



WEDDING GUIDELINES

It is a privilege to be able to host wedding ceremonies for current and former staff, students and fellows. However, the college is a working educational institution that is busy every day of the year. We are only able to host a handful of wedding ceremonies on specific dates in late July and early August. These dates are usually booked more than a year in advance. Although we will do everything we can to make your day memorable, the college is not a professional wedding venue and cannot provide the bespoke service you may experience elsewhere.

In brief, we can:

- Plan a Church of England ceremony for you taken by one of the chaplains
- Arrange for another priest to take your wedding if the chaplains are unavailable
- Arrange for musicians to play at your wedding (at your expense)
- Assist you with the planning the event, including briefing the porters, arranging access when necessary, providing a verger to prepare the chapel and preparing the legal documentation
- Give you access to the cloisters for drinks and photographs after your wedding
- Close the college to tourists for the day

The answer is no:

You cannot:

- Get married in the chapel if you have no affiliation with the college
- Have a non-Christian or civil wedding (see Legal Requirements below)
- Have a full reception in hall or elsewhere in college
- Have exclusive access to the college. Summer schools, conferences and graduations may all be taking place. Postgraduate students are resident all summer.
- Ask a photographer to take photographs during your wedding ceremony, except from the organ loft
- Use the chapel livestreaming system
- Throw confetti
- Throw rice or anything else
- Include your dog or another pet in the ceremony unless it is a trained assistance dog. Note that emotional support animal certification is not recognised in the UK.
- Fly a drone

We cannot:

- Promise that there will be no works in the chapel (including to the organ), the cloisters, the college or gardens at the time of your wedding
- Provide parking except for the wedding party, photographer, florist and anyone with access needs
- Provide accommodation for you or your guests, although you are welcome to email rooms@new.ox.ac.uk to check if we are offering student bedrooms as Bed and Breakfast accommodation. Chapel staff will not organise this for you.
- Print your service sheets, send out invitations, or do any other admin tasks.
- Assist you with booking a reception venue, florist, photographer, videographer or anything else not directly related to the ceremony and post-ceremony drinks.

Sometimes couples don't want all of the trappings of a wedding. If you want a simple marriage ceremony with fewer than 10 guests we may be able to make other arrangements. Please contact the Dean of Divinity to discuss this.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Only current and former students, staff and fellows of New College can be married in the chapel. The children of *current* students, staff and fellows (including emeritus and honorary fellows) are also eligible, but not the children of *former* students, staff and fellows. An exception is occasionally made for someone with a longstanding association with the chapel (not the college).

Only marriages conducted according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England are legal in New College Chapel; this is a matter of law which is beyond the college's control. If you wish to have a minister of another Christian Church, or a Roman Catholic priest, to officiate at your wedding they must either share the role with a Church of England priest (who will have to take all of the legal parts of the ceremony), or you must make other arrangements for a legal ceremony (such as a civil wedding at a registry office).

The chapel is a Christian place of worship and marriages of other faiths are not possible.

If you are already married and can produce a marriage certificate you can have a Church of England blessing ceremony in the chapel.

We are happy to host blessings of same-sex civil weddings in the chapel. Regrettably, the law prohibits Church of England clergy from officiating at (legally binding) same-sex marriages.

If one or both of you have previously been married or in a civil partnership, the priest officiating at your marriage will need to seek the permission of the Bishop of

Oxford for your marriage to go forward. Permission is usually granted except if your current relationship was responsible for the break-up of your previous marriage. This is a legal matter that is beyond the college's control.

The college is not licensed to host civil marriages.

SPECIAL LICENCE

As college chapels are not licensed for weddings, everyone who gets married in New College chapel has to get a special licence from the Archbishop of Canterbury: see <https://www.facultyoffice.org.uk/special-marriage-licences/couples/do-i-need-a-special-marriage-licence/>

You must apply online for this special licence with the priest who will be officiating at your wedding. There is a fee attached to this, charged by the Archbishop's faculty office (c. £300). You should apply for the licence several months before your wedding. After you have submitted the application, one of you will need to swear an affidavit affirming your details. This can be done at the Faculty Office in Westminster or in the presence of the priest who is administering your wedding. The licence will be posted to the officiating priest (NOT to you) about two or three weeks before your wedding.

CAPACITY

The seating capacity of the chapel is 200.

PLANNING THE SERVICE

The Dean of Divinity of New College is generally available to take weddings in chapel, but if unavailable she can arrange for another priest to officiate who would also take you through the application for the licence and plan the service with you. If you prefer you may have the ceremony taken by someone who knows you, such as your local parish priest or school chaplain. The officiant must be a Church of England priest in good standing, and must be prepared to apply for the licence with you and to plan the ceremony with you. Please confirm the arrangements with the Chapel Administrator.

INFORMATION CHECKLIST

When your marriage date has been confirmed the Chapel Administrator will send you a form so that we can keep accurate records of your marriage.

REGISTRATION AND MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE

From 4 May 2021 marriages are now all registered via local registry offices after the ceremony. You will need to purchase a marriage certificate from the Oxford registry office or the General Registry Office. This can be done online after your wedding and you must do it yourselves. We cannot provide advice about the processing time for marriage certificates or assist if there are delays or problems with the process once the marriage document is safely received by the registry.

SERVICE SHEETS

You are responsible for their creation, printing and costs. The priest who is taking your wedding will work with you to put the service together and will need to approve the final draft before you send it to the printer. The chapel administrator can supply college crests or images of the college if required.

MUSIC

The Assistant Organist will work with you to arrange music for your service. Organist fees are approximately £150-200 and each individual choir singer £50 - £100. If you have more than four singers you will also need to pay for a conductor (£150-200). Musicians prefer cash on the day and your arrangement is directly with them.

VERGER

A verger will be present at your wedding, and will be responsible for security, lighting, and setting up all the practical aspects of the service. He or she will need to know in advance whether you are having a nuptial mass. The verger is not available to act as an usher, so be sure to instruct a number of guests to act as ushers, and to give out service sheets.

RECEPTIONS

You may have drinks and take photographs in the cloisters for an hour after your service. Any food and drink must be provided by the college caterers. You should arrange that directly with the Catering Manager once your wedding date is agreed. Full meals or receptions in the hall or other college spaces are not possible.

PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS IN COLLEGE

You will need to contact the Chapel Administrator at least a month before the wedding to arrange the details with regard to cars, parking, access to the chapel for the florist, etc. The New College Lane entrance will be opened for the bride just before the service and for the departure of the couple at the end. The bridal car(s) may drive into the main quadrangle. Limited parking will be available for the immediate family in Holywell Quad and guests with access needs.

ACCESS & REHEARSALS

There will be access to the chapel in the morning (or previous day) for florists. A rehearsal slot will be reserved for you the day before between 5.00 and 7.00pm. Please confirm which hour would suit you best. If you are having a choir or musicians, we need to book in a music rehearsal before the wedding service.

COLLEGE RULES AND PHOTOGRAPHY

The college rules stipulate no confetti, rice etc., and no photographs or videos in the chapel during the main part of the service. Photographs may be taken in the ante-chapel before and after the wedding, from the organ loft without flash during the ceremony, and during the signing of the marriage document. Drone flying is not permitted.

FLOWERS

The chapel is very large and many couples find that smaller flower arrangements do not have much impact. If you wish to have flowers we recommend one or two large arrangements. It is your responsibility to organise flowers, and the chapel cannot provide florists' equipment. Florists may not pin arrangements to the woodwork. Access for florists can be arranged with the chapel administrator or Porters. There are often two weddings on the same day, and it is therefore possible for couples to share flowers by arrangement.

CHAPEL WORKS

We do our utmost to ensure that any work is scheduled after wedding dates, but there are sometimes emergencies, and it is therefore possible, though extremely unlikely, that there may be work in the antechapel, cloisters or quadrangles, or on the organ. The summer vacation is the only time that this work can be undertaken, and it is sometimes not possible to rearrange them. We accept no responsibility for any disruption to your wedding caused by small-scale works, and will only offer a refund in the unlikely event that the ceremony must be cancelled or postponed because the chapel is closed by emergency works.

FEE

There is a single fee of £1000 to be married in the chapel:

£250 must be paid as a non-refundable deposit as soon as you have fixed your wedding date.

An invoice for the balance of £750 will be sent to you 3 months before your wedding date. The college fee must be paid at least 2 months in advance.

Special rates are available for college staff. The chapel office will confirm these individually.

The fee does not cover the cost to the college of hosting a wedding, which includes:

Clergy fees and preparation time	£300
Administration	£200
Verger	£100
Porters	£200
Candles and candle oil	£30
Lost tourist income	£2000
Total	£2830

Additional donations are appreciated to help cover these costs.

In addition the Archbishop's Licence costs approximately £300, payable directly to the Faculty Office.

CANCELLATION

The deposit is non-refundable. The college will not refund the fee if you cancel your wedding within two calendar months of the service. Extenuating circumstances may be taken into account at the college's discretion.

BOOKING

If you are interested in booking a wedding please contact the Chapel Administrator (chapel.administrator@new.ox.ac.uk) to ask about available dates. Once a date has been agreed you will be sent a link to an online information form and an invoice for the deposit. Payment of the deposit and completion of the form constitute your agreement to abide by these guidelines and to pay the balance of the fee.