

**KING'S COLLEGE,  
CAMBRIDGE**

**2024**

# **PRE-APPLICATION PACK**

**ADMISSIONS  
OFFICE**





# INTRODUCTION

We're delighted that you are considering applying to study at King's College, Cambridge

We realise that navigating the application process can be challenging, and so, we have produced this 'quick guide' to help you make key decisions in relation to your application, and to take the various steps you will need to complete throughout the application process.

The information contained in this guide can also be found on our website:  
<https://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/applying-to-kings>

This guide will cover:

- 1. Researching your Options**
- 2. The Application Process**
- 3. How Does King's Make Decisions?**
- 4. What Happens if I Don't Get My Grades?**
- 5. Why Should I Choose King's?**
- 6. Where Would I live In King's?**
- 7. Fees, Fee Status, Finance, and Financial Support**

This guide is updated every year; please make sure you have downloaded the most up-to-date guide before you apply.



## RESEARCHING YOUR OPTIONS

### Choosing a Subject

The first important decision you have to make is which course you wish to study. This needs to be a subject to which you are genuinely committed, in which you are interested, and which will support any career ambitions you may have.

In choosing your subject, remember that subjects you studied at school may be quite different when studied at university level, and that subjects not available to you at school, may well be available at university (eg. Law, ASNC, Engineering etc). When thinking about what subject to study, therefore, don't simply think about your favourite school subjects; think in more general terms about your interests, motivations, and ambitions, as well as the learning styles with which you feel most comfortable.

Remember that the content of courses at different universities can vary significantly, so it is important to also study the content and structure of your chosen course at different universities and to compare them to see what suits you best.

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## Check the Entry Requirements

Having found a course you think you are interested in, it's important to check that you meet its entry requirements. Some subjects require that you have taken specific subjects at A level (or equivalent) while others strongly recommend that you take certain subjects. While not taking recommended (as opposed to compulsory) subjects will not be detrimental to your application, you should perhaps consider whether there are any ways you can cover content related to those subjects outside your school studies, as it is likely that the skills or knowledge acquired through studying those subjects will be advantageous in the application process, and/or throughout your degree.

If you have a good reason for not taking a compulsory subject, such as your school not permitting you to do so, contact the College ASAP to check whether or not this would be detrimental to your application, and whether or not there is anything you can do to make up for this.

To check entry requirements navigate to the relevant subject page on the **Cambridge University** website, click the 'Entry Requirements' tab, then navigate to the King's College row of the linked table. This will ensure you know of any specific requirements of King's College for your chosen subject.

In addition to checking you are taking the appropriate subjects in school, the entry requirements will also indicate what grades you will be expected to be predicted, or have achieved, to be considered eligible for studying at King's. It is very rare that a student who is not predicted at least the minimum typical requirements cited on the website to be invited to interview, unless there are convincing mitigating factors explaining this situation included in the reference you submit with your UCAS application.

It may be that you will find out that Cambridge is not for you; it might not offer a course that is well suited to your interests or needs, or you may not meet our minimum requirements. That is perfectly okay, and it just means that you will be better suited to another university, where you are more likely to thrive.





## THE APPLICATION PROCESS

If you have decided that studying at Cambridge University is for you, there are two routes you can follow in your application: you can either submit an **'open application'**, which means you will be randomly allocated to one of the Cambridge colleges, or you can submit an application to a specific college, such as King's. In each case, the college you apply to, or which you are randomly assigned, will be the college to assess you, interview you (if relevant), and ultimately determine whether you should be made an offer, should be rejected, and/or placed in the pool to enable another college to make an offer to you if they wish.

*The **winter 'pool'** takes place in January, after interviews, and it is a process whereby colleges can place applications that they feel are strong, and potentially worthy of an offer to study at Cambridge, in a 'pool', from which other colleges can 'fish', if they want or need to make more offers in certain subjects. This process is designed to better ensure that the strongest applicants to Cambridge are not disadvantaged by reason of applying to a college that just happens to receive a large number of strong applications in a given year; helping to ensure that the strongest applicants across the University as a whole are admitted, regardless of the college to which they ultimately obtain admission. This also means that when thinking about which college to apply to, applicants should not place too much emphasis on statistics and application numbers, but should focus more on what the college offers them in terms of culture, environment, and amenities.*

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To apply to Cambridge, whether via an open application or an application targeted at a particular college, students must apply via **UCAS** as with any other university. The process is the same for all colleges, and details can be found on the University's **Applying to Cambridge** page. You should read these carefully and make sure you fully understand all elements of the process that are relevant to you.

Please have regard to **application dates and deadlines**. Some aspects of your application require contributions from other people that need to be completed within strict time-frames, and you are responsible for making sure all parts of your application are completed in full and on time. Unfortunately, we cannot continue with applications that are incomplete, or which consist of components that have been submitted late.

Please remember that some subjects require that you sit a **pre-interview assessment** (Engineering, Chemical Engineering and Bio-Technology, Natural Sciences, Medicine, Economics, Computer Science, Law), for which you must be registered through a test centre, and must complete the assessment by the deadline. Registration and test dates are strict and failure to do either by the relevant deadlines will result in your application being discontinued because we cannot fairly assess candidates who have not completed the same modes of assessment as all other candidates.

Some subjects also require that you submit **written work** with your application. Failure to submit the required written work by the relevant deadline will also result in your application being discontinued. You will be sent information about how to submit your written work after you have submitted your application.





## Interviews

Not everyone who applies to Cambridge will be invited to interview. We will let you know if you have been invited to interview usually in the last two weeks of November, but in some subjects as early as the first and second week of November, with **interviews taking place in the first week of December.**

Depending on which subject you applied to, you might be required to sit a **College-registered assessment** before your interview, and you will receive details about how to do this in your interview invitation. Please check if this applies to your subject by navigating to the relevant subject page on our website.

Different colleges have chosen to adopt different formats for their interviews. In King's, **we interview all UK-based applicants in person**, and all candidates based outside the UK online. The format and structure of the interviews are the same, however, and each offers the same opportunity for us to assess your potential.

Depending on your subject, you will either have **1, 2 or 3 interviews**, depending on subject, varying in length from **25 – 35 minutes**. Each interview will be designed to test your aptitude for and commitment to your chosen subject, while testing some of the core skills deemed necessary for you to cope with the demands of the degree. We might begin by asking you some questions about your personal statement, before moving on to either specific problem questions (particularly if you are applying for a STEM subject), or questions about hypothetical scenarios which we hope you to address using your existing knowledge, and capacities for analysis. The interview is designed to push you – so do not worry if you find it challenging – but it is also supposed to be an enjoyable and intellectually stimulating experience. After all, you will be talking to specialists in your chosen subject and will be getting a chance to engage with issues, and on an intellectual level, that you may not have before experienced. We often suggest that students **treat interviews as a 'taster' of what teaching will be like in Cambridge**, and so, for some students, may be the only experience they ever get of what it might be like to study at Cambridge, and participate in supervisions.

*If you have a disability, or require any adjustments to be made, you will have an opportunity to request these after you have submitted your application. These requests are treated with utmost sensitivity, and you should not worry at all that you will be disadvantaged for making these requests. Our staff and fellows are more than happy to accommodate you where this is possible.*



## HOW DOES KING'S MAKE DECISIONS

Students often ask us which element of the application is 'most' important. In fact, no component is more important than any other, because your application is assessed holistically. We use all the information we have about you and your potential, including contextual factors, to assess your capacity to thrive on your chosen course. While your qualifications and predicted or achieved grades are important as a basic indicator of this, provided that you meet our minimum requirements, these are given no more weight than any other element, but are instead seen as just one indication of your ability and potential – alongside any achievements indicated in your personal statement and reference relevant to your chosen course; your performance in any assessments; and your performance at interview. All of this information is, moreover, interpreted in context, in light of information supplied to us via UCAS. Please see this page for details about what information is taken into account and why:

**<https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/apply/after/contextual-data>**

Decision-making takes place in **two stages**, and involves **discussions between subject-specialists and the Admissions Tutor**. The first stage takes place late October/early November, and involves making decisions about who to invite to interview. The second stage takes place after interviews, in mid-December, at which point the Admissions Tutors and the subject specialists sit down and discuss all the information they have relating to the applicant – including interview scores.



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Because the places we have available for students are limited, we often end up rejecting candidates who are extremely strong. This is not because they did anything 'wrong', or even, that they are necessarily unsuited to Cambridge. It just means that they were not the strongest applicants in the year to which they applied, in a context in which we can admit only a finite number of students.

When making decisions, **we decide which applicants we want to make an offer to, and we set our offer conditions.** These conditions may be stricter than the minimum typical offers stated on the University website, as each offer is made on an individualised basis. This might be for a number of reasons, such as because we want to ensure that a candidate remedies any weakness identified at interview, or we want to push and challenge a candidate. Either way, **your conditions are strict, and it is only if you meet your conditions that you will have a guaranteed place at King's.**

In addition to making offers, we also decide at this point which students to whom we are not making an offer, are sufficiently strong that we think they should be placed in the pool in case another college wants to make an offer to them. **We only place candidates in the pool who have a reasonable chance of success,** and whom we have assessed as having the potential to thrive at Cambridge. Success in the winter pool depends on the strength of other candidates in the pool, as well as the relative demand among the colleges.

**Decisions about interviews are communicated to applicants early-mid November.** In some subjects, such as medicine, these decisions may be as late as the third week of November, due to the timing of BMAT results. **Decisions about offers will be communicated towards the end of January.** Details about how you can obtain feedback if you were not successful at this stage can be found on our website.





## WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T GET MY GRADES?

**You will usually be given until the end of August (in the year following the year of application) to meet your offer conditions.** If you do not meet your academic conditions, we are under no obligation to admit you. This is so even if you think that your performance does not adequately represent your ability. If you suffered adverse circumstances during your exams, we can take these into account only if we are informed about these as soon as reasonably practicable following your exams. Any information of this type provided after results day will not be taken into consideration.

Occasionally, we do admit candidates who did not meet their offer conditions, particularly where they were very close to their expected grades, or experienced severely disadvantageous circumstances during their exams of which we are given notice, and which we deem to explain the disparity between achieved and predicted grades. If you did not meet your conditions we will let you know our decision as soon as practicable after your results are released.

**Candidates who nearly meet their offer conditions may be placed in the summer pool,** and given a chance to be made an offer by another college. It is entirely at the college's discretion as to whether they place you in the summer pool, and it is rare for a college to pool a candidate who did not at least meet the University's minimum entry requirements, unless there are other additional factors deemed to explain the lower than expected results. The pool takes place the day after results day. While we will not inform you that we are placing you in the pool, we will let you know the final outcome of your application by the end of the day, including the outcome of the pool if you participated.



## WHY SHOULD I CHOOSE KING'S COLLEGE?

The quality of the education you receive will not differ depending on the college to which you are admitted. **In choosing your college, you should be thinking about where you think you would be happiest living, eating, studying, and socialising**, as this is where you will spend most of your time. Colleges vary in their size, the diversity of the student body and fellowship, as well as in the accommodation and amenities they have on offer. Students also often say that each college has a different 'feel' or 'culture', which is why it is always good to visit and look around, such as during one of our open days.

**King's is renowned for being relaxed, welcoming, and diverse.** It is a mid-sized college, admitting around 135 undergraduate students per year. It is located in the centre of the historical city, and is well-placed for most faculties and departments, as well as shops, and cafes. King's is particularly well known for its music, and, by association, the Chapel, providing unique opportunities for singers in particular. King's also has a vibrant political community, an active politics society, and a culture of lively, stimulating, political, debate. We pride ourselves on our cultural dynamics, and our inclusivity, and this is evident in the range of societies which we form, and activities which we offer.

**King's receives a high percentage of applications from UK-based maintained sector applicants and so, a large proportion of its student body went to a maintained sector school.** It also admits a large number of 'widening participation' candidates, candidates recognised to have experienced various sorts of disadvantage, and whom the College supports in various ways thanks to a number of donations from alumni. However, King's actively welcomes people from all backgrounds, and is proud of the diversity and dynamism of its student body, staff, and fellowship.





## WHERE WOULD I LIVE IN KING'S?

**King's houses all its undergraduates for the full three or four years of their course.** A lot of undergraduate rooms are on the main college site. The rest are in 'hostels' (blocks of student rooms), which are a few minutes' walk from the College. The undergraduate rooms cover a wide range in terms of size, shape, age, and rent. All have a bed, a desk, a chest of drawers, a wardrobe, bookshelves and a reading lamp. They usually also have an easy chair and a coffee table. Many rooms have the cosiness and interesting shapes and features associated with old buildings.

When you start as a first year, you are allocated accommodation by the College Accommodation Officer. **You will be given a choice over two things: your preferred building and the length of lease. You can also specify if you wish to be guaranteed a room at the lower end of the rent scale.** The Accommodation Officer will also take into account any students with **special accommodation needs** (such as disabled access).

The rooms range from very old, with the full complement of all the features you would expect: mullioned windows, beautiful views, uneven floors, interesting architectural features, and quite often several flights of stairs to the nearest loo and bathroom, to the very modern – with their own bathroom or shower room.

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All rooms have toilet and bathroom facilities in fairly close proximity as well as some shared kitchens. Most buildings have either shared kitchens or 'gyp rooms' (rooms where snacks can be prepared). Kitchens are fairly simple, but have fridges and microwaves (some have cookers and ovens, but this depends on an ongoing fire safety review).

Some hostels have additional common areas where students can socialise or study. **Hostels outside of the main College site have laundry facilities.** For rooms in or adjacent to the main College site, there is a large, **central laundry room.** On the main College site there are also some **music practice rooms**, a large **bicycle storage shed**, and a small **gym.**

**Rents are set based on a formula agreed mutually between students and Fellows**, a formula that ensure that rents in King's are reasonable when judged by reference to rates in other universities, and in other colleges. Different rates are charged depending on the standard of the room (size, amenities, etc.), and depending on whether the student chooses to take a 'short' contract lease (28/29 week lease, covering term-time plus a few days extra) or a long contact lease (covering October-June, minus a few weeks over Christmas).





## FEES, FEE STATUS, AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

If you are made an offer to study at King's, **we will indicate your fee status in your offer letter**. If we cannot determine your fee status without additional information, we will ask you fill out a questionnaire so we can make this assessment for you. This decision is not a King's specific decision, but a legal decision based on an interpretation of the relevant legislation. Information about how this decision is made can be found here: <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Fees-and-Money/England-HE-fee-status>

**Your fee status will affect the fees you are charged, as well as your access to student finance.** It will also affect your eligibility for other forms of financial support in the wider University.

**Home fee students will automatically be assessed for the Cambridge bursary**, a means tested bursary that can provide up to £3,500 to home fee students, based on an assessment of their household income. No separate application needs to be completed; assessment will be done automatically based on your student loan application to your relevant funding body. Details about this can be found here: <https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/cambridge-bursary>

**International students** are not eligible for the Cambridge bursary, but **can access a range of international scholarships and studentships**, information about which can be found here: <https://www.internationalstudents.cam.ac.uk/applying/fees-and-financial-support>. It is not possible to apply for these until you have received an offer to study at a Cambridge college. Information about how to apply will be provided in your offer-letter and/or accompanying documents.

King's College does offer a **small number of studentships to international students** on the basis of academic merit. However, the College usually only makes one award per year, covering the full costs of a student's degree, and as such, these studentships are highly competitive.

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In addition to these studentships and bursaries, all King's students are eligible for various forms of **financial support** while they are at King's. These include hardship related grants; grants in relation to study-expenses; grants for the purposes of travel; grants associated with participation in University-level sports; grants to assist with medical costs; and grants to assist with payment for language courses. Full details about these forms of support can be found at:

**<https://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/intranet/students/college-grants-students>**

Finally, the Admissions Tutor also has the ability to provide **bespoke financial and academic support** to a small number of candidates meeting various widening participation criteria. This includes support with accommodation during the vacation; with IT and technology; an internship grant to assist with participation in internships and work experience over the summer, as well as private tutoring during the first year of an undergraduate degree. If you are eligible for this support you will be notified about this after confirmation.

**To assist you in financial planning, it is worth noting that the University estimates that the average living costs for an undergraduate student studying at a Cambridge college in 2024-25 is £14,600 a year, or £1,216 a month.**

