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WELCOME TO CHRIST'S

Welcome to the Christ's Alternative Prospectus and thank you for picking this little guide up, written entirely by current undergraduate students for prospective students!

Christ's is one of 29 undergraduate Colleges that make up the University of Cambridge. In addition to being a member of the University, you are also a member of a College. The closest parallel to a College is Halls of Residences in other universities, but Colleges are also so much more than that – they are the centre of your student life whilst you are here and where your accommodation, facilities and, of course, your friends are! Whilst your course is the same no matter which College you are at, each College varies in size, location, facilities, community, quirks and atmosphere! As we had to make the same decisions as you not that long ago, we remember well how difficult a choice it can often be to pick a College so we have compiled this guide to try answer any questions you may have and help you make informed decisions. We hope that it helps you get a feel for what living and studying at Christ's is really like and why we love it!

We also know that there are many myths and stereotypes that surround Cambridge here – as well as how wrong they are! So our aim here is to show you the reality of studying at Christ's, and Cambridge in general, from undergraduate students who really live it. Whilst we do work hard here at Cambridge, we certainly don't spend all our time in the

library – with so many sports to play, societies to join and friends to make, Cambridge is so much more than just your degree! And at Cambridge, there really is no 'typical' student – the only common factor is that everyone is passionate about their subject!

We've tried to cover as much ground as possible, from accommodation and welfare to student profiles and societies but if you have any questions at all about life at Christ's or Cambridge in general, we would love to hear from you so please do get in touch at access@thejcr.co.uk. We hope to see you at Christ's soon!

CHAYA KUPPERMAN

JCR Access team
access@thejcr.co.uk

WHY CHRIST'S? TOP TEN

1. Location, Location, Location!
2. Size and Atmosphere: we are a medium sized college with about 125 undergraduates in each year – not too small but not too big either! This means Christ's has a great atmosphere and close-knit community.
3. Age and Tradition: Christ's is older than the USA (by 271 years!). We have three beautiful courts and a huge Fellows' Garden to relax in, along with a gorgeous chapel and magnificent formal hall!
4. Alumni: Charles Darwin, John Milton, Sacha Baron Cohen, Jagadish Chandra Bose, Simon Sharma, Yusuf Hamied, Andy Parsons, and many more!
5. Facilities: a free to use on-site gym, squash court, professional-standard theatre, outdoor swimming pool, TV room, JCR Common Room, college bar (buttery), music room, sports ground and our wonderful boathouse along the river (with the shortest college-boathouse distance in Cambridge!) means we always have something to do in our spare time!
6. Living: single-room accommodation is guaranteed for the duration of your degree, either in college or in nearby college-owned houses to share with friends. There's a wide range of room options, from en-suite rooms to massive sets – choices not every college is lucky enough to have!

the best thing about Christ's
is the friendly, supportive and
unpretentious atmosphere

Sophie, 2nd Year HSPS student from London

7. Fun: regular bops (themed parties in college) and our spectacular May Ball (best night of your life!) are highlights, but we have smaller events throughout the year, from Bridgemas (Cambridge Christmas) Formal, to Halloween pumpkin carving contests, first-year Hunger Games and many more!
8. Support: Christ's is an incredibly diverse college with an amazing support network, ranging from your personal tutor, to the welfare officers, round-the-clock porters, to the college Nurse (she will never let you leave without at least a bagful of sweets!) and our wonderful college Chaplain (who regularly gives donuts and scones!).
9. Generosity: bursaries, book grants, travel grants, free garden parties are just some examples of the way Christ's is always financially supporting everyone!
10. It's impossible to fit of the reasons in just 10 points – from the sports on offer to the college cat Rocket, the huge variety of societies or the college family system, there is just so much more that makes Christ's what it is!

WHY CHRIST'S? LOCATION

Christ's is slap-bang in the middle of Cambridge (but if you don't believe us, type Cambridge into Google Maps and see where the pin lands!)

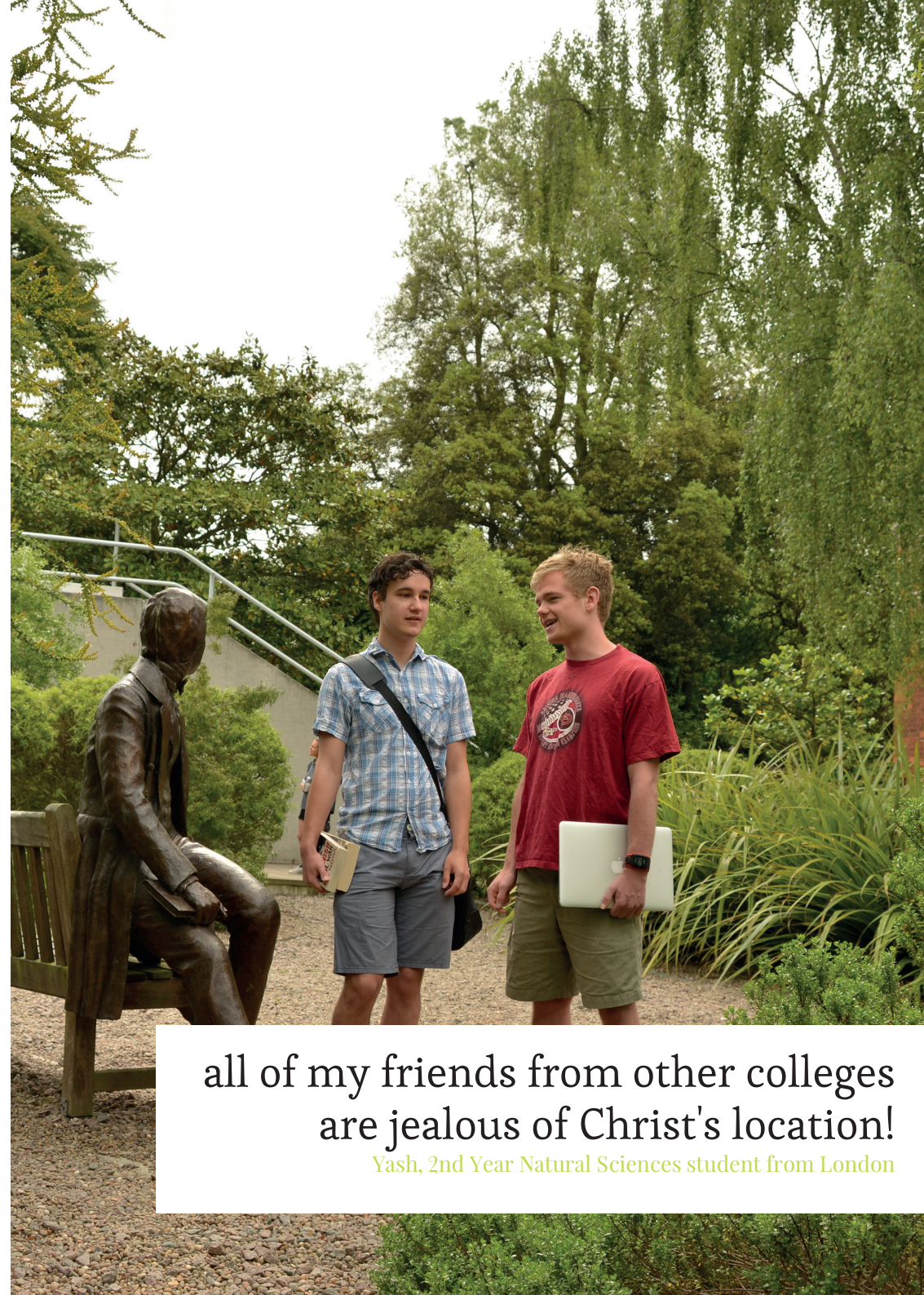
We are perfectly situated for everywhere you would want to go, whether that's lectures, faculties, shops, cafés, pubs, nightclubs, sports grounds and more.

This also means transport is very cheap as everywhere can be reached by bike or on foot very quickly, it's very rare that you'll need to use public transport, if ever! The great thing is that despite its prime location, the moment you walk through the Great Gate you'll be amazed at how serene college grounds are!

How long to the nearest _____?

- Supermarket: 3 minutes (Sainsbury's)
- Bank: 11 seconds (Metro/HSBC)
- Café: 14 seconds (Eat)
- Nightclub: 24 seconds (Cindies)
- Shopping centre: 32 seconds (Grand Arcade)
- GP/Pharmacy: 31 seconds (Boots/Newnham Walk Surgery)
- Take Away: 15 seconds (Wasabi)
- Nandos/Wagamama/Spoons/Revs: 4 minutes
- Park: 10 seconds (Christ's Pieces)

These have all been tried and tested at a leisurely pace!



all of my friends from other colleges
are jealous of Christ's location!

Yash, 2nd Year Natural Sciences student from London

LIFE AT CHRIST'S EAT

At Christ's, you are truly spoilt for choice when it comes to food!

Upper Hall is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner (as well as a lovely brunch on weekends) serving different meat, fish, veggie and vegan options! Priced at approximately £4.50 for a hot meal (with unlimited sides!), this is an easy, cheap and cheerful option to have at your doorstep and also a great chance to meet with friends and catch up over food!

We also have formal hall dining available every evening other than Saturday – this is when you get a chance to dress up a bit and wear the Harry Potter-esque gowns in a beautiful setting! Although it's slightly pricier at around £10 a meal, it's a three-course meal with fancier food. You can bring your own wine and it's always a fun and lively event! People usually attend formal hall dinners to celebrate birthdays, special events put on by societies or the JCR or for when family or friends from home come to visit and you want to give them the Cambridge experience!

All accommodation comes with gyp rooms, which are shared kitchen facilities – these vary in size and standard but all of them have basic cooking facilities (microwave, toaster, kettle, hob) which makes them a fantastic resource for whipping up a snack or meal if you fancy cooking yourself for a change! And with so many shops, cafés, take-outs and restaurants nearby, it's easy to pop out for ingredients or a quick bite at one of the dozens of places around Christ's!

christ's never fails to make me feel
happy and comfortable - within the
first week, the end of the day of lectures
meant getting to go 'home'

Mira, 2nd Year Education student from Mumbai



LIFE AT CHRIST'S

SLEEP

Christ's accommodation is guaranteed for your full undergraduate course, either within college grounds or in college-owned housing located just a few minutes away. Rooms are ranked in different price bands dependent on size, whether it's an en-suite or not etc.

First years get to express their preferences for room allocation and the Accommodation Office always do their best to try meet room requests. As all first-year accommodation is within college, it's a great way to get to make friends from all years and subjects! After that, you enter into a ballot system with friends and in second year you can choose to live in one of the college-owned houses nearby.

Rooms in Christ's range from massive wooden-panelled sets in the old parts of college to modern en-suites – not all rooms are en-suites but even when you do share a bathroom, it's never too crowded and it's extremely rare that you have to wait to use the shower!

All rooms have excellent facilities including internet access, huge desks and kitchen spaces (known as gyp rooms) which are usually shared between 3-8 people and are all equipped with a fridge, microwave, hob, toaster and kettle and laundry machines and dryers nearby.



I can't believe how quickly Christ's has become my home! Walking through college in the morning, seeing all the friendly faces around and greeting all the friends you bump into never fails to put a smile on my face - it's my favourite way to start the day!

Lily, 2nd Year English student from Brighton

LIFE AT CHRIST'S WORK

Studying at Cambridge might seem daunting at first but you have been accepted to study here which means that you have what it takes to prosper in your studies! There really is no need to worry – it's true that you may be challenged at first but soon you will get into a comfortable routine that works for you and lets you fit in time to socialise with friends, get involved with societies and relax!

One of the unique things about studying at Cambridge is that the teaching is divided between a faculty and the college. Lectures are organised by the university and are attended by students studying that subject from all the different colleges, so class sizes range from 20 to over 100 students, depending on your course. Supervisions, on the other hand, are organised by each individual college – these are either small group or one-to-one discussions with your supervisor - supervisions are what make Cambridge different and it can be really exciting to discuss work you've done with someone who is an expert in their field! Christ's is traditionally a very strong college academically, but this is because we are known to have amazing teaching rather than because everyone's a workaholic!

Structured learning time will vary between subjects and you will also have work to do outside of your contact hours, such as reading around your subject or writing essays but the main thing is not to worry about the workload – it's



definitely manageable and you will be amazed at your own organisational skills!

Your academic progress will be monitored by your Director of Studies, usually an academic in the field you're studying at your college. They are also always there to support you with anything related to your studies. At Christ's there is a big library that you can use whenever you want! The librarians are very helpful – if you need to borrow a book that the college doesn't already have you just need to tell them and they will usually get it for you within a day or two! So as you can see Christ's is a very supportive College with staff that are devoted to helping you excel in your studies!

LIFE AT CHRIST'S PLAY

Regardless of experience, Christ's is the place to get involved and try out different sports. Teams in college also provide the opportunity for students to play sports at a variety of levels, and contain every skill level from complete beginner through to university-level. Generally speaking, if you're not that experienced or don't want to play with too much time commitments, college sports are a fun way to get involved and meet people from different subjects and years – if you're particularly dedicated and skilled, you can play for Cambridge at a university level!

New students at Christ's are encouraged to try out new sports and Cambridge really does cater for almost every single sport – rowing, football, hockey, netball, rugby and lacrosse are just some of the sports played in Christ's and Cambridge (as well as the more obscure ones such as ultimate Frisbee and Quidditch!). Every year Christ's students are awarded colours based on their commitment to college-level sports, rewarding students for their dedication to the various teams within Christ's, regardless of skill. Christ's has had some great sporting success in recent years, and the many different college sports teams all add to the community spirit!

We also have our own gym and squash court on site, unlike most colleges. The boathouse is only a 5-minute cycle ride away, the shortest college-boathouse distance in Cambridge, and our sport grounds are only 15-minutes away by bike, complete with football, rugby, cricket and hockey pitches.

getting involved with college sport is something I really recommend. There are so many different things on offer, and there's always space for you on a team no matter whether you're a beginner or seasoned competitor. It's also a great way to make friends from different years throughout college.

Hugh, 3rd Year Economist from West Sussex



LIFE AT CHRIST'S

RELAX

You're never expected to just stay in your room and one of the best things about Christ's is that there are so many places where you can just hang out.

- » BATTERY: Students spend a lot of time here – it's a café and common room during the day, with comfy sofas and flat-screen TV, and in the evening it becomes the bar with reasonably priced alcoholic /non-alcoholic drinks. It's a great way to socialise with friends throughout the day and in the evenings!
- » JCR: Another popular spot, complete with a TV and Xbox, pool table, table tennis and a ton of board games to play as you chill on the sofas and bean bags with your friends!
- » TV room: with a huge TV and super-comfy sofas, this is the spot to watch your favourite TV show or sports – you should see the excitement when big matches are live on the screen.
- » Fellows' Garden: This garden is a huge, beautiful spot to sunbathe and unwind in the summer with friends! It's also home to the famous Milton Mulberry Tree, which is said to have been planted the same year John Milton was born and also where he relaxed!

the best thing about Christ's is the people. Everyone is so lovely and I've made so many friends for life, from all over the world!

Jasmine, 2nd Year Medic student from Essex

- » Outdoor swimming pool: Christ's is home to the oldest outdoor swimming pool in the UK and is one of only three colleges with an outdoor pool. It's a college tradition for students to jump in fully dressed once exams are over but otherwise students often use this as a sunbathing spot (and swimming of course, for those who can brave the cold!)
- » May Balls: Although we only have May Balls every other year, these are one of the most incredible events to attend – organised by Christ's students, this is a huge, all-night ball held within college and is a once-in-a-lifetime experience!





STUDENT PROFILE

HANNAH

2nd Year Historian from Manchester

Christ's: Why did you pick Christ's?

Hannah: I visited Christ's on an Open Day and it just seemed so perfect for me. The size of the college is great: it is small enough that you are able to know everybody in your year, and lots of people in the years above and below, but not claustrophobic! The location of the college is amazing: we are so central and all the accommodation for all three years is so close to college and all the facilities in the town centre (Sainsburys being the most important of course). The fact that the college itself is so beautiful is also a bonus: first court is so old and pretty, and the fellows garden is really tranquil and a great place to spend time with to get out of the busy atmosphere of the town.

C: And why Cambridge?

H: I never considered applying to Cambridge until one of my teachers suggested I apply when I was in lower sixth. Prior to coming on an open day I had thought that Cambridge was an unreachable and isolated place, but this is so not the case!

Although it is an incredibly academic university, the amount of support that students are offered from the collegiate system was something that really appealed to me, as was the beauty of the city itself.

C: What do you like about your subject?

H: The reason I chose to study history is simply because I loved it in school, and had the belief that if I was going to study something for three years, there wasn't much point if I didn't enjoy it! The History course at Cambridge is fantastic: you are encouraged to explore areas of history you wouldn't have encountered at school, and allows you to explore the history of the entire world. During my first year I studied medieval history which was brilliant, as I had never studied anything like it before, and global history, which enabled me to study the history of areas of the world I would love to visit and learn about, such as China, Japan and Vietnam. You can approach subjects in detail with a very specific focus, as well as exploring huge thematic ideas such as 'global Islam throughout the twentieth century', the course allows you to really do everything you want.

C: Any advice for those applying to Cambridge?

H: If you feel cautious about applying to Cambridge, just bite the bullet and apply! I almost chose not to, but getting in and coming here has been the best thing to ever happen to me. Cambridge really doesn't live up to any negative stereotypes you may hear so please don't be misled by them! It is truly a fantastic place to live and study. The interview process is not as scary as everyone thinks: your interviewers just want to help you!

LIFE AT CHRIST'S

GET INVOLVED

With over 750 societies across Cambridge, and dozens within Christ's itself, it's guaranteed that you'll find fantastic opportunities to spend your free time on the things you love. Whatever you're interested in, at whatever level, you'll find people who enjoy the same activities and are eager to get started. Christ's is home to a myriad of wonderful societies of all kinds, ensuring that Cambridge life can be about so much more than your degree alone. In the unlikely event that you can't find a society already established relating to your interests, you can set one up yourself – Christ's is very generous with financial support for societies and in the past year alone at Christ's, a new art society, horticultural society and politics society have been established by students!

Even if you've never considered trying an activity before, university is the place to start. You'll be joined by dozens of other beginners, and many students with no prior experience in a skill emerge having thoroughly enjoyed their time honing it, often continuing into later life. Societies are also a great way to meet people beyond the lecture hall and accommodation block, ensuring that you'll find those with similar interests to yourself, and helping you to build friendships that will outlast your time at Cambridge.

Christ's is lucky to be surrounded by great facilities and open spaces for sport, we have a theatre for dramatic productions,

and a beautiful chapel for musical performances. With such a wonderful site, it is no surprise that so many brilliant communities have flourished here.

Christ's Acting and Drama Society (CADS) is one of the friendliest, low-intensity theatre societies in Cambridge, so it's perfect for students interested in the theatre at any level – regardless of experience. We put on a couple of shows every term, from student-written pantos to Shakespeare, and there's so much scope for students to put on whatever they would like without having to go through a highly competitive committee vote.

– Georgia, 2nd Year English student from Southampton and President of CADS



Art & Chill is the Christ's College Art Society; we run a weekly session usually in the studio in Christ's Visual Arts Centre where we provide snacks, materials and a super chill atmosphere! Our sessions are open to everyone to come and do something creative to unwind, whether they are an experienced artist or are just there to try something new.

– Arianna, Second Year History of Art student from London and Art & Chill Committee Member

I've loved getting involved in the huge range of societies at Cambridge. I'm currently on the India Society Committee (IndiaSoc) and am in the process of planning our Annual Ball, which is so exciting!

– Jasmine, 2nd Year Medic student from Essex and Publicity Officer for IndiaSoc

Being part of the Boat Club at Christ's has had such an impact on my time in Cambridge – rowing itself is all about teamwork, pushing your own limits and having a lot of fun in training, racing, eating and laughing!

Rowing in Cambridge is utterly unique – there are so many crews to compete against on one river and opportunities to take on the rest of the country too! As well as developing a load of skills, I'm so thankful for the friendships forged through rowing.

– Emily, Classics student from York





DAY IN THE LIFE

HUMANITIES

Lily, 2nd English student from Brighton

MORNING

Arts students generally have around 5-10 lectures a week. These are usually between 9am and 1pm, so most mornings find little groups of students chatting together as they set off to lectures from college. The ten-minute commute from Christ's to the Sidgwick humanities site (the home of faculties for English, History, Law, MML, Classics, and many more) has simply got to be one of the most beautiful in the world.

You step from the tranquillity of early-morning Christ's into the bustling city centre and the daily market in the old town square, and then enter into the grounds of the stunning King's College passing the world-famous chapel and crossing the River Cam. It's the perfect inspirational start to your day, where you'll choose from a wide selection of lecture topics to suit your work that week, and listen to the world experts in their field perform at their best for you in the lecture theatres – you can even drop into lectures for courses you don't study, if you're interested.

AFTERNOON

After the lectures are done the rest of your day is quite often free, except for a supervision or two every week and the occasional class or seminar. Supervisions and classes are usually about an hour or two and, at their best, are the most intensely exhilarating learning experience of your intellectual life. If you haven't got any booked in, however, you're free to spend the afternoon as you please – which most days will be studying your way through your weekly reading list. Many students stay on their lecture site to lunch with friends and study in the faculty or university buildings there, while others head back to Christ's library, their room, or a local coffee shop.

Arts students spend a lot of time in private study, and you'll soon get to know all your favourite spots across the city: there really is something to suit everyone, from the airy and sophisticated grandeur of the University Library Reading Room to a secluded window seat in a lively city-centre cafe.

EVENING

The relatively slight number of contact hours means your evenings, much like afternoons, are flexible – every detail of how you study is up to you. This leaves you plenty of time to fit in sports, music, drama, journalism, cinema, being creative, learning languages, and any other extracurricular and leisure activities you'd like to make time for.





DAY IN THE LIFE

SCIENCE

Kenki, 3rd Year Medic from London

MORNING

A typical morning for a medic is usually taken up by lectures so I'll usually head over there with friends, though for some subjects, including Medicine, there are practicals too. Natural Science students and Engineers may have slightly more scheduled hours but less set work, so in the end the workload will probably be similar. In later years, the number of lectures will vary depending on the courses and modules you choose, but generally most of the morning is spend either in lectures or in the lab.

AFTERNOON

After grabbing lunch with some medic friends or going back to college to eat and catch up with friends from other subjects, I'll usually try work through my lecture notes for my supervisions later on or write up any set essays. Apart from the scheduled hours, we often get set work from our supervisors. It's good to try keep on top of your lectures so that you are able to contribute in supervisions/do not have to cram in the exam season.

If you work constantly throughout the term and prioritise/plan well, you can really get on top of your work whilst enjoying extracurricular activities (some medics do 7 sports!). I have around 25 contact hours a week, so around 4-5 hours a day meaning that if my day starts at 9am I may often be done by 1pm, with maybe one supervision later on. The supervisors at Christ's are particularly incredible - this is important because they are the people who know what you need to know both for exams and for your future careers, allowing you to focus on what is important and cutting down your workload significantly.

EVENING

In the evenings I'll usually meet up again with friends to get food from Upper hall or sometimes go out to eat as there are so many places nearby! I try make use of the college gym in the evenings, make sure I have everything sorted for tomorrow and go over any remaining lecture notes and then head over to the Buttery (college bar) to see friends for a few drinks.

The fantastic thing about Christ's is that there is a really strong sense of community amongst the science students here. We all have subject dinners and we often have subject socials as well (medics have about 3 a term). Normally, us medics go as a massive group (all years) to a Thai restaurant with a bottle of wine and then go out afterwards. It's really great as you can meet people doing your subject from the older years who know exactly what you're going through meaning that they can give a lot of advice and joke about certain lectures and modules! Medic dinners and socials were probably one of the most amusing and fun nights I've had at Cambridge!

THINGS TO DO IN CAMBRIDGE

Life at Christ's is vibrant and varied, but Cambridge itself also has so much to offer beyond the college walls! Although one of the beauties of Cambridge is that there are endless new places to explore and hidden gems to discover, we've compiled a list of just some of the things we'd recommend you do!

- It would be criminal to experience Cambridge without hopping on a punt at some point. See the city from the river, sit back and float along with a picnic or try your hand at steering- it's trickier than it looks!
- For the culture vultures, the (free!) Fitzwilliam Museum is well worth a visit. Home to an impressive collection, it is a museum of international stature.
- Get out in the fresh air! Cambridge is home to lots of green space. Jesus Green, Christ's Pieces and Parker's Piece are just minutes away from the college.
- If it's nature you're looking for, make a visit to the Botanic Garden. Get in for free with your Cambridge university card and take some photos of the rare species on parade.
- If you fancy a stroll further afield, head to Grantchester Meadows. Carry on towards the village and drop into The Orchard Tearoom, the haunt of the Bloomsbury Group, Alan Turing, Stephen Fry and Bertrand Russell to name but a few, for a cream tea or a piece of cake.

- Remember, remember that there is a brilliant firework display just a stone's throw from Christ's on Midsummer Common each Bonfire Night. Christmas carol concerts take place around the city, whilst 'Bridgemas' (Cambridge Christmas) is taken seriously at Christ's, with lots of seasonal events on offer.
- Christ's is a great place to be if you plan to get your dancing shoes on and sample some of Cambridge's nightlife, with the most reputable of Cambridge clubs just outside the college walls.
- If clubbing isn't your scene, many impressive classical concerts are held in the city's churches, while the Corn Exchange and Junction offer larger venues for jazz, rock, pop and comedy acts.
- If a quiet pint is more your thing, Christ's Buttery turns into a cosy college bar in the evening, whilst Cambridge is awash with pubs. King Street is a great choice for Christ's local establishments, whilst The Eagle, The Mitre and The Granta are firm favourites.





STUDENT PROFILE

PAGE

3rd Year Law student from Bristol

Christ's: Tell us a bit about your subject

Page: I'm currently in my third year studying Law, having studied Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic for 2 years in Part I. It's a slightly more unusual combination (with most students just studying one subject for their undergraduate course), but it is also possible to make connections across courses very easily in Cambridge (my legal history dissertation led me to make the change), whether that be via borrowing papers from other faculties or combining parts of tripos (the name for a Cambridge course). The key focus is pursuing what you're interested in and course structure tries to facilitate that as much as possible here.

C: Why did you pick Christ's?

P: Having visited Christ's on an open day in the autumn before applying, I was struck by the warm, friendly atmosphere from the porters, student helpers, admissions staff and just everyone in the college who was helpful. The welcoming

atmosphere combined with the central location, excellent resources on site (including the law library, 24 hour main library, all accommodation for your 3 year degree guaranteed on site/houses immediately behind college), as well as the range of extra-curricular opportunities meant that it felt like a very comfortable fit.

After three years, these initial impressions have definitely been confirmed. Christ's has something for everyone—it is a really good size for a close college community, with lots of connections outside of college too. Resources on site (as well as the beautiful buildings and gardens) make it an excellent working and social environment.

If you have been thinking about Cambridge for a while, or you don't think it is a space for you at all and it seems unfamiliar, Christ's is a very good fit for everyone in terms of size, location, environment (there's tradition, but not too much and you can engage with it as much, as little and as critically as you like) – Christ's is somewhere anyone with any range of interests, degree and non-degree related, can enjoy their time in Cambridge.

C: What would you say are the best and worst parts about studying at Cambridge?

P: By far the best part about Cambridge is the range of opportunity to learn in your degree and beyond. There are opportunities to learn from each other and the lifelong friendships you form, from academics engaging as your supervisor or tutor, from lectures, from living on your own (at the same time very much supported by the collegiate system) and an astounding number of extra-curricular and career

opportunities. The counter to this is that there are too many opportunities for the time available, but this helps you to focus in on what you truly value and it is still possible to be involved with a range of activities at college/faculty/university wide level. It's all about maintaining a balance (another important skill that Cambridge and university in general help you to learn!)

C: What advice would you give to those considering applying?

P: The application process can be a long but exciting process in terms of the eventual outcome. Try to enjoy it as much as you can (I appreciate it can be difficult to enjoy form filling, but I promise it's worth it in the end!)

Apply for what you enjoy—nothing is more compelling in a personal statement, in interview and most importantly, a better use of three or more years of your life than studying what you truly enjoy and value. Wherever you end up, if you follow what genuinely interests you, it will be the most productive use of your time and the best investment for the future. If you have any questions, always ask – the admissions team at Christ's are phenomenal and can easily be contacted via email and are also incredibly active on social media/online forums—they want to help all year round so do get in touch if there's anything that you/your parents/teachers are unsure about.





STUDENT PROFILE

PAO

1st Year Land Economy student from Bangkok

Christ's: Tell us a bit about your subject

Pao: I was born and raised in Bangkok, where I went to an American international school. I applied to read Land Economy, which is unique because most universities don't offer the course and it is a very varied, interdisciplinary, and practical course, combining environment, geography, economics, law, and policy. Another good thing about being a Land Ec is there are less contact hours than some of the other subjects which means I have the time to join numerous societies, take up sports and pursue interests and opportunities. For example, in addition to taking on a number of society positions, I'm currently writing for a student newspaper and an agricultural policy paper as well as playing badminton and jazz piano for Christ's, and working to create sustainable habitats for bees. Cambridge has opened up so many opportunities for me to explore my interests!

C: Why did you pick Christ's?

P: Although I didn't get a chance to visit Christ's before applying, there were still a number of reasons that influenced my decision. Firstly, Christ's is academically very strong yet is also known for being extremely friendly! Two, its located right in the centre of Cambridge. Three, the accommodation is guaranteed for all three years and generally of a very high standard. Four, the excellent facilities: the squash court, the pool, the gym, the 24-hour library, the JCR and TV rooms, unlimited salad bar, and a Bechstein grand piano (yes, I went that deep into my research). Having gotten here, my suspicions were wonderfully confirmed... and more! The perks went far beyond those objective factors, and as everyone here will tell you, the vibe is warm and friendly from the first, half-nervous word with the porters to the late-night conversations in the JCR room. The college's size and diversity strikes a perfect balance between casual and traditional and between academic and social, and the architecture is stunning. Finally, there really is no "typical Christ's student"; the uniting factor is that everyone is passionate and excellent at what they do, yet humble and helpful about everything.

C: Any advice for those thinking of applying?

P: Cambridge looks at far more than just your grades or your excellence in a number of subjects; what is unique about Cambridge is its emphasis on the interview. Crucially, the interview is nothing more than a supervision. It is an opportunity to show how you think – and it is also an amazing chance to talk to someone who loves your subject as much as you do so try enjoy it!



STUDENT PROFILE

GERARD

4th Year Medic student from Birmingham

Christ's: Tell us about yourself.

Gerard: I'm originally from north Birmingham where I went to a small comprehensive school and sixth form. I studied Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Maths and French for A-Level and I hoped to study some form of scientific degree after leaving school. Even at Sixth form, I was still uncertain as to what exactly I wanted to do at University however I'm so glad I finally picked Medicine! In my spare time, I enjoy participating in the Drama and Theatre societies as well as cycling around Cambridge.

C: Why did you pick Christ's?

G: When I came to Cambridge on the Open Day, I had absolutely no idea which college I wanted to apply to or even how Colleges work! I ran around the town trying to see as many colleges as possible before eventually settling on the first college I came to, Christ's. I really liked how central the College was whilst how quiet and calm it could be once you pass through the front gate. Christ's also has all the facilities needed for a

College packed into one site, almost every student lives within the college walls and everyone is always so friendly to each other.

C: How did you find your first term at Christ's?

G: Coming to University is always a huge adjustment compared to school but I feel that the college system really helps you settle in quickly. Christ's is the perfect size that within a few weeks, you know almost everyone in college! Everyone is also in the same situation and so keen to make friends that by the end of the first term, it feels like you've known everyone for years. Christ's also allows you to make friends with people outside your subject which really helps keep the work balanced.

C: What opportunities does Christ's offer?

G: No matter what your interests, it seems Christ's is able to offer something to everyone. We have active music, drama and arts societies as well as a full set of sports teams within the college. We also have a number of subject societies (such as the Science or History society) which run interesting talks on topics for students to attend. All the societies in the college are very welcoming and always on the lookout for new members. Christ's is also very generous with its welfare and funding support including a number of bursaries. For the last two years I've received a travel bursary from Christ's to allow me to go on trips to France and Austria which I otherwise could not afford.

C: What advice would you have for applicants?

G: Applying to university can be stressful and it can seem

that applying to Cambridge is even more stressful! Not many people from my school applied to Cambridge and many of the school staff didn't really know how to help me apply however Cambridge has loads of great resources on the web detailing all the information needed to make the application, from filling in the UCAS form to going to the interview. Choose a subject you really enjoy and read as much as you can about it. I would also check to see if there are any subject-specific requirements such as A-levels or pre-admission tests. Finally, the admissions staff at Christ's are super friendly and always ready to answer any questions!

christ's is the goldilocks college in terms of size so you'll never feel overwhelmed with all the students but you can still blend into the background if you want. when almost everything you'll need is within a stone's throw of the college, why choose anywhere else?!

Shadab, 2nd Year Natural Sciences student from Cardiff



UNDERSTANDING CAM

ACRONYMS

One of the stranger things about Cambridge is that we love abbreviations and acronyms. If a phrase/word can be shortened, it is guaranteed to happen. Below is a list some of the mostly commonly used abbreviations used around Cambridge to help you navigate your way!

AMES: Asian and Middle Eastern Studies - A subject that allows you to study the history, philosophy, religion and languages of Asia and the Middle East. Language options include the chance to learn Mandarin, Japanese or Arabic.

ASNAC: Anglo Saxon Norse and Celtic - This is a very unique subject at Cambridge, and is also really broad. It involves history (specifically Anglo Saxon and Nordic History), languages (you have the option to learn old Irish, welsh or old Nordic languages) and philosophy.

Bop: A college event organised by the JCR held a couple of times a term, involving cheesy music, drinking and fancy dress!
Buttery: The college bar.

Cindies: Actually called Ballare but known affectionately by students as Cindies, this is one of the four main Cambridge clubs.

College: These are the central hub of your student life. This is where your halls of residence usually are and your academic base. There are 31 colleges in total in Cambridge.

College Families: The JCR organises a parenting system so that each first year student is allocated to two second year students who are 'college married'. As college parents will usually have a number of 'children', this is a really nice way to get to meet people early on and a great support system to have.

CompSci: Nickname for a Computer Sciences student.

Cuppers: Tournament between colleges in most sports.

CUSU: Cambridge University Students' Union, the university-wide representative body for students at the University of Cambridge.

Department: Also referred to as Faculty, this is part of the university dedicated to one subject, both in terms of a physical building as well as the students, lecturers and staff involved.

DoS: Director of Studies - A fellow, normally within your college, who is in charge of your studies. They organise all of your supervisions, and can be your first port of call for any difficulties you have regarding your subject.

Ents: Cambridge slang for 'entertainment', refers to the entertainment officers who put on events at college.

Fellow: An academic affiliated with a College (as opposed to the university) usually to do teaching or research.

HSPS: Human Social and Political Science - A subject that lets students study lots of different avenues from sociology, politics, international relations, political theory and political philosophy, and anthropology. There is even the option to borrow some papers from the history faculty and study modern political history!

Gyp: Your kitchen area, usually shared between 3-6 people.

JCR: Committee of undergraduate students that represents undergrads, runs 'ents' events and welfare schemes and much more. Also the Junior Combination Room, which is the common area for students to relax and socialise in.

LandEc: Cambridge slang for students of Land Economy.

Matriculation: A simple but formal signing ceremony held early on in your first term where you are officially admitted as a member of the University (and get to see the signatures of the likes of Charles Darwin and John Milton from when they matriculated!).

Michaelmas, Lent and Easter Term: 1st, 2nd and 3rd term respectively

MML: Modern and Medieval Languages - Basically a languages degree, all MMLers will study two languages which can range all over the world. People have options to study French, German, Spanish, Russian, Portuguese, or can join another faculty and study Greek (with the Classics faculty) or Mandarin, Japanese or Arabic (with the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies faculty).

NatScis: Natural Scientists - Anyone who studies Natural Science is called a NatSci. There are options within Natural Science to study biology, chemistry, physics and maths, and to mix and match options in your first year before narrowing down your choices in second and third year.

Pidge: Short for pigeon hole, the space in the plodge (see below) where all your mail is sent to.

PBS: Psychological and Behavioural Science - A subject that

bridges the sciences and the arts, psychology and behavioural science allows people to advance their study of the mind, as well as being able to borrow papers from Natural Scientists such as neuroscience and papers from the Education faculty too.

Plodge: Short for Porter's Lodge. This is the main entrance to Christ's and is staffed 24/7 by our wonderful Porters.

Sidge: Short for Sidgwick Site. The location of most of the faculties for arts subjects, including English, History, Economics, Languages, and Law. Near to the University Library.

Squash: A party or reception with drinks and snacks, usually at the beginning of term, with the objective of getting attendees involved with a society or organization.

Supervision: A huge part of what makes Cambridge unique. This is where students are taught by a Supervisor either one-to-one or in small groups of 2-4 students. Work is often submitted beforehand and then discussed in the supervision.

Tripes: The formal university examinations in which undergraduates are required to obtain honours in order to qualify for the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

UL: University Library - One of the biggest libraries in the country, the UL is a copyright library, meaning they are entitled to a copy of any book published in England! You will normally never need to buy a book in Cambridge, because if your college doesn't have it, the UL is guaranteed to.

Van of Life: Located in the market square and actually called the Trailer of Life, this is the place to get food after a night out.



STUDENT PROFILE

NIKKY

1st Year Psychological and Behavioural Sciences Student from Switzerland

Christ's: Tell us a bit about your subject

Nikky: PBS is a great degree because of how it's essentially a mixture between an arts and science subject, so you can choose any options that align with your interests, from philosophy to evolution!

C: Why did you pick Christ's?

P: I love the fact that not only is Christ's one of the beautiful, older Colleges but it also has ensembles in 40% of the rooms! All students also live either in College or a few minutes walk away so all the facilities - which include a 24/7 library, free-to-use gym, a professional standard theatre, an outdoor pool and squash courts - are all on your doorstep! Christ's is also great because of its size, which is almost exactly average - this means that you get to know everyone and can always spot a friendly face as you're walking through college but it never feels oppressively small! Christ's also has so many opportunities for everyone, no matter whether your interests

lie in extreme sports or gardening! There are also always talks held on every topic imaginable, and due to Christ's theatre, a lot of these talks happen directly in College! The pastoral care at Christ's is particularly amazing, and Christ's is also very generous with grants, helping provide students with money for anything from books to cultural trips abroad!

C: What have you enjoyed about your first term?

P: One of my most memorable moments has been the formal dinners, in which you have a three-course dinner in our 16th century dining hall, whilst wearing the Harry Potter gowns and sat with your friends! Unlike at other colleges, our formal halls is available to book every night other than Saturday, making it really easy to get places to celebrate special occasions like birthdays (and college marriages!). It was also great when our TV room got completely refurbished, with the JCR choosing to redecorate it with a huge TV, lots of comfy sofas and bean bags - the atmosphere there now, whether to watch Bake Off, football or even the American elections, is always electric and incredibly social! Although Fresher's week is a bit shorter at Cambridge than at other universities, the Freshers' reps pack in so many activities into several days, leading to an amazing first week! There's the customary Freshers' punting, where us freshers go off on a scenic punt of the River Cam to make some great memories and meet some friendly swans! There's also the first Bop of term, where everyone dresses up in costumes to fit the theme, as well as numerous other events which are all a very fun way to meet people!

10 THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU GRADUATE

- » Kiss the bust of Milton on your birthday.
- » Befriend the somewhat aloof college cat, Rocket.
- » Plunge into the outdoor pool on a hot summer's day after basking in the sun in the Fellow's Garden.
- » Have a chat with the porters – the loveliest, friendliest bunch around – at 2am after being let in through the Great Gate.
- » Hang out with Darwin in the Darwin garden or dance around Milton's mulberry tree.
- » Stay up until 6am at the mind-blowingly spectacular Christ's May Ball and watch May Week fireworks from New Court.
- » Experience every bop, superhall and themed formal on offer, go all out with fancy dress and explore the more dubious choices on the cocktail menu in the Buttery.
- » Celebrate a Cambridge Christmas (Bridgemas) in November, overindulge on mulled wine and mince pies and get in the festive spirit far too early.
- » Be bold, go where no man has ever gone before and fleetingly place a foot on 1st court grass. Oh so daring.
- » Have lunch at the Master's Lodge and discover the secrets of Lady Margaret Beaufort.



college very quickly becomes a home away from home, and you rapidly connect with people of all ages and degrees, not just your own!

Karan, 2nd Year Economist from London

LIFE AT CHRIST'S DON'T WORRY

WELFARE

Contrary to what you might expect, life at Cambridge (and specifically Christ's, which has a slightly academic reputation) is not all stressful! The collegiate system means there is the strongest, closest support network possible, with a whole college full of people who want to make your life here as happy as possible. The smiley porters keep you safe and are there for a chat 24/7; the welfare officers have weekly tea-and-talks to de-stress, relax, meet new people and have a snack and there are also a number of different student support officers, such as the Internationals Officer, LGBT Officer and Ethnic Minorities Officer who are trained to help and are always available to offer advice and support you. The chaplain is super-friendly and welcoming of everyone and keeps his welfare duties separate from religious duties. The nurse is like having your very own aunt in college to look after you whilst your DoS can help you with any queries or difficulties related to your studies. Everyone is also allocated to a tutor (though you can talk to any of them) who doesn't teach you but with whom you meet with at the beginning and end of every term to catch up and is there to support you whenever you need. Beyond the college, there is also an excellent University counselling service free for all undergraduate students. And remember, the sense of community here at Christ's is amazing so there are always other students at your doorstep who will always be understanding and supportive – ultimately, everyone wants you to be happy here!

The pastoral support in Christ's is fantastic – the tutors and director of studies are incredibly supportive, but so are the nurse and the chaplain. In particular, our porters' lodge is staffed 24 hours a day, and they are a fantastic point of support even at 3am!

Richard, PhD student, Nat sci, from East Sussex

DIVERSITY

One thing that will continue to strike you throughout your time at Christ's is the completely accepting atmosphere. No matter what your religious, racial, financial or linguistic background, everyone is welcomed into the family. It's fantastic to meet so many new people and whether you're an absolute city person, or born and brought up on a farm, you'll find a myriad of ways to connect with the Christ's community around you. There are lots of societies in the college and university that let you embrace your own backgrounds and cultures, as well as explore new communities, so definitely take advantage of them.

Christ's is very diverse, making it more likely that you will find people that share your perspectives but also provides an opportunity for you to learn about different cultures, countries and religions.

Arqum, 2nd Year Natural Science student from Karachi

FINANCES

No UK student should feel dissuaded from applying to Cambridge because of financial constraints, and Christ's has an extremely generous bursary system to make sure that never happens. The Admissions and Tutorial officers and your personal Tutor are there to ensure that you get the financial support you need and are always there if you have any requests which they will usually deal with within days! There are also numerous grants, such as the book grants available to all first-year students,

irrespective of income, and travel grants which everyone can apply for to help with the costs of travel for trips or research during the holidays. Meals at upper hall and the proximity of Sainsbury's means that getting good food on a budget is never a problem, rent costs at Christ's are low as you only pay for rent during term time and the small size of the city helps you save on transport costs.

The tutors are really helpful and will give you loads of advice and get things sorted for you as quickly as they can!

Jasmine, 2nd Year Medic from Essex

INTERNATIONALS

It's only natural to worry about fitting in or making friends or homesickness – or even just moving in and moving out or adjusting to the English weather! The good news is that Cambridge is far more international than you'd expect, and Christ's specifically has a large and very friendly international student body. The college's medium size makes it easy for us to feel at home and even form a warm family, and our central location makes it a piece of cake to do administrative tasks like opening a bank account and do social things like meet other internationals or take your friends/family around. The even better news is that if you ever need anything, Christ's extraordinarily helpful staff (friendliest porters in Cambridge), tutors, directors of studies as well as the JCR (including the Internationals Officer who is there to represent internationals and organize events for them) and your friends and college/subject families will gladly answer any questions you have and support you in whatever you do!



christ's is no doubt one of the best colleges for internationals, and my international friends from other colleges hate us for it. Its extremely central location makes ticking off administrative tasks - which can be a hassle during Freshers' Week - and getting around town a breeze. More importantly, the college has been amazing with accommodation, storage, welfare, and unlimited servings of the best roast potatoes in Cambridge. On top of that Christ's has a noticeably international and diverse mix of students. You'll feel right at home!

Pao, first-year Land Economist from Bangkok

THE PROCESS

ADMISSIONS

APPLYING

The admissions process is pretty much the same across all Cambridge colleges. As we understand that this can be a daunting process, we have written a step-by-step guide in the hopes that it will make things a bit clearer!

STEP 1: DO YOUR RESEARCH

You're going to be studying the subject you choose in great depth for a number of years so make sure you choose the course you're genuinely interested in and will enjoy studying! Also, do your research around Cambridge – check out the Cambridge prospectus to see what A-Levels (or equivalent) are required, attend Open Days and look at College prospectuses.

STEP 2: UCAS APPLICATION

Applying to Cambridge through UCAS is pretty much the same as applying to any other university, with a few minor differences. Firstly, the deadline is earlier, usually the 15th of October to leave plenty of time for the University to gather a bit more information about you as a candidate. The other difference is that you also need to pick a College to apply to. If you genuinely have no preference, you can make an open application which means that the University will assign you to a college randomly. If, however, you have any preference at all, however minor (such as not wanting to have to walk far to get to your lectures), it may be best to pick a college yourself.

STEP 3: SUPPLEMENTARY APPLICATION QUESTIONNAIRE (SAQ)

After your application has been received, you will be asked to fill out the SAQ. This is a short online form that you will have roughly a week to complete. This is not something to worry about – it is just another way to help the University gather as much information as possible about you, such as class size and topics covered in your AS/A Levels (or equivalent). The Admissions Tutors will never look at just one part of your application in isolation – they take into account all the factors, including contextual factors like where you live, the school you attended and so on. It's also a great opportunity for you to explain why you applied for the Cambridge course in particular, which is especially useful if you applied for different courses at other universities. You will also be asked to submit a photo of yourself – be warned, this photo will appear on pretty much everything once you are here, including your end-of-term reports and your university card so choose wisely!

STEP 4: SUBMITTED WORK AND ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENT

For many courses, you will be asked to send in some written work before your interview. Don't panic – there isn't any need to write anything new! The College simply wants an example of your normal school work which may then be discussed during the interview (so it's always worth photocopying before you send it off so you can re-read it before your interview).

Most applicants are also required to take a written admissions assessment, either pre-interview or on the day of the interview. Again, there is nothing to worry about! The assessment is simply there to assess your skills and academic potential. You are not expected to revise new material beforehand – at most, you may want to read over your notes from school (particularly for science subjects). And do not fear – the admissions department will always keep you informed at every stage of the process.

STEP 5: THE INTERVIEW

Cambridge want to know about you as person, which they can't really do from paper alone, so around mid-November almost all applicants (around 80%) will receive an invite to interview. Interviews take place in early December. The standard format is to have two interviews, each lasting between 20 to 40 minutes with specialists in your chosen subject. For many people, this will be their first experience of an interview and so this may seem quite daunting. Once again, there really is no need to worry – try to think about why it is you want to study your subject and what specific aspects of the course you find interesting. It's difficult to know how to prepare for an interview as there are no set questions you will be asked so try read over your personal statement and things you have mentioned in it and your SAQ. It's also helpful to practice speaking about your subject out loud so arranging mock interviews with teachers or parents, or even just talking to yourself can be very helpful. To put you at ease on the day,

Christ's students will be on hand with tea, coffee and biscuits and we'll show you to your interviews and any assessment tests you need to do so you don't need to worry about getting lost – remember, we were there too not long ago so we understand how you feel! The 'scare' questions you may see in the press or hear about are usually very misleading and out-of-context – perhaps about something the interviewee discussed in their personal statement. It is not in the supervisors' best interest to try 'catch you out' – they want to be able to test your ability to think for yourself and show how your ability to think flexibly and apply existing knowledge and skills to new concepts.

The interview also aims to replicate the system of supervisions in Cambridge so that supervisors can assess whether Cambridge is the place that will bring out the best in you – and for you to get a feel for small-group teaching. You're not being assessed on your personal appearance either, so do wear something you feel comfortable in! Finally, be yourself – there isn't any Cambridge 'type' you should try be. Almost everyone says after that the interviews weren't that bad, and many enjoy the chance to talk about something you love!

You may also see private companies who offer, at a cost, interview advice. We strongly discourage you from paying for materials or interview practice from them – we have never seen any reliable evidence that paying any such company increases your chance of getting a place, and in reviewing many such services, we have found many to be riddled with misinformation and inaccuracies. The University stresses that the official resources

are all available online from official University websites and you will never be asked to pay for them.

THE POOL

If the college you applied to felt that you would do well in Cambridge but don't have enough spaces for you, they may place your application in the winter pool. This is where all of your details (your personal statement, SAQ, interview report, admissions assessment) are put into a folder and then the folders of all pooled applicants are placed in a room for Directors of Studies and Admissions Tutors from all the colleges can choose whether they want to 'fish' anyone. Occasionally, they will invite the applicant for an interview, but this is not common.

The winter pool exists so that you don't have to worry about 'tactically' applying to a specific college to increase your chances of getting in, as if that college receives more applicants than normal but you are a strong applicant, you will be placed in the pool for other colleges to consider you so make sure you apply to the college you really want! About 20% of applications are placed into the winter pool, and about 20% of those end up receiving an offer. As the winter pool takes place before offers are sent out, you would receive your offer at the same time as everyone else. In August, there is also the Summer Pool, which is for those narrowly miss their offer – the original college might not be able to offer a place but another college may.

NEXT STEPS

WHAT NOW?

It's easier to say and much harder in practice, but try not to worry about the interview once it's over. It's tempting to get worried about the little things and replay every answer you gave in your head, but this won't be any help and won't make your Christmas particularly fun! Try make the most of the experience of visiting Cambridge, meeting new people and discussing the subject you love. In early January, you should receive a letter confirming the outcome of your application.

Please note that this section is up-to-date at the time of printing but the details of the application process can change slightly from year to year, so for the most up-to-date information, please see:

www.christs.cam.ac.uk
www.cam.ac.uk

For more student's perspectives:

Visit the student union's website:
www.thejcr.co.uk

Read detailed student profiles:
www.christs.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate-admissions-0/students

Look at the CUSU Alternative Prospectus:
www.applytocambridge.com/

Look at the CUSU Freshers' Guide:
www.freshers.cusu.co.uk

There are also some great Cambridge vloggers on YouTube, such as Jake Wright (who has now graduated but studied at Queens' College) which often provide really interesting insight into what life here is really like.

'The Student Room' can be a great source of advice and discussion. There are also official Cambridge representatives, such as Admissions Tutors, who often respond to questions and provide information about Cambridge. Do keep in mind though that there can be misinformation and rumours out there as well unfortunately.

USEFUL LINKS

The college's website:
www.christs.cam.ac.uk

For information for Offer Holders:
www.christs.cam.ac.uk/admissions/offer-holders

The University's Finance webpage:
www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/finance

The Student Finance website, including financial help available for students from the EU:

www.gov.uk/student-finance/overview
www.gov.uk/studentfinancesteps

Information for International students:
www.christs.cam.ac.uk/international-students



SOCIAL MEDIA

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Facebook:
[Christ's College, Cambridge](#)
Twitter:
[@ChristsAccess](#)

COME AND VISIT US!

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To view our upcoming Open Days and other events:
www.christs.cam.ac.uk/open-days-prospective-applicants

For information on visiting Christ's:
www.christs.cam.ac.uk/admissions/visiting-christs

For our outreach work and access events:
www.christs.cam.ac.uk/outreach-access-and-schools-liaison

Any questions?

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If you have any questions, we'd love to hear from you:
For any questions about Admissions: Admissions Office
admissions@christs.cam.ac.uk

For any questions about visiting Cambridge or our events:
Schools Liaison Officer
access@christs.cam.ac.uk

For any other questions contact our JCR Access Officer
access@thejcr.co.uk

A huge thank you to everyone who has been involved in creating this Alternative Prospectus, from the students who contributed by writing up sections or providing quotes and photos to our fantastic graphic designer and brilliant Admissions Office, this couldn't have been done without you!

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