

Title: A Graduate Degree at Oxford – Sabine Kerssemakers



If you're thinking of following up your initial degree with a Masters, and you'd never dreamed of an Oxbridge qualification, it's worth reading Sabine Kerssemakers's account of her experience. Both Oxford and Cambridge have Colleges that are dedicated to graduate students, and entry isn't quite as competitive as for undergraduate studies. Now read on...

After Fram, I spent a short time as a volunteer teacher in Malawi. This experience, together with other work with young people such as working as an EFL Teacher and with young offenders, led to my decision to study the theory of education. I applied for a place at the University of Winchester, since it has an excellent and well respected education department. Whilst completing my dissertation on the academic achievement of Somali pupils in UK schools, for my BA in Education Studies at Winchester, I made the decision to take my studies further, before entering employment. Whilst researching suitable courses, I found the Comparative and International Education Masters programme at the University of Oxford. Oxford had not been my goal and prior to submitting my application, I had some serious moments of hesitation. However, I reasoned that the application process itself would be a valuable experience; having secured a place I realised that the saying 'nothing ventured, nothing gained' really is true! I was delighted to be offered a place

at the postgraduate Green Templeton College (you may have seen it, as it features in some episodes of the TV detective series, Lewis!).

Oxford did not disappoint, with its renowned architecture and rich historical presence and with the collegial system offering up superb dinners and fairy-tale balls. The most important outcome of my experience was not just my MSc qualification, but a solid belief in myself and my abilities. This programme also gave me the opportunity to extend my Undergraduate dissertation and I was able to undertake fieldwork in order to complete a qualitative piece of research on how UK schools support Somali pupils, in terms of achievement and aspiration. Oxford gave me the opportunity to interact both academically and socially with a wide range of professors and students, both from my own field of study and from other subject departments, which contributed to my own personal development.

I am currently in the process of seeking employment in the field of Higher Education or the charity sector in London.

