

Cambridge University
Students' Union



Activities for Schools and Colleges

2009-2010



Dear Teacher / Adviser,

Welcome to the 2009-10 programme of activities for schools and colleges. We hope that you will find a range of events and initiatives that will benefit your students as they consider Higher Education and, specifically, Cambridge.

The Cambridge University Students' Union (CUSU) runs an Access Programme, headed by a sabbatical Access Officer, usually a recent graduate of the University. Each year, over 1000 Cambridge students volunteer to work with schools across the country in outreach activities.

Our aim is not to 'sell' the University, but to use our own experiences to help prospective students make an informed choice about whether Cambridge is for them. For many current students, it is a chance to talk about their own fears of putting in an application and to provide reassurance to the common questions: Will I fit in? Am I 'clever enough'? How bad are the interviews? Can I afford it? Will I have time for a social life?

Our events aim to maintain a relaxed, informal and down-to-earth atmosphere; we encourage students to ask questions which they might not feel confident asking to an official university representative or a teacher. Having recently gone through UCAS applications and the transition to university, we are well-

placed to understand the concerns of your students, particularly in applying to a university like Cambridge. We hope that through our Access Programme we can encourage students to consider Cambridge an option and that we can help you to support them through their application process. Perhaps most importantly, we hope that by sharing our own stories and experiences we can inspire students to work hard at their studies, think outside their curriculum and classroom and aspire to a university education.

The activities in this guide are targeted at students of a variety of ages and learning levels. Some specify year groups or ask for a specific attainment level; we are, however, happy to work with any secondary age group on request. This list is not exhaustive; we are happy to use your suggestions to try to provide an activity you think would benefit your students.

We look forward to working with your school throughout the year.

Joe Farish
CUSU Access Officer 2009-10

Email: access@cusu.cam.ac.uk
Direct Line: 01223 761691



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Shadowing Scheme

What is the Shadowing Scheme?

The Shadowing Scheme, now entering its tenth year, is a residential event, supported by the Cambridge Colleges, which brings year 12 students to Cambridge to shadow a current undergraduate for three days. The 'shadows' stay in College accommodation and experience student life first-hand. They meet current undergraduates, attend lectures and supervisions in the subject of their choice and participate in extra-curricular activities and taster sessions. The event includes an admissions session.

Dates of the Event

The 2010 Shadowing Scheme will take place over three sets of dates. Participants will be allocated to one of these dates after selection, though they will be able to state a preference.

Thursday 28 - Saturday 30 January
Thursday 4 - Saturday 6 February
Thursday 11 - Saturday 13 February



Typical Timetable

There is no typical timetable for the Shadowing Scheme; participants' schedules will vary depending upon their volunteer. Students will arrive in Cambridge for 1pm on Thursday and leave around midday on Saturday.

Who is this Scheme aimed at?

The Scheme is aimed at students from state schools with little history of sending students to Oxford or Cambridge and/or students from families with no history of university. Applicants should be on track to achieve A grades at AS level (or equivalent) and be capable of making a competitive application to a selective university. We would normally expect students to have a strong set of GCSE results; we will, however, take into account any contextual information surrounding a student's performance.

How do I book?

Applications for the Shadowing Scheme will open in August/September 2009. All applications are submitted online. There are three parts to the form: a student form, a teacher form and a parent/carer form. The Shadowing Scheme is a competitive scheme; we tend to receive more applications than we have places (in 2008, 1000 applications for 240 places). You may encourage multiple applications; please be aware, however, that we will be unlikely to accept more than a couple of students from any one school or College.

The deadline for applications is likely to be at the end of November, though you are advised to check this information on our website. No applications will be assessed until this deadline has passed.

How do I found out more?

Additional information about the Scheme, including student diaries from previous participants, can be found on our website.

Contact: CUSU Access Officer

Email: access@cusu.cam.ac.uk

Direct Line: 01223 761 691

Website: www.applytocambridge.com

Mature Students Shadowing Days

“Looking back, spending a weekend in Cambridge taught me a lot of things. It taught me that I want to go there. It taught me that I definitely want to study languages. And it taught me that there is no reason for fear. That all you can ever be is yourself ... I plan, in one and a half years, to go to Cambridge as Steph. And I plan, in five and a half years, to leave as Steph. With a degree.”

- Steph, Ponteland High School, on the Shadowing Scheme

What is the Shadowing Days?

We run a Shadowing Scheme for mature students (students who will be 21 or over at the start of their course). The event takes place over one day; whilst there is no guarantee of accommodation, it may be possible to secure a room in a College, with sufficient notice. Students are matched to a mature student and will go to any lectures, supervisions and classes. The day also allows time for students to find out more about the lifestyle, challenges and rewards of a full-time course at Cambridge, and to ask any questions in an informal setting.

Dates of the Event

Dates for the 2009-10 Scheme have yet to be confirmed, but will be likely to run in November 2009 and in January 2010. Information will be updated throughout the year and dates will be advertised on our website.

Typical Timetable

08:30 Welcome Breakfast
09:00-15:00 Student Shadowing
Timetable dependent upon student and subject
16:00-17:30 Coffee with an Admissions Tutor

Who is this Scheme aimed at?

The Scheme is open to prospective students aged 21+ at the start of their course. It is aimed specifically at those who are unsure about applying to Cambridge or starting a full-time degree course.

How do I book?

Applications for the Mature Students Shadowing Scheme will go online in September. There are only a small number of places (in 2008, 13 places), though there are no limits on numbers for the final admissions session.

Contact: CUSU Access Officer

Email: access@cusu.cam.ac.uk

Direct Line: 01223 761 691

Website: www.applytocambridge.com

Cambridge Explained Day

What are ‘Cambridge Explained’ days?

The days are designed to introduce students to Cambridge. They are student-run and informal, with an opportunity to talk in small groups to current undergraduates. The days try to explain what it is like to be a student at Cambridge: how you are taught, where you live, the College system, social activities, transition from school to university.

Dates of the Event

There will be three Cambridge Explained days in 2009-10, with capacity for 100 students at each:

Friday 25 September (*aimed at year 13 students*)

Monday 15 March

Wednesday 17 March

Typical Timetable

10:45-11:00 Registration
11:00-12:00 Cambridge Explained talk
12:00-12:30 The Student Panel
12:30-13:00 Lunch
13:00-14:30 Tour of Cambridge (*subject groups*)
14:30-15:45 Admissions Tutor talk
15:45-16:00 Closing Questions

Who is this event aimed at?

The event is aimed at year 12/13 students considering applying to Cambridge. Students can book individually or as part of a school group, and are welcome to attend with teachers or parents. Priority will be given to students from state schools.

How do I book?

Bookings are made online. Applications will be online from August 2009. Confirmation of a place will be sent at least three weeks before the event. School groups are advised to contact the CUSU Access Officer prior to booking.

Contact: CUSU Access Officer

Email: access@cusu.cam.ac.uk

Direct Line: 01223 761 691

Website: www.applytocambridge.com

Target Schools

What is the Target Schools programme?

Every year we send hundreds of current undergraduates into schools and colleges in their local area to talk to students about life as a student at Cambridge. The undergraduates use their own experiences to take students through the steps, from applications to freshers week, choosing a course to university exams, social life to academic work.

Dates of the Scheme

The visits tend to take place in University vacations, usually in March/April or late June/July. Undergraduates try to visit schools in their local area, which can provide an instant link between the students.

Typical Structure

In most cases, the visiting undergraduate will be able to adapt to the level of your students and their stage of thinking about university. The visits are often during lunch breaks, PSHE or after school, with students being self-nominating or invited by a teacher. The

sessions often begin with a 10-15 minute introductory presentation by the undergraduate and then continue with a Q&A session, allowing the session to be focused on the interests of those present.

Who is this scheme aimed at?

In most cases, this scheme is aimed at students in year 12 or 13, considering applying to Cambridge. The advantage of the scheme, however, is its flexibility; the visits can be adapted to cater for the requirements of your school or college.

How do I book?

To request a Target Schools visit, please contact the CUSU Access Officer (see below). Your school's details will be added to our database and highlighted as a priority school. We will then encourage students to sign up to visit you. We are unable to guarantee that a student will be able to visit your school or college; however, if we are unable to allocate a student to you, we will send your details to your Link College (see page 11).

CUSU Access Team

In addition to the Target Schools volunteers, we have a small team of highly trained volunteers (including a full-time sabbatical Access Officer) who visit schools and colleges throughout the academic year. We can offer a variety of different presentations and workshops, either as part of a visit to your school or college or as a day visit of your students to Cambridge. A suggestion of the types of activities we can offer is listed on the opposite page. Please note that this is not prescriptive; we are more than happy to tailor sessions to your needs, listen to requests or combine any presentations or activities into a longer programme.

Contact: CUSU Access Officer

Email: access@cusu.cam.ac.uk

Direct Line: 01223 761 691



“Our school was visited by the CUSU Access Officer. She was young and energetic and realistic, witty and charming and the students related to her as a result. ... She is a wealth of information and as Head of Year 13 I am so grateful to have a friendly contact I can e-mail for advice. I strongly recommend that other 6th Forms take up the offer - as it is very useful not only for Oxbridge applicants, but all university applicants”.

- Denise Jackson, The Leventhorpe School

Examples of Presentations

Presentation	Description	Age Group	Length
Cambridge Explained	An introduction to Cambridge University, covering the courses, teaching, the College system, student life, sports and societies and a brief look at the application process.	Year 12-13	30-60 mins
Why University?	This presentation is designed to introduce students to the idea of HE. It touches upon the types of courses, teaching, student life and career paths. It looks at the importance of GCSEs and at post-16 options.	Year 10-11	30-60 mins
Student Finance	A guide to student finance, including the national system, loans and bursaries and budgeting.	Year 12-13	30 mins
UCAS and Personal Statements	An overview of the UCAS process, focusing upon writing a personal statement.	Year 12-13	30-45 mins
Applying to Cambridge	An in-depth guide to the applications process, including college choice and interviews.	Year 12-13	30-45 mins
Choosing your Course	A guide to thinking about subject choice and comparing courses at different institutions.	Year 12	30 mins

Examples of Workshops and Activities

Activity	Description	Age Group	Length
Design your Student Week: general	Students construct their week's timetable in groups, using real lecture timetables, student newspapers, sports and society and entertainment listings. This aims to familiarise students with university and give a realistic idea of the amount of work required.	Year 9-11	60 mins
Design your Student Week: finance	An interactive and realistic introduction to student finance. Students are given a budget, which they must use to live as a student in Cambridge.	Year 9-11	60 mins
Personal Statements	An in-depth session analysing what makes a personal statement effective and acting as a starting point to construct individual statements.	Year 12-13	30-60 mins
Debate: Why HE?	A chance to learn debating skills and introduce students to HE, pulling together into a class debate.	Year 9-11	45-60 mins
Quiz Selection	Short team-based quizzes introducing students to a variety of issues, including finance, courses and living away from home.	Year 9-11	15 mins
Interview a Student	A short exercise, allowing students to ask a current undergraduate questions.	Year 9-11	15-25 mins

Ask a Student

The 'ask a student' scheme is run by a team of student volunteers across each subject, College and with a range of extra-curricular interests. It allows prospective students to ask a question to a current undergraduate in an informal, anonymous environment.

The motivation for this initiative comes from our own experiences of applying to university. Whilst there is a wealth of information on almost every aspect of university life, it is often hard to pull it together and to make sense of it. Sometimes the most important questions also seem the most trivial and aren't questions a student would want to ask to someone 'official'.

The 'ask a student' scheme tries to provide clear, concise and accessible answers and to point the way to the most useful information on a specific topic. It allows students to tap into the experiences of current students and tries to put a real face on the University.

Questions tend to cover a range of topics, from choosing a College to sports and societies, from communal bathrooms to the format of interviews,

from subject choice to suggestions of reading material.

www.applytocambridge.com

The website offers information for prospective students on applying to Cambridge, costs and bursaries and our access schemes and events. It also hosts our Alternative Prospectus (see page 10). 2009-10 will see the redevelopment of the Students' Union website. As the year progresses, we will be adding to the information, with student profiles, video blogs and a Frequently Asked Questions section.

The Students' Union prospective students website is not designed to be a substitute for the University, College or department websites: it does not contain anything like the depth and quality of information. It is, however, an informal resource for students in search of more information.



“The students came back from the Shadowing Scheme enriched and enthused. They really enjoyed the supervisions and were already dropping into their conversations terminology such as DoS. The Shadowing Scheme has made them even more determined to apply and be successful and shown them that any preconceptions they had about students being aloof were completely off the mark.”

- Tony Cutting, Teacher, Beauchamp College

Student Societies

There are over 600 central University societies, run by students, for students. Of these, many are involved in outreach activity with schools and Colleges. A full list of Cambridge University societies can be found in the searchable database:

<http://www.cusu.cam.ac.uk/societies/directory>

There are more societies than it is possible to mention, so we have drawn out a few examples of student societies working with schools.

Cultural and Religious Societies

The Islamic Society

The prospective students pages of the Islamic Society website offer advice to muslim students thinking about Cambridge and talk about moving away from home and the muslim community in the University. It includes details about prayer facilities, catering for a halal diet and the compatibility of a muslim lifestyle with student life at Cambridge.

The Islamic Society also work with the CUSU Shadowing Scheme (see page 4) to offer students the opportunity to shadow a muslim student for three days, to see life here first hand.

The Pakistani Society (PakSoc)

There is an annual PakSoc Access Day, where students can come to Cambridge for the day to meet with committee members and explore Cambridge.

The Turkish Society

2009 saw the first Turkish Society Open Day, with 40 year 11 and 12 students coming to Cambridge for the day. The time table is similar to the Cambridge Explained days (see page 5), though the focus is on the experiences of Turkish students in Cambridge.

Subject-based Societies

CHaOS

Cambridge Hands On Science (CHaOS) are a student-run group who bring fun scientific experiments into schools (years 5-8). They run an annual road show and

are involved in the Cambridge Science Festival.

CU Spaceflight

The Cambridge University Spaceflight group broke into the national news this year, sending four teddy bears into space (reaching altitudes of 30km). Students from the society have given talks, run workshops in schools and ran a Space Challenge competition.

Cambridge University Eco Racers

Cambridge University Eco Racing (CUER) designs, builds and races solar-powered cars, competing in the World Solar Challenge. They have taken their latest car to schools, giving assemblies and helping to lead workshops making solar powered buggies.

Skills-based Societies

Cambridge Debating Union

The Cambridge Union run an annual schools debating competition, involving over 700 students across the UK. Aimed at students in year 11-13, there are a series of regional rounds in late October leading to national finals in February.

This year's venture has seen a massive drive to increase participation in the competition amongst schools that don't traditionally enter. The Union is offering financial assistance to schools, introductory workshops, start-up mentors and a free-to-download guide written by some of Cambridge's best debaters, to help get schools off and running.

Cambridge SIFE

Students in Free Enterprise is a worldwide organisation that helps university students teach people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds about business, ethics, personal success skills, literacy and entrepreneurship.

Contact: CUSU Coordinator (societies)

Email: coordinator@cusu.cam.ac.uk

Telephone: 01223 333 313

Website: www.cusu.cam.ac.uk/societies/directory

What is the Alternative Prospectus?

The Alternative Prospectus is entirely written and produced by current students and is designed to give honest information about being a student at Cambridge. Its aim is not to 'sell' the University, but rather to help students make an informed decision about applying to Cambridge.

It guides students through various aspects of student life: Cambridge as a city, finance, welfare, applying to Cambridge, choosing a subject and choosing a College. There are full profiles for every undergraduate College and course, written by a current student.

It is not intended to be used as a substitute to the University Prospectus, but to be used alongside, providing a different type of information or a second opinion. Its tone is more relaxed and informal and feedback from schools suggests that it provides reassurance to many potential applicants. Every effort was made to ensure that the information was correct at the time of publication; some of the statistics, in particular, change on a year-to-year basis and students are advised to check important information on the University website.

Where can I find a copy?

The CUSU Alternative Prospectus is a biennial publication, which can be downloaded or viewed online. We have around 5000 printed copies; schools and Colleges can request a copy to be used as reference. Financial restrictions currently prevent us sending a copy to individual students. The Alternative Prospectus is also available at CUSU events and the University Open Days and Oxford and Cambridge Student Conferences.

As with all our events, there is no charge for the publication. There are several commercial companies who profit from selling copies of (often inaccurate or misleading) guides to Oxbridge, particularly applications; we strongly advise you to steer clear of these companies.

In addition to the CUSU Alternative Prospectus, several College Student Associations produce their own Alternative Prospectuses. Many are found on College Student Associations (often called JCR) websites, the addresses of which are printed on each of the College pages in the CUSU Alternative Prospectus.

Cambridge University

Alternative Prospectus

2009-2011 entry

**Request a copy:**Email: access@cusu.cam.ac.ukWebsite: www.applytocambridge.com

“I was surprised by the relaxed attitude of the lecturer who whilst teaching casually offered tea to myself and the small group of students he taught. ... If they didn’t know the answer, they weren’t sent away or told off, they were simply given a explanation to the correct answer. Surprisingly I wasn’t intimidated, I was curious to learn more and even asked some questions myself!”

- Sanarya, Lampton School, on the Shadowing Scheme

There are various elements of the University engaged in outreach work. CUSU coordinates the student-run initiatives, but we have pulled together some of the main official University projects and schemes.

University Open Days

The main University Open Days run on 2 and 3 July 2009. These are huge events for year 12 students, involving each of the Colleges and departments, and are well worth attending. There are a variety of presentations, stands and tours throughout the day, and the schedule is constructed so that students should be able to find out about most areas of interest.

Colleges and departments also run their own Open Days (though they are also involved in the main Open Days) throughout the year. Most require booking and have limits on numbers.

Website: www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/opendays

University Access Initiatives

The Cambridge Admissions Office runs a series of events for students and teachers, mainly from the state sector. These include a range of residential events, including the Sutton Trust summer schools, Challenge Days, teacher conferences and GEEMA (Group to Encourage Ethnic Minority Applications) events. They also attend HE fairs across the country

and run the regional Oxford and Cambridge Student Conferences.

Website: www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/opendays (*scroll down to Access events*)

Link Area Scheme

The Colleges all run their own outreach events. Each region of the country is linked to a Cambridge College, who works with schools and Colleges in that area. This allows teachers to develop a personal and direct contact in Cambridge.

Website: www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/arealinks/

Department-based outreach

As well as the central University and College schemes, departments also run subject-specific outreach programmes. These events are often aimed at raising attainment in a subject and wider community engagement and are open to any member of the public.

Website: <http://webservices.admin.cam.ac.uk/outreach/>



Cambridge University Students' Union

For information about student-run initiatives and life as a student at Cambridge.

Old Examination Hall
Free School Lane
Cambridge CB2 3RF

Email: access@cusu.cam.ac.uk
Direct Line: 01223 761 691
Web: www.applytocambridge.com

Cambridge Admissions Office

For information about University outreach initiatives and admissions.

Fitzwilliam House
32 Trumpington Street
Cambridge CB2 1QY



Email: admissions@cam.ac.uk
Telephone: 01223 333308
Web: www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/admissions

College Admissions Offices

For information about College admissions or for College-specific open days and events.

www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/colleges/contacts

Department Contacts

For information about specific subjects, their requirements and their open days.

<http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses/>

Disability Resource Centre

For information about support available for students with disabilities, including pre-admission.

Keynes House
Trumpington Street
Cambridge CB2 1QA

Email: ucam-disability@lists.cam.ac.uk
Telephone: 01223 332301
Web: www.cam.ac.uk/cambuniv/disability

International Office

For information concerning visa requirements and support for international students.

9 Jesus Lane
Cambridge CB5 8BA

Email: international@admin.cam.ac.uk
Telephone: +44 (0)1223 764680

www.applytocambridge.com