



Merton College Urgent Appeals, Summer 2025



Message from The Warden, Professor Jennifer Payne:

Dear Mertonians,

Over the past year, I have had the privilege of meeting so many incredible Mertonians – here in Oxford and at events across the globe. It has been inspiring to witness the profound connection that Mertonians share and to see our community extend far beyond Merton’s historic walls.

In particular, I have been moved by the commitment of the Mertonian community, whose generosity has made recent scholarships for our Refugee and Black Academic Futures students a reality.

Our graduate students lie at the heart of Merton’s academic community, working alongside world-leading scholars to address today’s most pressing challenges. Talented students who have the opportunity to pursue their studies, regardless of background or means, push the boundaries of research. They uphold our traditions of excellence and ensure that Merton continues to thrive as a centre for intellectual enquiry. In a period of growing financial and political pressures, supporting these students has never been more vital, and your support sustains Merton as a beacon of opportunity, curiosity, and achievement.

Each gift, no matter the size, plays a vital role in shaping the future of our College. Now, as we call on Mertonians once more to support the College’s urgent causes, we ask you to help us to ensure that Merton remains a place where the brightest minds can flourish in a nurturing community.

New Graduate Scholarship in Archaeology (Target: £88,000)

Our target of £88,000 will provide the essential living costs for four years of doctoral study in Archaeology, and matched with University funding will create a full scholarship opportunity for a talented student. Archaeology gives us the tools we need to examine and explain human behaviour, understand how society functions, and learn from the past to enrich the present. However, like many Humanities and Social Science subjects, it faces the existential threat of chronic underfunding. Thanks to the generosity of Mertonians, Archaeology at Merton is currently benefitting from the vibrant intellectual contributions of our alumni-funded DPhil student. It would be wonderful to strengthen the subject further.

“Archaeology at Merton is attracting a large number of graduate students, many of whom have achieved post-doctoral positions and are now themselves academics in universities, curators in museums and scholars in advanced research institutions all over the world. These Mertonians are defining the future of archaeology, advancing new methods and approaches to understand the past, and shaping the future of the discipline. We wish to carry this legacy forward and secure positions in archaeology at Merton, and welcome future generations of students.”

Professor Irene Lemos and Professor Jonathan Prag



£47,750 raised

£40,250 remaining



New Graduate Scholarship in Law (Target: £88,000)

Supporting a DPhil in Law Graduate Scholarship at Merton College is a fantastic way for Mertonians to invest in the future of legal scholarship and practice. The DPhil is the most prestigious of the Law Faculty’s research degrees, attracting outstanding students from diverse backgrounds, and offers the intensive research experience ideal for those seeking to become a leading legal expert. Mertonians can help to ensure that talented students – regardless of financial circumstances – have the opportunity to study at Merton without the anxiety of financial burden, enhancing the College’s reputation for excellence in the legal field.

£25,000 raised

£63,000 remaining

New Graduate Scholarship in Music (Target: £88,000)

With its renowned choir and commitment to fostering talent, Merton has a strong tradition of musical excellence. Scholarships enable students to contribute to this vibrant musical community, participate in high-level performances, and engage in academic research that advances the field of music and beyond. The individual research projects our doctoral students undertake are unique in their blend of approaches: frequently they extend into other academic disciplines within the Humanities, and sometimes into Social Sciences and Psychology. Despite this, Music is a subject which faces significant financial challenges. In response, we aim to raise the remaining £55,128 needed for living costs which will create a full scholarship when combined with University funding, resulting in a transformative opportunity for a talented student.

£32,872 raised

£55,128 remaining



Choral Scholarships (Target: £57,000)

The acclaimed Merton Choir comprises 26 scholars who, as well as pursuing their own academic programmes, deliver some of the finest music in Oxford. Since the establishment of the Merton Choral Foundation in 2008, the Choir's ambition and scope have grown considerably, and the Choral Scholarships that were initially endowed – to provide an honorarium, singing lessons, meals, as well as concert tours in the UK and overseas – have now struggled to keep pace with rising costs and the demands of a much more ambitious programme.

The top-up scheme is targeted at strengthening the existing endowed Choral Scholarships and to offer Merton singers support on a par with other Oxford college choirs. We are seeking donations towards a target of £57,000, a sum which will reinforce the endowment and make it fit for purpose.

£19,000 raised

£38,000 remaining



Discovering Merton's Hebrew and Islamicate manuscripts (Target: £53,000)

Merton is known for its medieval library and collection of Western manuscripts, yet it also houses an invaluable selection of Hebrew and Islamicate manuscripts. These unique works, gathered primarily in the 16th and 17th centuries by Merton scholars, remain largely unknown because they have had only basic 19th-century catalogue descriptions. We propose to catalogue fully, digitise and promote these manuscripts to make them widely discoverable. Key items include a Hebrew dictionary associated with Warden Henry Savile and rare Arabic and Turkish manuscripts donated by scholars such as Robert Huntington. This initiative will preserve and share these cultural treasures, enhancing access for scholars and the public alike.



£33,293 raised

£19,707 remaining



Your Legacy at Merton

Leaving a legacy is one of the most powerful ways that Mertonians can support and shape the College for years to come, ensuring that future generations of students can benefit from the same high standards of teaching and research that have defined Merton for centuries.

A legacy donation costs nothing during your lifetime but can have a lasting effect on the future of the College. Please consider joining the 200+ members of our Founder's Society, whose matriculation dates currently range from 1946 to 2018, to remember Merton in your Will.

If you would like more information, or have anything to notify, please do get in touch: development@merton.ox.ac.uk