

Ellen Holtmaat

Geneva to Oxford, on Europaeum bursary, February 2019

I received the Europaeum grant and spent almost a month in Oxford. This was an amazing time in multiple respects.

Receiving the grant put me in a position to reach out to one of the most well-known professors in my field, Duncan Snidal, to host me. I have met him three times during my stay in Oxford. He has been very welcoming, has put me in touch with several people and he has read two of my papers and has given extensive feedback both in writing and in person. It has been a pleasure to meet such a kind person, to get this useful feedback and spending time in Oxford and being hosted by such an accomplished professor, is an asset for my CV and my academic network.

Next to meeting Duncan Snidal, I met several other professors in my field, who took out time to meet me and exchange ideas on my research project. I also spontaneously made some useful connections when I attended dinners or several talks that were of interest to me. Currently, I have finished a scholarship application for a post doc with one of the professors I met during my stay.

Besides these great benefits content wise for my project and for my network, it was a pleasure to spend time and feel like an 'insider' at such an illustrious university. Studying in Harry Potter like libraries, having afternoon tea at the colleges, attending interesting talks and casually meeting some of the most famous professors in International Relations like Prof. Mearsheimer. The whole atmosphere was just so unique! I had a wonderful experience when being invited to a formal dinner. I had underestimated how 'formal' such a formal dinner is. With everybody dressed up, like for a gala, prayers in Latin and specific etiquettes. It was, as if I went back 100 years in time. A truly unique experience.

Meeting professors and students in Oxford also gave me a sense of the network that I am part of as an aspiring academic. Professors in Oxford appeared to know most of the professors at the Graduate Institute and even I had acquaintances from the Graduate Institute who were now studying in Oxford. It was a definite pleasure to meet them there, to be invited by them to these 'surreal' formal dinners and for them to help me find my way around in Oxford.

I was also invited, very British by the Europaeum office, for tea and biscuits, and had the chance to spend a wonderful morning with the administrator and director of the Europaeum office.

Oxford is like a small village surrounded by lovely parks and fields. It was wonderful cycling from my Airbnb through the university parks to the library, or going for a jog in the morning along the Thames, where the university's rowers were doing their training. Meeting for drinks in 13th century pubs or having afternoon tea with a scone or cake, I thoroughly enjoyed this stay in nearly all of its facets :)

As suits such a historical place, the only downside was that the library provided an ink station for a pen, but not a 100% reliable wifi-connection.