATE  
23:00 onwards: Post-Debate Drinks

The length of the debate depends on the number of speakers and the length of speeches (which are capped, see below).

There is no obligation to attend the dinner or the drinks mentioned above, although we do feel that the pre-debate dinner is part of the 'debate experience' and is a good opportunity to meet the other guest speakers.

## 2) Arrival

A useful map of the location of the Oxford Union is attached at the bottom of this document, together with car park directions. However you arrive in Oxford, a member of committee can meet you at your arrival point to escort you to the Oxford Union.

## 3) Dietary Requirements

Please let the President know if you have any dietary requirements for the dinner, which can normally be catered for.

## 4) Dress

Dress for men is black tie, and for women the female equivalent. We appreciate that some speakers do not approve of black tie, in which case we ask that the speakers look smart.

## 5) Format of the Talk

The debate comprises a mixture of guest speakers and students currently at the University. The first two speakers are usually students and then the guest speakers begin. The guest speakers alternate for the motion and against the motion in order: Proposition, Opposition, Proposition, Opposition etc.. Often, halfway through the debate there is a short 'floor debate' when anyone from the audience may make a short speech.

Guest speakers speak for approximately 10 minutes, although this is to some extent flexible. The Secretary sits next to the Dispatch Box (where speakers stand up to speak), and passes up 'time cards' indicating a rough guide of how long the speaker has left.

## 6) Additional Debate Notes

The Forms of Debate are similar to the House of Commons. In particular, interventions may be made during the course of a speech, whereby another speaker interrupts by saying “on a point of information”. Such interventions should be kept short and to the point; and a speaker is not obliged to accept the intervention.

Please do not be put off by the flow of students entering and leaving the Chamber at the beginning and end of each speech; this is entirely normal, as students often finish labs or Hall late, or have to leave early to do some work!

There is no amplification in the Debating Chamber, and it is therefore necessary to project your voice. Having said that, the Chamber was built specifically for debates and the acoustics are very good – we have found that we do not need microphones on the whole.

## 7) Contact details:

The President can always be contacted by  
e-mail : [president@oxford-union.org](mailto:president@oxford-union.org)  
phone : 01865 241 353

## DIRECTIONS TO THE OXFORD UNION BY CAR

The recommended Car Park is just a short walk from the Oxford Union and can be accessed from Park End Street. From the Car Park, walk up George St. Take the first turning on the right into New Inn Hall St (just past the International Relations and Politics faculty building). The first turning on the left is St Michael St and the Oxford Union is at the far end of the road on the right.

**Oxford City Centre**  
(Enlarged on right)



**Recommended Route to Parking**



**Oxford Union**