

Christine, Peterhouse Cambridge

Making Competitive Applications



Top UK Universities to Aim For





Why Oxford or Cambridge?

What is different about Oxford and Cambridge?

- Teaching Style
- College Structure
- Application Process





Teaching:

**Tutorials /
Supervisions**

**University
College
Department**





WHAT IS A College

- 29 undergraduate Colleges (Cambridge)
 - 2 female-only
 - Between 80 – 200 students a year
 - 34 undergraduate Colleges (Oxford)
 - All mixed genders
 - Between 30 – 150 students a year
-
- A college provides:
 - Accommodation
 - Dining Hall
 - A Common Room (JCR)
 - Library
 - Facilities like gyms, theatres, college bar, etc.
 - Pastoral support
 - Most subjects available at most Colleges

Application Timeline



Choose course and college

Apply via UCAS by 16th October

Register for any pre-interview assessments by deadline

Complete the My Cambridge Application (MyCApp) the week after (Cambridge only)

Pre-interview assessments



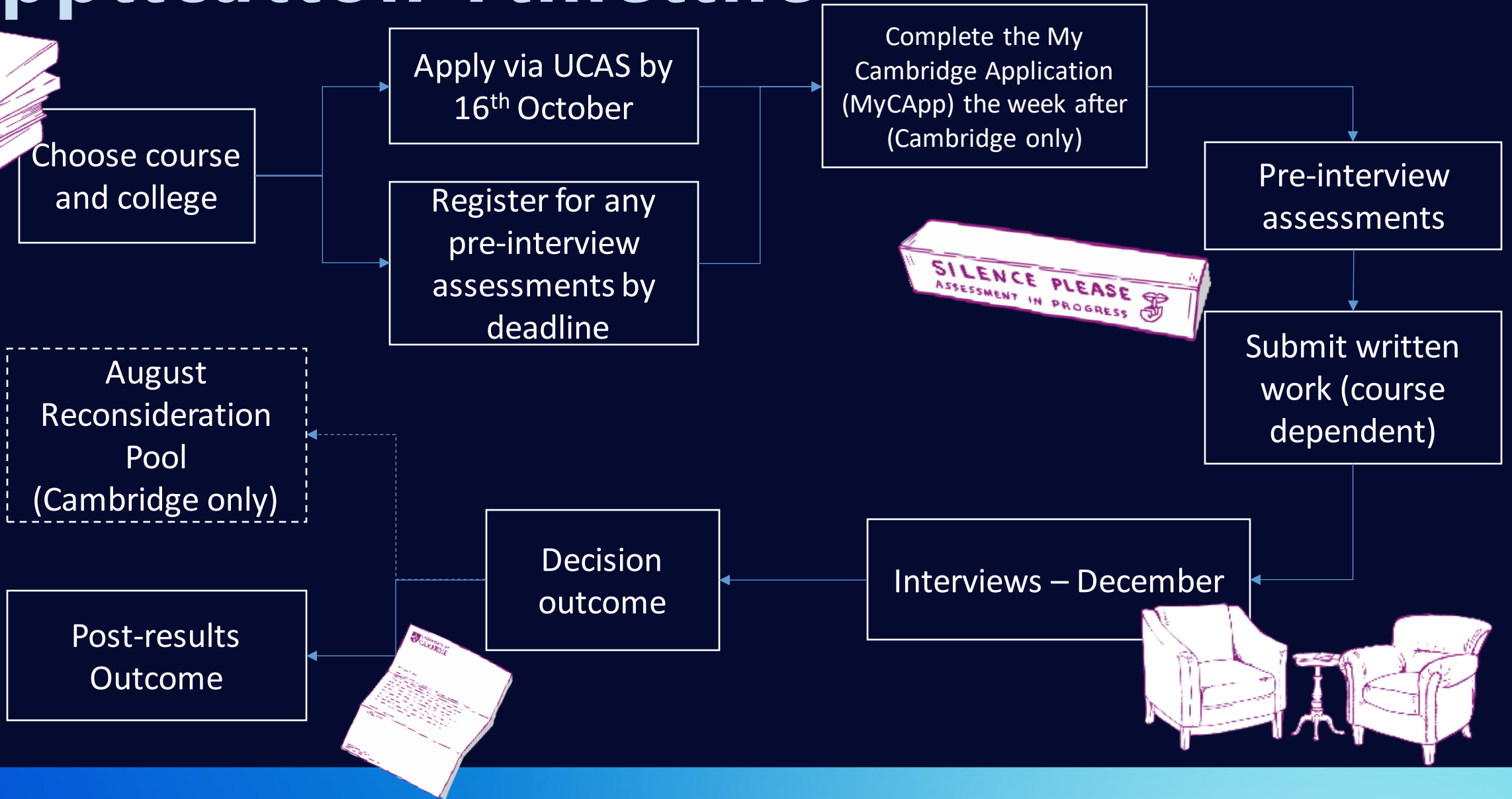
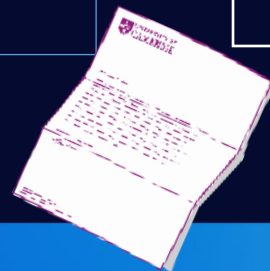
Submit written work (course dependent)

August Reconsideration Pool (Cambridge only)

Decision outcome

Interviews – December

Post-results Outcome



Choosing a Course



Course

College

Admissions
Assessment
Registration

UCAS:
16th Oct

My Cambridge
Application:
22nd Oct

Admissions
Assessment and
Written Work

Interview
(Dec)

Decision
(Jan)



Many graduate jobs don't specify a degree subject:

They ask for a good degree



From a good university



In any subject



If necessary, training follows

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City centre or further out of town?

Old or modern?

Facilities e.g. sports, performing arts, accommodation?

Size?

Choosing a College

Available bursaries and scholarships?

What feels right for you?

Close to the Department?

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For example:



Peterhouse - Cambridge

- Around 70 students per year
- Cambridge's oldest college, founded in 1284
- Very close to the Engineering Department
- City centre

Magdalen College - Oxford

- Around 110+ students per year
- Founded in 1458
- City centre
- Has its own deer park



Choosing a College

Open Days

Oxford – 28th and 29th
June, 15th September
2023

Cambridge – 6th and
7th July, 15th
September 2023



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The Pool

- System of cross-college moderation system
- Typically, over 1/4 of Cambridge offers are from the Pool
- Typically, around 1/3 of Oxford applicants are accepted by a different college than they applied to
- It means you shouldn't be disadvantaged by making an application to an over-subscribed college

Tell your teachers you're applying!

- They may need to register you for a pre-interview admissions assessment
- They need to write your reference earlier
- They can provide you with help and support

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The Application Process: What do we look at - UCAS

School or
college
reference

Predicted A-
level grades

Personal
Statement

GCSE
grades

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#ExploreYourSubject



@Peterhouse_SL0



Critical engagement

- What is the argument in this book/article?
- What is the supporting evidence?
- What do I think? How can I find out more?

NewScientist

aeon

The Economist



My Cambridge Application

- **Optional additional personal statement**
 - If your Cambridge course is different to those elsewhere, e.g. Natural Sciences, HSPS
- **Extenuating Circumstances Form**
- **Contextual Data**
- **Just for Cambridge**
- **Deadline - one week after UCAS Deadline**



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Extenuating Circumstances and Contextual

Extenuating Circumstances:
If your education has been affected by circumstances outside of your control, we want to know so that we can assess your achievements in their proper context



Extenuating Circumstances Form

Background

The Extenuating Circumstances Form is designed to ensure that all Cambridge Colleges have the information they require in order accurately to assess applicants who have experienced particular personal or educational disadvantage. It helps Admissions Tutors by providing, first, context against which they can judge the academic record of an applicant, and, secondly, information useful in assessing an applicant's performance at interview.

The form should only be used where an applicant's education has been **seriously disrupted or disadvantaged** through health or personal problems, disability or difficulties with schooling.

While Cambridge Colleges look for potential as well as achievement in their applicants, they have to be sure that students who receive offers are well suited to the specific course for which they have applied. Undergraduates need to be highly motivated and have sufficient background knowledge to cope with the challenging nature of Cambridge courses. Applicants are strongly advised to read the University of Cambridge *Undergraduate Prospectus* or website (www.cam.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/) carefully before applying, and to ensure that they understand the structure of the course they hope to study.

Data

Contextual Data

- Geographical information (HE progression in your local area)
- School information (GCSE / A Level performance)
- Free School Meal Eligibility
- Care Experience

Only used to fairly assess candidates who may be disadvantaged: it's not used to discriminate against those who have not experienced disadvantage

Written Work

- May be requested for arts/humanities subjects
- No more than 2,500 words
- Marked by a teacher
- Weekly school essay, not written especially for application



The Application Process: What do we look at?

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Assessments

Predicted A-
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Contextual
Data

Extenuating
Circumstances

Written Work

GCSE
grades

Personal
Statement

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Interviews

- 1 to 3 interviews – all academic
 - Conducted by lecturers/supervisors
 - Don't bother looking them up!
- 25–30mins typically
- May be given prep material beforehand
- Could have an at-interview assessment
- Supervision-style discussion
- We know you're nervous!



#Peterhouse #CambridgeUniversity #medicineinterview
Medicine Mock/Example Interview (2) | Peterhouse, Cambridge
19,508 views · Jun 24, 2019



Ascleplum
1.44K subscribers

SUBSCRIBE



Example Cambridge Law Admissions Interview
509,700 views · Nov 27, 2017



Cambridge Law Faculty
17.9K subscribers

SUBSCRIBE

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Interviews - How to Prepare



- Revise everything you've mentioned in your application
- Discuss academic work, ideas, and wider reading with those also applying
- Practice **thinking aloud** and staying calm when you don't know an answer



The Application Process: What do we look at?

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Assessment

Predicted A-
level grades

Contextual
Data

Extenuating
Circumstances

Interview
Performance

Personal
Statement

Written Work

GCSE
grades

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Successful Applications

Common pitfalls

- Wrong subject(s)/course chosen
- Lack of wider reading and critical engagement
- Lack of revision before interview
- Rehearsed answers at interview, lack of clarity or flexibility of thought

Key points for success

- Strong exam results
- Choice of A-level and degree subject
- Wider reading and revision in advance of interview
- Ability to think independently



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What can I do now?

OX.AC.UK/STUDY

Home of Big Questions

OX?PLORE www.explore.org

You Tube www.youtube.com/Oxford

Available on iTunes iTunes or <http://itunes.ox.ac.uk>

f www.facebook.com/the.university.of.oxford

t www.twitter.com/OxOutreach



