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APPLICATION

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COURSES

1. What courses are available at Cambridge?

Cambridge has a total of 31 full-time undergraduate courses ranging from Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic to Veterinary Medicine, and lots in between.

Many of the courses encompass several subjects, with some options available in a number of courses where the subjects overlap. This offers much greater flexibility than more narrowly focused courses elsewhere. Those with a clear sense of the subject they wish to pursue at university can specialise. However, students who are less certain are able to explore the wider subject area before deciding what to focus on.

A list of all the courses available can be found on the course index page:

<https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses>

COLLEGE

1. What is a College?

As well as being members of the University, students are also members of a College. The key functions that the University and Colleges are responsible for are:

The University:	The Colleges:
▪ determines course content ▪ organises lectures, seminars, practicals and projects ▪ sets and marks examinations ▪ awards degrees	▪ admit undergraduate students ▪ organise small-group teaching (supervisions) ▪ the place where you'll live, offering accommodation, and places to eat socialise and meet new people ▪ there to provide pastoral and academic support when you need it

For more information about the College system at Cambridge, and profiles on each of the 29 undergraduate Colleges, have a look at <https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/colleges>

2. How do I choose a College?

It might seem a bit daunting trying to choose a College, but don't worry, Colleges are more alike than they are different! Students on the same course, regardless of their College, are taught together by the academic faculties/departments, and the cross-College moderation procedures mean that your choice of College does not affect your chances of being made an offer.

When choosing a College, we suggest you consider the following:

- **course** – most Colleges take students in all subjects, but there are a handful that don't so check availability (details can be found in the relevant course entries and College profiles)
- **your age** – three Colleges are exclusively for mature students (aged 21 or older), and their facilities are geared accordingly
- **your gender** – two Colleges consider applications from female students only.
- **College size** – number of students
- **appearance and type of accommodation** - eg on-site or College-owned houses
- **particular facilities**
- **personal instinct** – many students can't explain why they were drawn to their College other than it just 'felt right' for them

3. Do I have to choose a College?

No, you don't have to choose a College. If, having looked at the different Colleges, you don't mind which you attend then you don't have to choose – you could make an ['open' application](#) instead. Open applications are allocated to individual Colleges randomly after the closing date. Once allocated to a College your application is treated exactly the same as any other application to that College.

4. Which Colleges are 'best' for which subjects?

There are no Colleges that are 'better' for certain subjects – students on the same course, regardless of College, are taught together by the academic faculties/departments, attending the same lectures, seminars and practicals.

While your College organises your supervision, contrary to what some people believe, the research specialisms of a College's Fellows won't dictate what you can study or guarantee you'll be supervised by them. If a Fellow of your College is an expert in the aspects of the course you've chosen, you may be supervised by them. However, you'll attend supervisions at another College that's where the relevant subject expert is based.

Teaching is a level playing field across the University and is not determined by the College you attend – the differences between the Colleges lie in the ambience, not the educational opportunities.

5. Will choosing a preference College or an open application affect my chances of being made an offer?

For equally well-qualified students, making an open application or applying to a specific College makes no difference to your chances of being made an offer.

Don't agonise over choosing a College, students quickly settle in and really enjoy their College, wherever they end up! Each year, many applicants are made an offer through our pool system. Typically, one in four applicants is placed in our winter pool and, of these, around one in five is made an offer of a place by a different College to the one to the one they originally applied/were allocated to.

6. Can I choose more than one College?

No – you can only make one application to the University, either selecting a preference College or an open application. Applications to more than one College, or to one College and an open application are not allowed

APPLICATION

1. What are the steps involved in an application?

- 1.1. Submit UCAS
- 1.2. Submit virtual Supplementary Application Questionnaire (SAQ)
- 1.3. Register for assessments
- 1.4. Submit your transcript
- 1.5. Attend interviews
- 1.6. Hearing back

1.1 Submit UCAS:

Submit a UCAS application by the following dates the year before you wish to start at the University.

- **20 September:** Deadline for applicants applying for the October interview slots with the international interviews team.
- **15 October:** (interview slots by college) the year before you wish to start at the University.

You can include up to five UK university courses on your UCAS application (please note that it's not possible to apply to both the University of Cambridge and University of Oxford in the same academic year). You must provide information about:

- 1) your education to date - e.g. SPM cert (everything must be translated to English and certified by a trusted party - your secondary school principal/head of Pre-U),
- 2) a personal statement (not more than 4000 characters), and
- 3) an academic reference (normally by your teacher/lecturer).

1.2 Submit virtual Supplementary Application Questionnaire (SAQ):

After you've submitted your UCAS application, you'll receive an email link (in 48 hours) to the SAQ which needs to be completed and submitted by the dates below.

- **26 September 2021:** Deadline for applicants applying for the October interview slots with the international interviews team (overseas interview scheme). ***(DO take note that only a certain subjects can participate in this scheme)***
<https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/international-students/international-interviews>
- **22 October 2021:** SAQ deadline for all other applicants. (for the college interview scheme)

The purpose of the SAQ is to ensure that we have complete and consistent information about all applicants. It also enables us to collect information that's not part of the UCAS application but is helpful when assessing applications, such as an optional Cambridge specific personal statement and the topics you've covered as part of your AS/A Level (or equivalent) courses (which helps our interviewers decide which questions to ask).

1.3 Register for assessments

- **1 October 2021:** If you are applying for Medicine you must be registered with your test centre by 1 October to take the BMAT.
- **15 October 2021:** If you are applying for a course with a pre-interview assessment you must be registered with your test centre by 15 October. This is separate from your UCAS application. If you require special access arrangements you must be registered by your test centre by 30 September to allow time for arrangements to be made.

Most applicants are required to take a subject-specific written admission assessment, either pre-interview or at interview. The assessments are designed to supplement the information in your application and to assess skills, such as writing and language skills, and levels of knowledge and understanding relevant to your course. More information can be found [here](#).

1.4 Submit your transcript

- **20 September 2021:** Deadline for applicants applying for the October interview slots with the international interviews team.
- **22 October 2021:** (interview slots by college) the year before you wish to start at the University.

Most overseas applicants are required to submit a High School Transcript (record of academic achievement in the most recent years of schooling), everything MUST be in English/translated to English and certified by a trusted party (your secondary school principal/head of Pre-U). However, if you take IGCSEs/GCSEs and modular AS/A Levels or Cambridge International A Levels in which you receive a Percentage Uniform Mark (PUM), you won't be required to submit a transcript. More information can be found [here](#).

1.5 Attend interviews

As an international applicant, if you are invited to interview in 2021, this will take place virtually. This may be with the admissions team in the College you applied to (or were allocated to), or you may be interviewed by the international interviews team for certain subjects. You will be given the opportunity to choose as part of the application process.

1.5.1 What do the interviews involve?

Regardless of who interviews you (whether it's your College or the international interviews team), the aims and format of the interview will be the same. You will be expected to meet the same expectations around submission of written work, if required for your course, and to take any pre-interview or at-interview assessments. Your College will notify you of any arrangements for any at-interview assessments (which take place in late November), and you should arrange to register for the early November pre-interview assessment if your course requires it.

Throughout the admissions process, Admissions Tutors and interviewers will be assessing your English language skills as well as your academic ability. You will be expected to have a good standard of spoken English to take part in the interviews. Please check our [English language requirements page](#) for more detail.

1.5.2 College or international team interview?

Interviews with the international interviews team are offered in over-subscribed subjects so that as many candidates as possible receive an interview. To increase the number of interview slots available, The **international interviews team** normally conducts interviews earlier (in **October and November**) during the **daytime or evening in your time zone**.

College interviews are normally scheduled in **December between 9.00am and 5.00pm UK time**. We will confirm who will interview you when you receive your interview invite.

Interviews with the international interviews team are only available in the following high demand subjects (updated to 1/8/2021):

- **Sciences:** Computer Science, Engineering (including Chemical Engineering), Mathematics, Natural Sciences (Biological), Natural Sciences (Physical including Chemical Engineering)
- **Arts:** Economics, Human, Social, and Political Sciences, Law

*Please note that if you are applying to Trinity College for any of these subjects, the College is **not** taking part in the international interviews scheme, so please do not select to be interviewed by the international interviews team when you apply. You can find more details on the College website.*

1.5.3 In-Country interviews (for Malaysians that is in the UK)

In previous years, we have conducted in-country interviews in some locations for international applicants. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic all interviews will be conducted virtually for candidates applying for 2022 entry (or deferred 2023 entry). This means the in-country interviews won't be happening in their usual format this year, but may go ahead again in future years.

Throughout October, November and December: In 2021, all interviews will be conducted virtually and interviews for international applicants generally happen in October, November and December. Information about interviews, including films about preparing and what to expect, can be found on our international interviews webpage.

1.6 Hear back

Cambridge will let everyone know the outcome of their application by the end of January 2022. The possibilities are:

- You may be unsuccessful
- You may be made an offer of a conditional place. This is the most common offer type and is dependent on you achieving particular grades in the qualifications you are taking. These grades will be detailed in your offer so you'll know what you need to achieve in order to secure your place at Cambridge. You will most likely be required to submit a financial proof before being offered a CAS/Unconditional offer.

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENT, QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE

1. What qualifications are acceptable? (for Malaysian)

The majority of applicants apply with **CAIE A-Levels**, although other school/national examinations at an equivalent level including **IB diploma** and **STPM** are also acceptable. (for courses such as AUSMat, Foundations, Diploma are generally not accepted, but please do approach your preferred College's Admission Office to double check) Information about typical requirements for a range of qualifications can be found in Entrance Requirements.

2. Are there any subject or grades requirements?

Admissions Tutors will expect high grades in the subjects most relevant to the course applied for and expect you to have read enough about the course to know what studying it entails. Depending on the course, the typical conditional offers are:

- CIE A-Level : A*AA or A*A*A
- IB Diploma: 40 and 42 points out of 45, with 776 in Higher Level subjects
- STPM: AAA

Whatever school or college system you are being educated in, we require top grades in the highest level qualifications available for school/college students – most successful applicants to the University ultimately exceed the conditions of their offer.

Subject requirements and preferences are given in the relevant course entry. Please also check College-specific requirements with the College(s) you're considering applying to.

<https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses>

3. What's the University's position on exam resits?

3.1 Resitting entire qualifications

Your application will normally only be considered when there were significant extenuating circumstances during your initial teaching or examination period, though the university does recognise the current challenges faced by many students, so extenuating circumstances in relation to resits should be provided via the **Extenuating Circumstances Form**.

3.2 Resitting modules

If you're in a modular examination system, your application is unlikely to be adversely affected by resitting one or two modules; any intention to re-sit such modules should be indicated during the application process. Arrangements for mature applicants may differ – check the mature students section for more information.

3.3 Written exams

Written exams are the main form of assessment used for Cambridge courses and most students will be examined at the end of each year. The University does not offer resits as part of its normal examining process.

4. What's the University's position on qualifications taken early?

Although the University's in favour of stretching and challenging learners, this shouldn't be at the expense of levels of achievement and we'd discourage students from being entered for public examinations early unless top grades will be obtained.

There are also potential disadvantages to taking qualifications early in subjects where the knowledge and understanding will be required at university. Students who haven't studied a key subject in a structured way in the year before they arrive at university can find their knowledge has atrophied.

Where students are successfully taking qualifications early, we'd still want to see evidence that they can cope with a workload equivalent to three A Levels taken simultaneously; and offers are normally made on the qualifications being taken in Year 13 (or equivalent). However, individual circumstances are taken into account when assessing each application – seek advice from a College admissions office if you have particular queries.

****N/B:** If a student has taken A Level Mathematics early and is applying for a course that requires it, please refer to the A Level guidance in the Entrance requirements section.

5. Is there an age requirement?

There's no age requirement for admission to Cambridge, although the vast majority of undergraduates are 18 years or older when they start their course. If you'll be over 21 when you start your course you are classified as a mature student.

All students must demonstrate that they have the maturity and personal skills to cope with university level study, and will be able to gain full benefit from the course when admitted.

Applicants who'll be under 18 on admission should seek advice from a College Admissions Tutor as early as possible to discuss their application. If they're considering Medicine, they should also read the advice regarding age requirements for this course in the Medicine course entry.

Applicants who would be under the age of 16 on admission may also be subject to additional requirements and restrictions in order to comply with legislation.

6. Can I take a gap year and defer my entry?

Around 6% of students accepted to Cambridge take a gap year before starting their studies. This year out can be a useful time in which to improve skills, earn money, travel and generally gain maturity and self-reliance.

You should state on your UCAS application if you wish to defer entry. You'll probably be asked about your plans at the interview, so be prepared to talk about your year out.

****N/B:** If you're applying for Mathematics, most Colleges have a preference for immediate entry. However, if you're applying for Engineering many Colleges generally prefer applicants to take a year out, to gain some industrial experience. Please note that it's not possible to defer entry for the Graduate Course in Medicine.

7. What work experience do I need to have?

Work experience isn't expected or required. However, for vocational courses, such as Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, having some relevant work experience in an appropriate setting is useful and recommended. It demonstrates commitment to your intended profession and gives you the opportunity to acquire greater understanding of the realities and pressures associated with that career.

For students applying for Medicine or Veterinary Medicine for 2022 entry, we're mindful that the COVID-19 pandemic may have prevented you from completing work experience. Consequently, applying without this experience will not disadvantage your application to Cambridge. For further advice about what to do in lieu of work experience, check the course pages: [Medicine](#), [Veterinary Medicine](#).

8. How important are extra-curricular activities?

Our admissions decisions are based on academic criteria (ability and potential) and we expect to see evidence of students' wider engagement with areas of academic interest, such as reading and other explorations relevant to the course for which they've applied. Extra-curricular activities which are of no relevance to the course will not increase a student's chances of receiving an offer.

If, however, particular extra-curricular activities have enabled a student to develop transferable skills, such as organisation or time management, then these can be included in their personal statement. Such activities might include significant caring responsibilities or paid employment, which can help us fully contextualise an application, as well as sport, physical activity, music, drama and volunteering.

Random FAQs

1. What's the most important part of my application?

Every application is assessed holistically – Admissions Tutors consider all of the information available together before making any decisions. No part of an application is considered in isolation; for example, a student's performance at interview alone doesn't determine the outcome of their application.

Although personal statement is one of the main components, students should also be mindful to prepare for interviews and admission tests.

2. What should a personal statement include?

Your personal statement is your opportunity to tell the universities you're applying to, about your subject interest(s) and why you'd be a good student of that subject. The process of writing your personal statement can also help you to better understand your academic interests and motivations.

UCAS provides advice about what to include in your personal statement and you should refer to their website in the first instance. Your school/college may also be able to offer advice about what to include.

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/how-write-ucas-undergraduate-personal-statement>

<https://www.ucas.com/connect/blogs/personal-statements-quick-fire-questions-answered>

At Cambridge, all admissions decisions are based solely on academic criteria – ability and potential. Therefore, in their personal statement, we're looking for applicants to:

- explain their reasons for wanting to study the subject at university
- demonstrate enthusiasm for and commitment to their chosen course
- express any particular interests(s) within the field
- outline how they've pursued their interest in the subject in their own time

Such information is often (but not guaranteed) used as a basis for discussion at interview (if interviewed). So please pls plz pleaz, revise/look back at your personal statement a day or two before the actual interview to make sure you know/understand everything you wrote in it.

3. Will I be interviewed?

Everyone with a realistic chance of being offered a place is invited to take part in an interview – in previous years that has been around 75 per cent of Home(UK) applicants, although this varies by course. So, if you apply, it is very likely that you will be invited to Cambridge for an admissions interview (although due to the level of competition for places, there are applicants each year who are not interviewed).

For Internationals, we CUMaS do not have an exact figure on the number of Malaysian applicants getting to the interview stage but just try your best!!

There are 2 different types of interviews - the overseas scheme and the college based scheme. (for more information, please refer to [1.5 Attend interviews](#) section in the application process part above)

****N/B:** Not all applicants who are interviewed will be successful (made an offer of a place), but all those who are made an offer will have been interviewed.

4. Will I have to sit a written assessment?

You will usually be required to sit a subject-specific written assessment either pre-interview or at-interview. If your course has a pre-interview assessment you will need to be registered in advance by your school or college. If your course has an at-interview assessment your College will make the arrangements, usually for the same day as your interview(s).

5. Can I transfer to Cambridge from another university?

Cambridge Colleges will only, as a matter of principle, consider applications from students enrolled in a degree course at other UK universities in very exceptional circumstances.

Any application to study at Cambridge would need strong support from your Course Director or other academic tutor at your current university. A reference or letter of recommendation from that person to the Cambridge College would be required, and only then can a Cambridge College consider an application. All such applications are still subject to the same academic assessment as any other application to the University.

We do have a system of admitting graduates from other universities to do a second undergraduate degree as an affiliated student at Cambridge, in which case the course takes a year less than usual.

6. Can I apply to both Oxford and Cambridge?

It's not possible to apply to both the University of Cambridge and the University of Oxford in the same year.

7. If my application is unsuccessful, can I reapply?

It is possible for students to reapply to the University, either the **following year or in a future year**. If your application is unsuccessful and you think you may wish to reapply, you're strongly advised to request feedback on your original application as soon after you're notified of our decision as possible.

8. Eng requirement

IELTS Academic1 – normally a minimum overall grade of 7.5, with 7.0 or above in each element

TOEFL Internet Based Test (IBT) – normally a minimum overall score of 110, with 25 or above in each element

Cambridge English: C2 Proficiency – accepted with a minimum overall score of 200, with no element lower than 185.

Cambridge English: C1 Advanced – accepted with a minimum overall score of 193, with no element lower than 185, plus an assessment by the Language Centre. Following assessment the University Language Centre may advise further action from the applicant (e.g. enrolment at one of the Language Centre courses, or completion of an IELTS test).

9. 4 a levels subject vs 3 a levels

The typical offers are based on students taking three A Levels together in Year 13, and most Cambridge applicants are studying three or four A Level subjects in Years 12 and 13. This is usually sufficient to show breadth of interests and ability to manage a range of differing academic tasks. We'd rather applicants develop broader and deeper knowledge of the subjects most relevant/closest to their chosen course than accumulate additional A Levels.

Applicants taking four subjects won't normally be at an advantage compared with those taking three, although competitive applicants for STEM courses often have Further Mathematics as a fourth subject.

For courses where A Level Mathematics is required by all Colleges – Computer Science, Economics, Engineering, physical sciences options in Natural Sciences – students taking A Level Mathematics in Year 12, and A Level Further Mathematics and only one other A Level in Year 13 will be considered.

In such cases, individual circumstances will be taken into account; including the context of your application, the combination of A Level subjects, the grade achieved in the early A Level, and your engagement with other relevant subjects in Year 13 in and beyond the classroom.

We recommend you seek advice from a College admissions office, and you should also consider potential implications for your other university options.

If you wish to apply for our Mathematics course, you should refer to the entry requirements guidance on the course page.

10. What if I did not take the subject recommended for my course in a levels?

This is not a very typical case but does happen a lot of the time, be it that you decided to switch course mid way or you mislook the course requirement for your respective course. This is pretty normal, but might put you in a slight disadvantage. Personal statement and virtual SAQ is a place for you to shine as that is the only opportunity (before they decide to offer you an interview) for you to let Cambridge know that you are passionate about the course you are applying to and you are equally a worthy or a 'worthier' candidate.

11. International Fees and Costs

As an international student at Cambridge, there are three costs you need to consider. These are your:

- Tuition fees: ranges from £22k - £58k depending on your course
- College fees: around £10k

- Living expenses: a minimum estimation of £11k

More detailed information can be found [here](#).

You will most likely be staying with your college throughout the whole 4 years and rents differ by each college. (but an average of £150 per month is a safe estimate). Foodwise, you could expect to fork out £4 for a decent main course (or £8 if you decide to eat out). The rest is some miscellaneous fee such as buying a bike, cooking utensils, cutlery, electrical appliances, and wearables.

12. Scholarships

At Cambridge, the financial support for international students are normally partial contributions and means-tested. The most common support at the university is the Cambridge Trust, which can only be applied after an offer has been secured. Apart from that, certain colleges offer additional financial support for international students for which more information can be found in their [respective admission websites](#).

We have compiled [a list of scholarships available](#) for Malaysians wishing to further their studies in Cambridge, along with their main criterias.