



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

# Making a Competitive Application

Preparing to apply



# Russell Group



UNIVERSITY of York



University of BRISTOL

Imperial College London

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER



University of Glasgow



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS



UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM



QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

UNIVERSITY OF Southampton

Queen Mary University of London

THE UNIVERSITY of LIVERPOOL



The University of Nottingham



Newcastle University



The University of Sheffield.

MANCHESTER 1824

The University of Manchester



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE



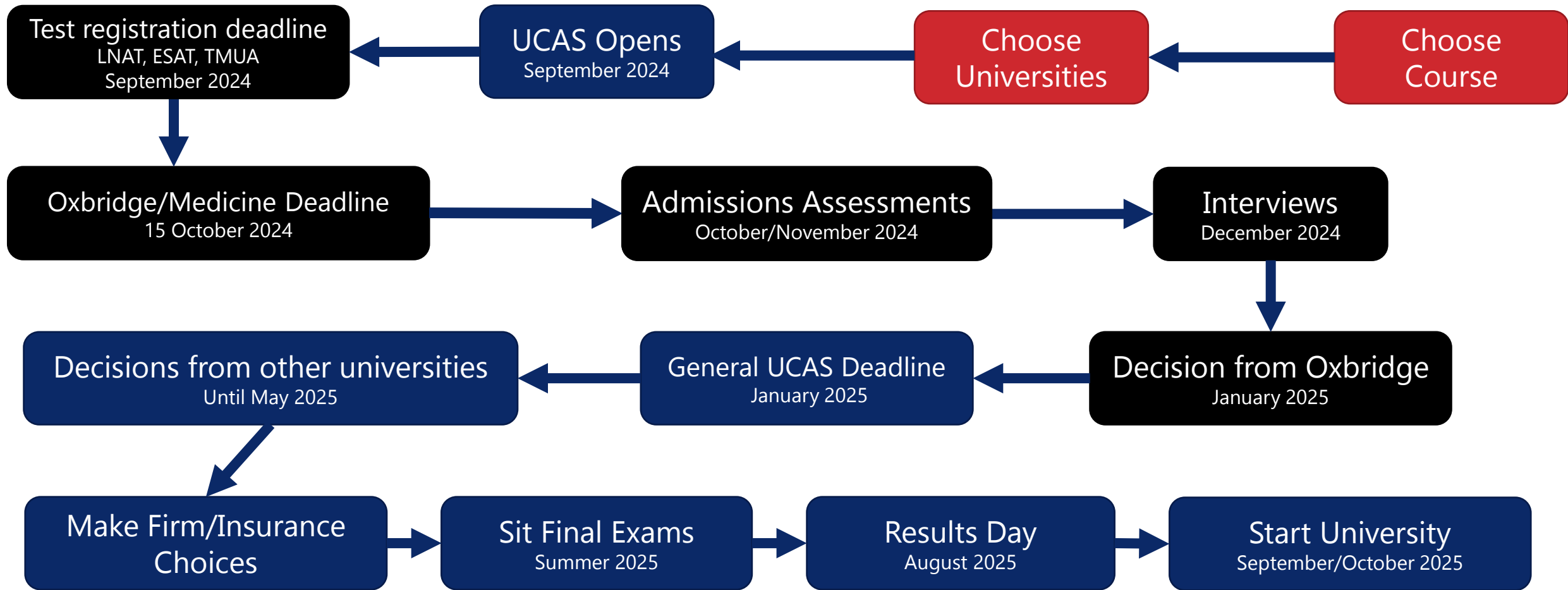
Christ's College Cambridge



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

# Application Process

# Application Timeline



# To-Do List

- Choose a Course
- Choose your universities (and college\*)
- Write your Personal Statement
- Complete any other paperwork required
- Prepare for & do Admissions Assessment (where applicable)
- Prepare for & do Interview(s) (if invited)



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

# Preparing: Course Research



# Choosing the right course

- **Your interests**
- Specialisms available
- Length
  - Year abroad?
  - Year in industry?
- Teaching style
- Assessment style



# What Can I Study?

- Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic
- Archaeology
- Architecture
- Asian and Middle Eastern Studies
- Chemical Engineering & Biotechnology
- Classics
- Computer Science
- Design
- Economics
- Education
- Engineering
- English
- Geography
- History
- History and Modern Languages
- History and Politics
- History of Art
- Human, Social, and Political Sciences
- Land Economy
- Law
- Linguistics
- Mathematics
- Medicine
- Modern and Medieval Languages
- Music
- Natural Sciences
- Philosophy
- Psychological and Behavioural Sciences
- Theology, Religion, and Philosophy of Religion
- Veterinary Medicine





# Places to Look for More Information

- University website – specific course pages
  - Entry requirements
  - Resources
  - Department links and events
- College websites
  - General information
  - Subject pages (!)

## History

Taught at one of the largest and highest-ranked History faculties in the world, this Cambridge course lets you explore the past from multiple angles under the guidance of teachers with a huge range of interests and expertise.

- [Why Study History at Christ's?](#)
- [Course structure and content](#)
- [Teaching](#)
- [What do our students think?](#)
- [How to apply](#)
  - [Subjects: what do you need?](#)
  - [Written work](#)
  - [Interviews](#)
  - [Written assessment](#)
  - [Offers](#)
- [Helpful resources](#)
- [Open Days and Online Events](#)
- [Want to know more?](#)



### Subjects

- [Anglo-Saxon, Norse & Celtic](#)
- [Archaeology](#)
- [Architecture](#)
- [Asian & Middle Eastern Studies](#)
- [Chemical Engineering](#)
- [Classics](#)
- [Computer Science](#)
- [Economics](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Engineering](#)
- [English](#)

## Why study History at Christ's?

Christ's is proud to boast a distinguished reputation for History

# CHECK ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- What subjects are **required**?
- What subjects are **recommended**?
- How does this compare to your current subjects?
- What **grades** are required?



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

# Preparing: Explore Your Subject

# Super vs Extra

## Extra-curricular activities might be....

- Sport
- Volunteering
- Art
- Drama
- Music
- Part-time work
- First Aid course

## Super-curricular activities might be....

- Reading a book
- Entering an essay competition
- Researching a topic
- Work or research placements
- Listening to podcasts
- Watching videos or documentaries

# Extra-Curricular Activities - Cambridge

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 exploration 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 enable 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.



# Why are they important?



## Super-curricular activities:

- Help **expand** your subject knowledge
- Help you **explore** your own interests
- **Develop** your skills

# Expanding Subject Knowledge

- What are you interested in?
- What interests/engages you in your current studies?
- What's not in the syllabus that you wish was included?
- What would a university course cover? Is there suggested reading/resources?
- Remember: subjects are broad!





UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

# Super-curricular Examples

# Super-Curricular Activities

- **Reading** – books, journals, articles, magazines
- **Watching** – documentaries, online talks, lectures
- **Listening** – podcasts
- Online content
- Keeping up with the latest developments
- Trips, expeditions, conferences
- **Competitions** – Olympiads, challenges, essay prizes
- **Relevant** work experience\*
- Summer schools and taster days
- EPQ/independent research projects





# Keep up with the news (from different sources!)



# HISTORY



NewStatesman



theguardian





# MOOCs & Online Talks

Open Yale courses



coursera



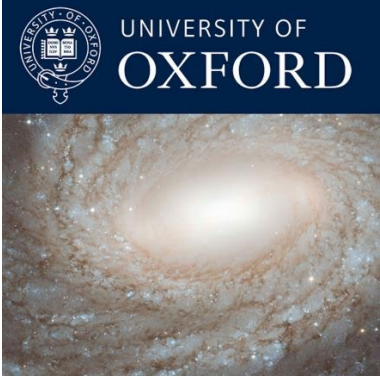
The Open University



codecademy



# Podcasts and Videos



# HE+ and Oxplore



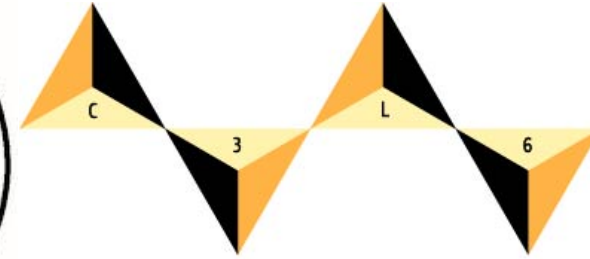
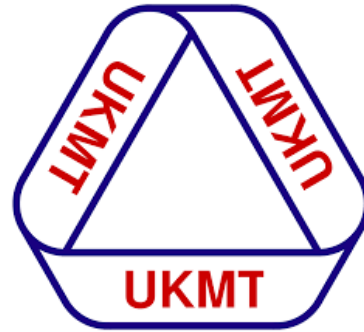
Home of Big Questions

OX?PLORE

CAMBRIDGE  
FESTIVAL



# Competitions



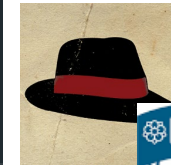
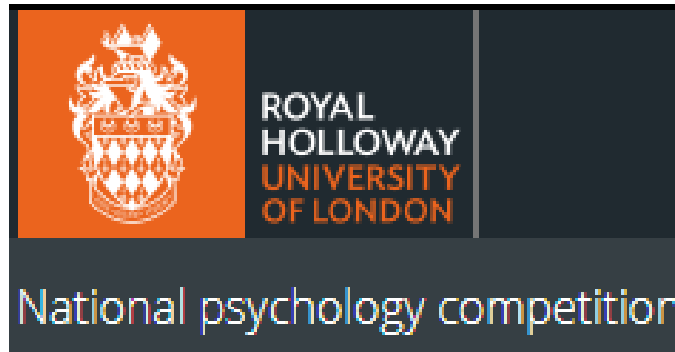
Cambridge Chemistry Challenge Lower 6th



The Department of History Y12/L6 History Essay prize



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE



University of  
**Southampton**

# Summer Schools, Taster Days, Work Experience, Research Placements



**UCL**

**RESIDENTIAL SUMMER SCHOOL**  
A five day taste of studying at UCL

Academic Work  
Completely Free! Including travel, accommodation and food  
120+ Students per week!

Social Activities  
Year 12 Students

Theatre  
Bowling  
Thames Cruise  
Escape Room  
University Experience  
Choose from 18 subjects  
UCL Accommodation

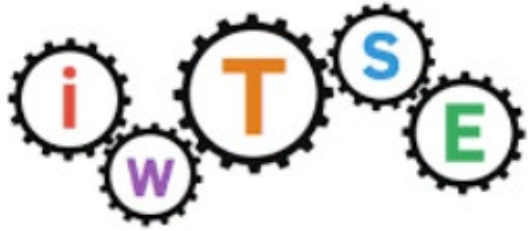
Activities are for students who meet our eligibility criteria. Please visit: [www.ucl.ac.uk/widening-participation](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/widening-participation)



**BUT DON'T EVER PAY FOR THEM!**  
**CONTACT UNIVERSITIES TO ASK ABOUT EVENTS AND SUMMER SCHOOLS PROVIDED THROUGH WIDENING PARTICIPATION INITIATIVES.**



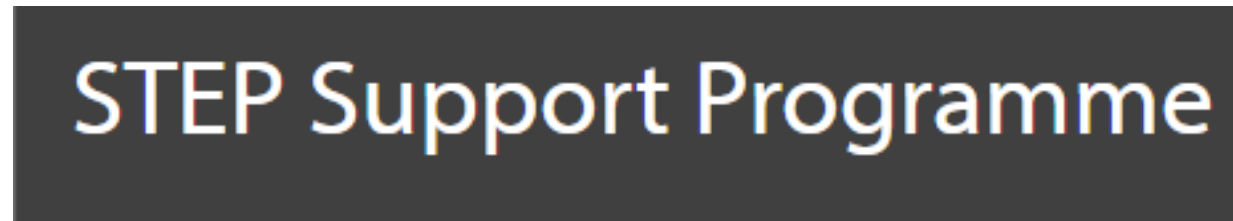
# Sciences



iWantToStudyEngineering



Advanced Mathematics  
Support Programme®



# Arts & Humanities





# Use Your Library!



# Ask your teachers!





# A note on Work Experience

- Another form of super-curricular activity
- Expected for: **Medicine and Veterinary Medicine** (Cambridge)

## General Advice:

- It's about your **reflections** on the experience rather than how 'good' your experience looks
- Do not pay to do it!
- You can do it for other reasons than university applications...

## For Medics and Vets:

- No required amount, but check other universities' expectations. General recommendation: c. 2 weeks
- In a **care setting** - does not have to be explicitly e.g. with a GP, hospital etc.
- Check local NHS Trust websites; Royal Voluntary Service; NCVO



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

# Analysis & Critical Thinking

# Using Super-curricular Activities

How does the activity develop your skills and/or knowledge?

Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences – more often ‘wider reading’

Sciences/Maths – practice **key subject specific** skills very important

Logical and mathematical thinking

E.g. doing problems, extension work

For all activities you do:

- Resource **name** (title)
- Resource **type** – *book, podcast...*
- Brief **summary** – *what’s it about?*
- Notes on what you learned, agreed/disagreed with
- Any further research to do?
- Does this **link** with anything? *A-Level, another activity done, another thing you read...*

## Reflection is Key

Look for **links & connections**

- Comparisons and contrasts

Ask questions, and **reflect**

- Don’t just accept arguments – challenge it
- Do you agree? What was interesting/surprising/new?

**Discuss** with others

**Enjoy** it! If you don’t – try something else, but... also be **open-minded**

# Thinking about Skills

Research skills; Time management; Team work; Organisational skills; Interpreting, synthesising & clarifying data/information

## Arts

- Creativity
- Critical & evaluative thinking
- Lateral thinking

## Essay subjects

- Communication skills
- Writing skills
- Observational skills
- Logical thinking and reasoning

## Social Sciences

- Project Management
- Flexible & adaptive approaches

## Numerate subjects

- Numeracy
- Analytical skills
- Investigative & research skills
- Problem solving
- Using statistical data

## STEM

- Attention to detail
- Computational & Data processing
- Report writing



# REMEMBER

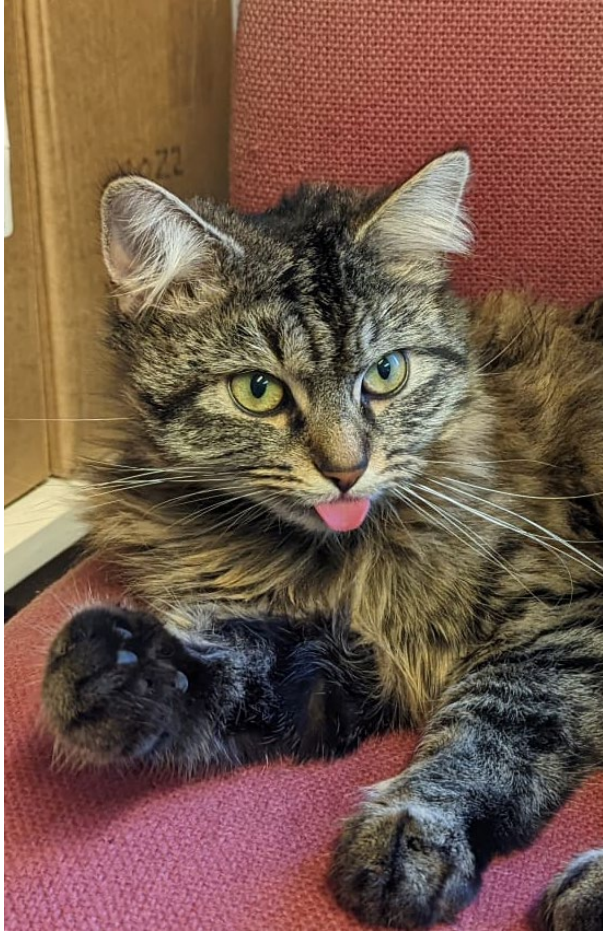
- **Quality, not quantity** – fewer examples but well-analysed are better
- **Never** just list the activities you have done
- **Keep a record** of what you do
- There's **no magic recipe** of super-curricular activities for your subject
- If it isn't relevant... is it a good use of space?
- Each application is **unique** – reflecting YOUR interests, experiences and passion

**REMEMBER: It's *not* about who has had the best opportunities, but who can best reflect on the academic ideas and experiences encountered through the opportunities that *are* available to them.**

# How do I know what to include on my PS?

- Did you **learn something new**?
- Did this activity make you want to **find out more** about your subject? (i.e. did it leave you wanting to interact with more similar material?)
- **If someone asked you** to discuss how you explored your subject, which activities would you mention?
- It doesn't matter if you use the same examples as someone else!
- How does the activity develop the **skills/knowledge** required by the course you want to apply to?

# Myth-busting!



- “You need to show you are well-rounded and have done e.g. lots of volunteering”
- “An excellent PS can make up for poorer grades”
- “You should analyse how each A-Level subject links to the degree you’re applying for”
- “You should write about what the academics are interested in”
- “No one reads the personal statement anyway!”

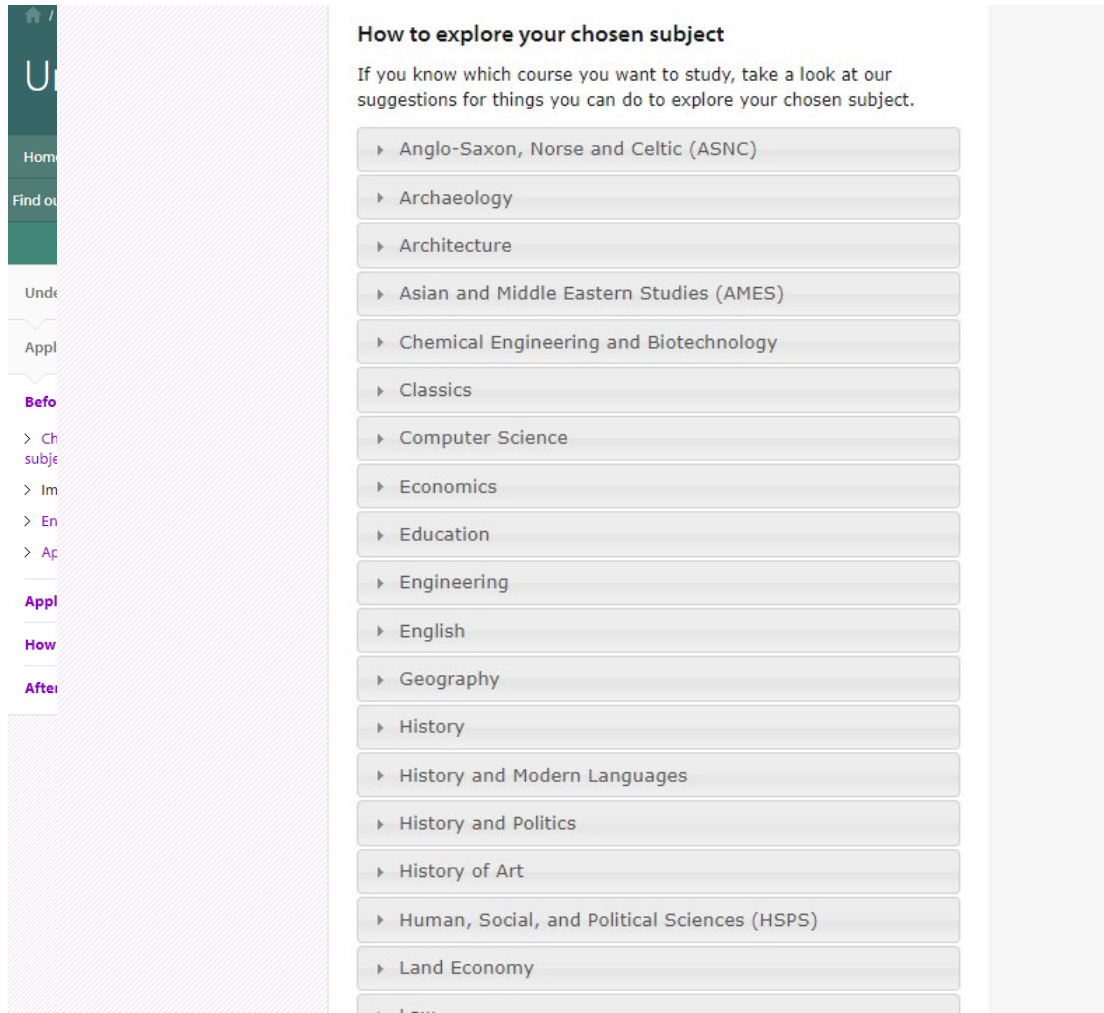


UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

# Where to look for ideas



# Some Ideas...



**How to explore your chosen subject**

If you know which course you want to study, take a look at our suggestions for things you can do to explore your chosen subject.

- ▶ Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic (ASNC)
- ▶ Archaeology
- ▶ Architecture
- ▶ Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (AMES)
- ▶ Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology
- ▶ Classics
- ▶ Computer Science
- ▶ Economics
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Engineering
- ▶ English
- ▶ Geography
- ▶ History
- ▶ History and Modern Languages
- ▶ History and Politics
- ▶ History of Art
- ▶ Human, Social, and Political Sciences (HSPS)
- ▶ Land Economy
- ▶ Law

- **Cambridge University** – PDF
- Christ's College – Subject Pages
- Resource Hub – Unix, Oxford
- 'Resources' on course information pages
- Research outreach events!

# Some Ideas...

## Helpful resources

<a href="#">Think Cambridge Law (blog)</a>	A really helpful set of posts from the Faculty of Law at Cambridge
<a href="#">Cambridge University Exploring Law course on FutureLearn</a>	A six-week University of Cambridge course for 16-18 year olds.
<a href="#">Websites for exploring your subject in Law (part I)</a>	Suggestions from the Law Faculty
<a href="#">Websites for exploring your subject in Law (part II)</a>	Suggestions from the Law Faculty
<a href="#">Cambridge Law Test</a>	Information and sample tests
<a href="#">Reading suggestions</a>	Book recommendations from Cambridge Law students
<a href="#">Gresham College Law lectures</a>	Free online lectures including, for example, lecture series on <a href="#">the Practice of Law</a> , <a href="#">The Politics of the Courtroom and Death</a> , <a href="#">the State and Human Rights</a> , as well as <a href="#">the Gray's Inn Readings</a> .
<a href="#">Public Law for everyone</a>	Blog exploring public law ideas, by Cambridge Law Professor Mark Elliott
<a href="#">Legal problems (film)</a>	Law Open Day resource
<a href="#">Cambridge University Law Society Speakers Faculty of Law public lectures Law in Focus</a>	Short talks and online lectures
<a href="#">The Modern Judiciary: Who they are, what they do and why it matters</a>	Future Learn course introducing you to the role of judges in the legal system of England and Wales
<a href="#">Supreme Court website</a>	Including information about the court and online films, You may also want to consider <a href="#">visiting a local court</a> .
<a href="#">Cambridge Sixth Form Law Conference</a>	For Year 12 students interested in studying Law at degree level
<a href="#">Information about Work Experience for Law</a>	Information and advice
<a href="#">Supercurriculars in a pandemic</a>	Lots of good suggestions here
<a href="#">HE+ Law</a>	Website for secondary school students who would like to explore Law.
<a href="#">CamGuides</a>	Introducing the academic and information skills that you will need during your studies, as well as how and where you would be working

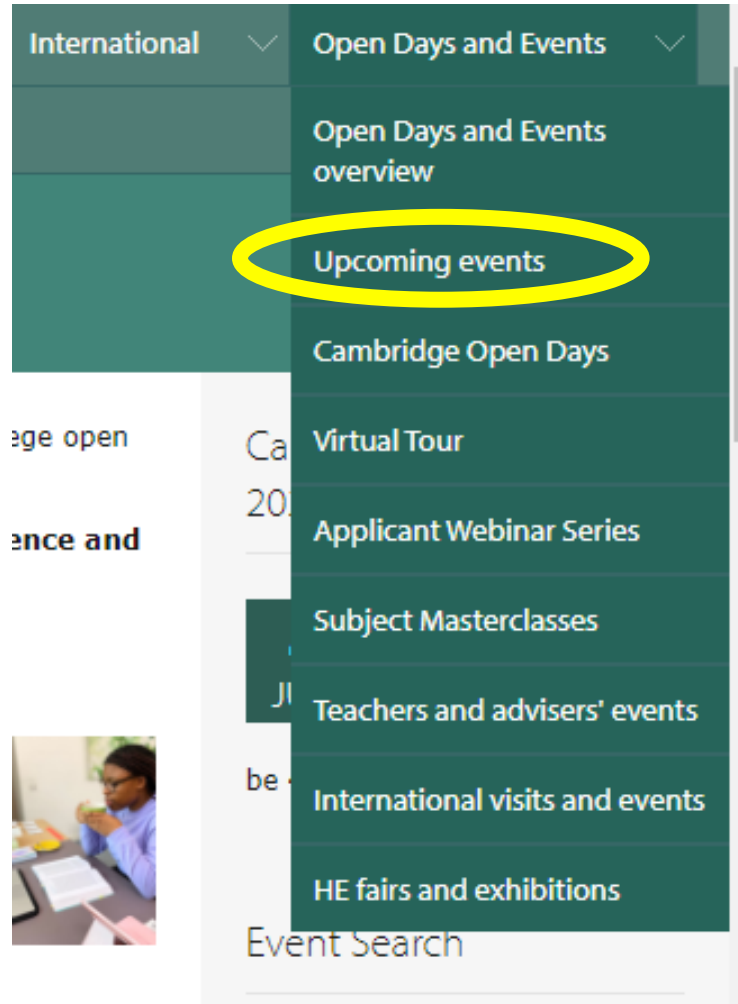
- Cambridge University – PDF
- **Christ's College** – Subject Pages
- Resource Hub – Unix, Oxford
- 'Resources' on course information pages
- Research outreach events!

# Some Ideas...

The screenshot displays the 'Natural Sciences' course page on the University of Cambridge website. The page features a navigation menu at the top with options like 'Home', 'Why Cambridge', 'Courses', 'Colleges', 'Finance', 'Applying', 'International', 'Open Days and Events', and 'Find out more'. A left-hand sidebar lists various categories under 'Undergraduate Study'. The main content area includes a video player for a 'Course Film', a 'Fact File' section with details on UCAS Code, Course Duration, Colleges, 2020 Entry, and Department Open Days, and a 'Resources' section with links to 'Overview', 'Course Outline', 'Entry Requirements', 'Resources', and 'Discover Uni'. Below this, there are sections for 'Find out more about Natural Sciences at Cambridge' with a list of links, and specific sub-sections for 'Astrophysics' and 'Biology and Biochemistry'.

- Cambridge University – PDF
- Christ's College – Subject Pages
- Resource Hub – Unix, Oxford
- 'Resources' on **course information pages**
- Research outreach events!

# Upcoming Events Page



## Upcoming events

All our upcoming in-person and online events, including College open days and events.  
Use the Event Search to filter by keyword, target audience and event type.

Cambridge Open Days 2024

**4** JULY **5** JULY Our next Cambridge Open Days will be 4 and 5 July 2024.

**25** OCT **Christ's College October Open Day**  
Location: Online/Christ's College, Cambridge



**BOOKING CLOSED**

An online open day for prospective students considering applying in October 2024 for entry in October 2025 (or October 2026 deferred entry).

**01** NOV **Lincolnshire Collaborative Webinars**  
Location: Online (Zoom)



Christ's College Cambridge and Lincoln College Oxford have teamed up to offer a series of events for schools in our Lincolnshire...

**21** NOV **Subject Matters: The Importance of Your Post-16 Subject Choices**  
Location: Online (Zoom)



This webinar will provide advice on what subjects and combinations of subjects to choose to be competitive for a variety of courses at Cambridge and other selective...

**19** JAN **Christ's-King's Programme 2024**  
Location: Hybrid: online with in-person visit



Each year, Christ's College and King's College collaborate to host a programme for students attending UK state schools, to find out more about studying at the University of...

**01** MAR **Biological Sciences Subject Taster 2024**  
Location: Hybrid: online with optional in-person visit



Christ's College's annual Biological Sciences taster series will be taking place as four online sessions.

Event Search

Keywords

Christ's

Open to:

- Any -

Category

- Any -

Find Event



# When you don't know what you want to apply for yet

- You will never be able to include *everything*
- Nurture your interests and **curiosity**
- Many subjects/courses are **interdisciplinary**
- You should never do something purely for the sake of being able to say you have done it!





UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

# Preparing: Assessments & Interviews

# Admissions Assessments

## Make sure you register ON TIME

- Tests you will need to register by September for:
  - **LNAT** for Law
  - **UCAT** for Medicine
  - **TMUA** for Economics and Computer Science
  - **ESAT** for Engineering, Natural Sciences, Chemical Engineering & Biotechnology, Veterinary Medicine

## Resources:

- Past papers
- Department websites
- Subject pages
- STEP Support Programme - **Maths**

## Check for:

- Any specifications (required knowledge)
- Format and time limit
- Deadlines (where applicable)

# Admissions Assessments: Updates

From 2025 entry (i.e. applying from October 2024):

Test	Courses	Notes
<b>UCAT</b>	Medicine	Registration opens in May, booking from June, testing <b>July-September</b> . £70 UK/ £115 overseas
<b>TMUA</b>	Economics and Computer Science	Computer-based. Test date will be <b>15-17 October</b> 2024. £75 UK/ £130 overseas.
<b>ESAT</b>	Chemical Engineering, Engineering, Natural Sciences, Vet Medicine	Computer-based. Test date will be <b>15-17 October</b> 2024. Also for Imperial. £75 UK/ £130 overseas.

*As with LNAT, these are sat at Pearson VUE centres, across the UK and in 130+ countries – not at school*

# Interviews

Interviews:

- **Academic** in focus
- **Academic** stimulus or problem
- **Support** from interviewers
- Assess ability and **potential**
- **HOW you think** – ability to assimilate new ideas, or apply existing knowledge to new contexts or problems

Best ways to prepare:

- Have **regular conversations** around your subject and interests
- **Challenge yourself** with new ideas and material
- **Keep exploring** your subject after applying!



# PREP

## Programme of Study

- Course choice – most important
- Research thoroughly, personal interest(s)

## Results

- Work hard – do as well as you can in current studies

## Engage and Explore

- Be proactive in your learning – current studies + interests relevant to intended degree course

## Practise!

- Discuss your academic interests with others
- Past/example admissions tests
- Time management – generally + for tests/exams



# MAKE SURE YOU:

- Read the **subject pages** of the college website
- Read the course content, outline **and** entry requirements tabs
- Explore your subject!
- **Email** if you have questions





UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

# Other information

# Christ's College Website: Accommodation

## ACCOMMODATION

[Home](#) [Admissions](#) [Undergraduate Admissions](#) [Accommodation](#)

*These pages describe accommodation for prospective undergraduate students. If you are a member of the public looking for College Bed and Breakfast accommodation, please visit the [Bed and Breakfast](#) pages.*

Here at Christ's we're extremely lucky to be able to accommodate the majority of our undergraduate students onsite in our beautiful, centrally located College campus ([map](#)). Roughly sixty undergraduates live in a set of houses just behind the College on Jesus Lane and King's Street, while the remaining 300 or so students live on campus. This creates a great community atmosphere, but does mean that getting from one side of College to



[Undergraduate Ad...](#) >  
[Subjects](#) >  
[Exploring courses](#) >  
[Student Profiles](#) >  
[Subject resources](#) >  
[Why Choose Christ...](#) >  
[Grounds and Facili...](#) >  
**[Accommodation](#)** v  
[Finances](#) >  
[International Stude...](#) >  
[Events \(including o...](#) >  
[Visiting Christ's](#) >

Here are some examples:

- [Inside New Court Staircases 1-3](#)
- [Inside New Court Staircase 4](#)
- [Inside the Stevenson Building, Third Court](#)
- [Inside the Blyth Building, Third Court](#)
- [Inside Second Court](#)
- [Jesus Lane and King Street](#)

# Christ's College Website: Facilities

- **Entrance**

- **Porters' Lodge**

- **First Court**

- **Café and Bar** (Buttery)
- **Hall**
- **Chapel**
- **Law Library**
- **OCR (meeting room)**
- **Darwin room**
- Accommodation

- **Library Court**

- **Working Library**
- **Old Library**
- Prayer Room

- **Second Court**

- **Fellows' Building**
- **Canteen** (Upper Hall)
- **Accommodation**

- **Third Court**

- **Accommodation: Blyth Building**
- **Accommodation: Stevenson Building**
- **Lloyd Room (meeting room)**
- Accommodation: Y Building

- **Behind Third Court**

- **Welfare Room and Nurse's Surgery**
- **Laundry Room**
- **Hobson's Conduit**
- **Darwin portico**
- Accommodation: P and Q staircases

- **New Court**

- **Yusuf Hamied Centre**
    - **Theatre**
    - **Function Room** (and second bar)
    - **Common Rooms & TV room**
    - **Music practice room**
    - **Squash Court**
    - **Gym**
  - **Accommodation: New Court Staircases 1-3**
  - **Accommodation: New Court Staircase 4**
  - **New Court Seminar Room**
- **Yusuf Hamied Court (new) & Todd Building**
    - **Bill Fitzgerald Music Room** (Yusuf Hamied Court)
    - **Plumb Auditorium** (Todd Building)
    - Accommodation: Todd Building (staircase Z)
- **Darwin Garden**
  - **Fellows' Garden**
    - **Milton's Mulberry Tree**
    - **Swimming pool**



[Hall picture page](#)



[Buttery picture page](#)



[Old Library page](#)



[Working Library page](#)



[Chapel picture page](#)



[Fellows' Garden page](#)



[Swimming pool page](#)



[Theatre page](#)



# Christ's College Website: Student Profiles

CHRIST'S COLLEGE

## AYOMIDE - LAW

[Home](#) [Admissions](#) [Undergraduate Admissions](#) [Student Profiles](#) [Law \(Ayomide's profile\)](#)

*Ayomide is from New Cross in South-East London, and wrote this at the end of his first year studying **Law** here at Christ's College, Cambridge. He took A-Levels in Maths, Economics and English Literature.*

### WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO LAW AT CAMBRIDGE?

Studying Law aligned well with my skillset (writing, arguing and reading), and it's a course that gives me a lot of freedom of choice on what path to take after university. Law is also a broad course that touches on a lot of areas in society, which allows me to explore different angles of the law, depending on the problems it aims to address. Finally, as it is such a current subject that affects our



Ayomide, First year

- [Student Profiles](#) >
- [Where our student...](#) >
- [Archaeology \(Ari's ...\)](#) >
- [Architecture \(Anna...\)](#) >
- [Architecture \(Victo...\)](#) >
- [ASNC \(Alys's profile\)](#) >
- [Classics \(Emma's p...\)](#) >
- [Classics \(Kathryn's ...\)](#) >
- [Classics \(Tom's pro...\)](#) >
- [Classics \(Sebastian...\)](#) >
- [Chemical Engineer...](#) >
- [Computer Science ...](#) >
- [Computer Science](#) >

CHRIST'S COLLEGE  
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE



## RACHEL - NATURAL SCIENCES

[Home](#) [Admissions](#) [Undergraduate Admissions](#) [Student Profiles](#) [Natural Sciences \(Rachel's profile\)](#)

*Rachel wrote this at the end of her first year studying **Natural Sciences (Biological)** here at Christ's College, Cambridge. She is from Guildford, South-East England and did A-levels in Chemistry, Biology, Physics and Maths.*

### WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO YOUR COURSE?

I was attracted by the breadth of the Natural Science course. I liked that you don't have to decide what you want to specialise in too early. I'm a very indecisive person, and it stressed me out to look at other courses where you need to decide if you want to do a biochemistry degree, biomedical science, or genetics right from the start. I didn't know what



- [Student Profiles](#) >
- [Where our student...](#) >
- [Archaeology \(Ari's ...\)](#) >
- [Architecture \(Anna...\)](#) >
- [Architecture \(Victo...\)](#) >
- [ASNC \(Alys's profile\)](#) >
- [Classics \(Emma's p...\)](#) >
- [Classics \(Kathryn's ...\)](#) >
- [Classics \(Tom's pro...\)](#) >
- [Classics \(Sebastian...\)](#) >
- [Chemical Engineer...](#) >
- [Computer Science ...](#) >
- [Computer Science](#) >

# Keeping in Touch



**<https://tinyurl.com/OngoingSupport2023>**

Email: [admissions@christs.cam.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@christs.cam.ac.uk)

Web: **christs.cam.ac.uk**



Christ's College Cambridge