

# OUTREACH

2014/2015



Cambridge University  
Malaysia Society

*"You might stumble and fall on your journey here at Cambridge but CUMaS will always be there with a hand out to catch you."*

**Lauren Diandra Ong Sue Ching**, President 2014/2015

# WELCOME

A warm hello from the Cambridge University Malaysian Society's (CUMaS) committee.

Following on from the success of last year's Outreach program, we have decided to continue sharing our stories and experiences with fellow Malaysians, hoping to help and provide an insight to you of life as a student at the University of Cambridge. We will be organizing workshops as well as talks in various states in Malaysia to encourage students from all backgrounds to apply. A Cambridge degree, after all, is much sought after and opens many doors.

Studying in Cambridge has been an exhilarating journey filled with highs and lows. However, it has been an experience that I am fairly certain no student from Cambridge would trade for anything else. You will be surrounded by top intellectual minds and have the opportunity to study in an environment where the pursuit of knowledge is so highly sought after and cherished, as well as be exposed to a myriad of experiences.

We realise that at first sight the whole application process appears intimidating but that's what this workshop is all about. Our goal is to provide you with sufficient information to help you with your application and to give you valuable and personal insights to our lives as Malaysian students at Cambridge, both on the cultural aspects and academia.

It definitely is not about all work and no play. We hope to show you how we are all normal students who have varied and fulfilling social lives. We meet to discuss issues of the day within our group of fellow Malaysians as well as with students from other cultures in this town that is steeped in history. We learn lessons in life from each other and academia from our tutors. In every corner one walks, one treads in the footsteps of the thousands of the best brains in this world who have passed through the hallowed halls of Cambridge's colleges. The atmosphere and traditions of the various colleges in Cambridge is also another aspect which is impossible to duplicate and experience anywhere else in this world.

There is no better foundation for future success in your life than to study at Cambridge. Do not miss this opportunity to find out more about applying to, studying and living in Cambridge. Come and talk to us. We would be very happy to share with you our thoughts and experiences as students of the University of Cambridge.



Lauren Diandra Ong Sue Ching  
President  
Cambridge University Malaysia Society  
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## WHAT IS CUMaS?



The Cambridge University Malaysia Society (CUMaS) is a non-profit organisation founded in 1994. It is dedicated to the support of Malaysian undergraduates and post-graduates at the University of Cambridge. CUMaS provides a social platform for members to interact and participate in various activities and events, which are tailored for the welfare of its members, and to promote Malaysian culture in general. It also serves as a platform to unite Malaysians who are scattered over the many colleges in the university. CUMaS provides a place where members are free to express themselves in a familiar setting whilst in a foreign country.

Our flagship events include the Malaysian Food Fest (MFF), which occurs once a year, where members can savour an array of Malaysian food prepared by their fellow CUMaS members. Another event is the CUMaS Garden Party held at the end of each academic year, where members come together in a garden setting one more time before flying home, and where graduates are given farewell gifts on behalf of CUMaS. The annual Malaysian Night (MNight) is also something to look forward to as members of CUMaS put up a performance, usually a play and dance. We also organise various formals and dinners (e.g. Chinese New Year) throughout the year for members to come together over a meal, thereby living up to what we Malaysians do best – “makan”.



*"CUMaS connects you with fellow Malaysians in Cambridge whom you will cherish for life."*

**Wong Sher Lin,**  
Alumni Officer 2014/2015

# APPLICATION PROCEDURE



Fill in the **UCAS** undergraduate application form at <http://www.ucas.com/apply>, selecting *University of Cambridge* as one of your university choices. The institution code is *CAM C05*.



Write up a **PERSONAL STATEMENT** to be attached to your UCAS application, for which useful guidelines can be found at [http://www.studential.com/guide/write\\_personal\\_statement.htm](http://www.studential.com/guide/write_personal_statement.htm).



Fill up the **CAMBRIDGE ONLINE PRELIMINARY APPLICATION (COPA)**, information of which can be found at <http://www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply/copa.html>.

(Not applicable to students who study their pre-U courses in the United Kingdom)



Complete the online **SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER QUESTIONNAIRE (SAQ)**, information of which can be found at <http://www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply/saq.html>.



Prepare for and take an **INTERVIEW** (either in Malaysia or Cambridge)



Sit for any additional **CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENTS** (e.g. Cambridge Law Test, BMAT, TSA, etc.)



**WAIT** and pray hard for admission results to be released!

(Note: Don't feel inferior if you are pooled, it just means you are given a second chance to be selected by Cambridge!)

# UCAS APPLICATION

## When to apply

The Cambridge Online Preliminary Application (COPA) and the UCAS form must reach the University of Cambridge by:

- 20<sup>th</sup> September for those wishing to be interviewed in Malaysia
- 15<sup>th</sup> October for those wishing to be interviewed in Cambridge

For those applying for Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science, the UCAS form must be submitted by 15<sup>th</sup> October.

## How to apply

Fill in the UCAS form, which requires personal details, personal statement, reference and other supporting documents. Yes, it seems tedious but don't worry! You can look for:

- Step by step guide in UCAS website  
- <http://www.ucas.com/how-it-all-works/undergraduate/filling-your-application>
- MABECS where they will guide you through your application  
- <http://www.mabecs.com/contact.htm>

# CHOOSE A COLLEGE

University of Cambridge has a collegiate system where the university is an association comprising 31 different colleges.

## Key Function

Below is the key function of the University (through its faculties and departments) and Colleges:

University	College
Determine course contents	Admit undergraduate studies
Organise lectures, seminars, practicals and projects	Organise small-group teaching (Supervision)
Set and mark examinations	Are responsible for academic and pastoral care
Award degree	Provide accommodation, places to eat and recreational facilities

## What are your options

When it comes to selecting a College, you have 2 options – you can either choose a particular College to receive your application, or you can make an ‘open application’ and accept the allocation made by a computer programme. In both cases, your UCAS application will be sent to a College, and that College will assess it.

## How to choose a college

When considering the Colleges, these are the aspects that you should, or what most applicants tend to consider: (see below)

<b>Course</b>	Some Colleges do not offer certain subjects so check the availability for the course you are interested in.
<b>Age</b>	<b>Four</b> colleges (St Edmund’s, Lucy Cavendish, Wolfson and Hughes Hall) are exclusively for <b>mature students</b> (aged 21 or over). <i>(Note: There are cases where applicants are pooled and accepted by a mature college, and hence is forced to defer his/her entry. It is up to you if you want to attend another university or enjoy a bonus year of respite!)</i>
<b>Facilities</b>	Gym, music room, chapel, badminton courts, swimming pool, punts, library, river Cam, etc.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Three</b> colleges consider applications from female students only. (Murray Edwards, Newnham and Lucy Cavendish). <i>But this doesn't mean that you only hang out with girls!</i>
<b>Location</b>	Distance from the city <i>(GIRTON college is very, very, very far away from the town... although Kah Wei will still insist it is the best and is one of the prettiest)</i>
<b>Subject Ranking</b>	<b>Tompkins Table</b> <i>(Don't take this too seriously! It is much more about your personal endeavour and hard work. College rank is never representative of your results!)</i>
<b>Admission Ranking</b>	Check it out on the respective college websites <i>(Note: Not advisable to take this into account)</i>
<b>Welfare</b>	Good food bad food, big rooms small rooms. By the way, rich colleges tend to give you more grants!

## Making an open Application

If, having looked at the different Colleges, you find that you don't mind which college to attend, then you don't have to choose - you can make an open application.

- After the closing date (15<sup>th</sup> October 2014), a computer programme allocates each open application to a College.
- The basis of the allocation is to even out the distribution of applicants across the Colleges - applicants from the UK/EU are allocated to Colleges which happen, in that year, to have received fewer applications per place in that subject than the average number across all Colleges; applicants from outside the EU are evenly distributed across Colleges

in each subject.

- Once allocated to a College, your application will be treated in exactly the same way as any other application.
- For equally well-qualified applicants, making an open application or applying directly to a specific College makes no difference to your chances of being made an offer.

## What to do in UCAS

In your UCAS application, as well as listing Cambridge (institution code CAM C05) as one of your options in the 'Choices' section, you'll need to enter:

- A College (campus) code.
- '9' as the campus code if you decide to make an open application



# PERSONAL STATEMENT

## What is a personal statement

Personal statements allow students to tell the admission tutor about their subject interest and the process of writing a personal statement can often help a student better understand their academic interests and intellectual motivations. This in itself is an important element in the preparation for any interview.

## What a personal statement should contain

Students are advised to follow the UCAS advice about what to include in their personal statement. At Cambridge, all admissions decisions are based solely on academic criteria (ability, commitment and potential). Therefore, in their personal statement, Cambridge is looking for an applicant to:

- Explain their reasons for wanting to study the subject at university demonstrate their enthusiasm and commitment for their chosen course
- Express any particular interests within the field
- Outline how they have pursued their interest in the subject in their own time

Such information is often used as a basis for discussion at interview.

## How important are extra-curricular activities

As the admissions decisions are based on academic criteria, a student's participation (or not) in specific extra-curricular activities is not taken into account (unless it is relevant to the course applied for) and does not affect their chances of being made an offer of a place at Cambridge.

Instead, Cambridge looks at how extra-curricular activities demonstrate other characteristics that will aid students' transition to life at university, such as how they balance their academic and personal commitments, and have developed particular skills or qualities (such as perseverance, independence, leadership or team-working).

However, students should be advised to consider the importance that their other university choices may place on extra-curricular activities when composing their personal statement.

(Source from <http://www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/teachers/personalstatements.html>)

## Further Pointers

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## OUTREACH

### Personal Statement

- Make a list of all the information you might like the admissions committee to have about you including such things as (a) your personal qualities, (b) your reasons for wanting to pursue the course you have chosen and (c) how you have prepared yourself for the University of Cambridge
- Organise your ideas
- Demonstrate your good qualities and skills through the experience you have had. Use concrete examples and avoid being vague.
- Admissions officers must read

countless applications and essays in a fairly short time, so be succinct and concise (but not too brief)

- Use key words and action verbs throughout your statement
- Grammar and spelling check

For more information about personal statements:

- [http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/Category:Cambridge\\_Personal\\_Statements](http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/Category:Cambridge_Personal_Statements)
- [http://www.studential.com/guide/write\\_personal\\_statement.htm](http://www.studential.com/guide/write_personal_statement.htm)



*"Don't even think of giving up at the starting line. Prepare yourself, gear up and give it a try!"*

Goh Kah Wei, Sponsorship Officer 2013/2014

# COPA (Cambridge Online Preliminary Application)

## Who needs COPA

For applicants who wish to be interviewed in Malaysia.

## What is COPA

The COPA form is divided into nine sections:

1. Application Type
2. Personal Details
3. Application Details
4. Education
5. Qualifications
6. Choral/Organ (only if you are applying for an Organ Scholarship)
7. Fees & Funding
8. Additional Information
9. Pay & Submit

## Example of additional information in COPA

- A1.1 Please enter your personal statement in English as prepared for your UCAS application (max 4000 characters including spaces)
- A2.1 Optional additional personal statement (max 1200 characters including spaces)
- A2.2 Do you have any specific career plan? (Max 300 characters including spaces)

- A3.1 How have you kept up your interest in the subject you have applied for? (Max 300 characters including spaces)
- A3.2 Are you interested in applying for a Choral award?
- A3.3 Are you interested in applying for an Instrumental Award for Chamber Music?
- A3.4 Is there anything else you would like us to know? (Max 600 characters including spaces)
- A4.1 Please provide details of your UCAS referee

### TAKE NOTE

- Before you sit down to write, think about what kind of information the application requests and decide what information about yourself you want the admissions committee to be aware of that is NOT fully described elsewhere in the application.
- SAQ is similar to COPA.





# REFERENCE

## What is a reference

Your reference is a full written recommendation from a teacher or tutor who knows you. You won't have access to this as your teacher will write your reference and send your application to UCAS for you.

## What can you do

- Provide them your CV, which contains information such as your extra curricular activities, community service projects, academic achievements etc.
- It is important for your referee to know your involvement beyond the classroom walls in order to gain an in-depth understanding about you.
- You also want to make sure that there is **no overlap of information** in your personal statement and your reference letter i.e. citing a particular activity to demonstrate your qualities.
- Remember to keep in touch with your referee about how it is going – that way you will know when they have sent it on to UCAS.



- ▲ Carved stone (with Xu ZhiMo's Poem) in King's College
- ▶ Bridge of Sighs in St. John's College



# INTERVIEW

## General View

- The interview is a process which the University of Cambridge uses to select the applicants it gives an offer to. It is arguably the most important factor determining the success of one's application.
- Generally viewed as a daunting but unique experience; most students only go through the interview process once and learn a lot from it.
- The interview can be done in Malaysia or in Cambridge. Normally, there is only 1 interview if the interview is done in Malaysia (or more than 1 if it is done in Cambridge).

## Questions Asked

- Personal Statement (PS)
- Pre-University courses' material
- General Questions (to gauge the thought process of applicants)

## My perspective/ experience/advice<sup>1</sup>

- Prepare to be asked questions on your PS. Anything that you write in your PS can be questioned and thus thorough research should be done before the interview.

- Revise Pre-U material especially the topics written down in the COPA form (questions will usually be asked from topics stated there).
- Voice out your thoughts during the interview; this will help show the interviewer how you think to solve a problem or debate a point.
- Speak confidently and clearly during the interview so that what you say can be well-understood! If you don't understand the question, don't hesitate to ask the interviewer to repeat it.
- Dress smart and don't panic! Many applicants tend to panic in the interview either because they are nervous due to the occasion or get intimidated by the questions. Some mock interviews should help overcome this problem.
- In a way, the interview can be seen as a mock supervision. The questions will not be straightforward and thus not panicking and giving up goes a long way in showing one's willingness to learn and ability to understand a new material.
- Try to make the interview an enjoyable experience for both you and the interviewer by smiling, being polite and happy. Being as stiff as wood with a sullen expression doesn't help one's chances, at least this is what I think.

<sup>1</sup> The views expressed are our own and do not necessarily reflect the views of University of Cambridge. We thank Ramaraj Sundraraj (1<sup>st</sup> year Engineer from Churchill College) for his input.



## TSA (Thinking Skills Assessment)

### Why use TSA Cambridge

The University of Cambridge has been using the TSA as part of its admission process since 2001. This test assesses critical thinking and problem-solving skills which are highly relevant to study at degree level. It also helps admission tutors identify candidates suitability and potential for success.

### Who needs it

Courses requiring TSA Cambridge	Computer Science, Economics, Engineering, Human, Social, and Political Sciences, Land Economy, Natural Sciences, Psychological and Behavioural Sciences.
For those who wished to be interviewed in Cambridge	Colleges have their own policies on which courses require the TSA. Please refer to <a href="http://www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply/tests/">http://www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply/tests/</a> for each College's requirements.

For those who wished to be interviewed in Malaysia	TSA is <b>COMPULSORY</b> if you are applying for one of the courses mentioned above. <i>Yes, the website lies.</i>
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### Test format

Form	Question	Timing
Written Test	50 multiple choice question	90 minutes

### What does it test?

- Problem solving skills including numerical and spatial reasoning
- Critical thinking skills including understanding argument and reasoning using everyday language

### Test Score

The average TSA score of an applicant to University of Cambridge is in the high 50s, with only around 10% of the applicants scoring over 70.

### Results

TSA results will **NOT** be released directly to candidates. Results will be passed to the Cambridge college you applied to. How the results are used varies.

## Do you need to study for TSA

For those who did Thinking Skills as one of their A-levels subjects, revising your exercises and practising the past year papers are sufficient.

However, there are more questions to do in a shorter time period for Cambridge TSA. Speed and accuracy are important!<sup>1</sup>

## How to prepare

For those who are unfamiliar with TSA, you can get familiar with the test format by practicing with specimen papers available for download at <http://www.admissionstestingservice.org/our-services/thinking-skills/tsa-cambridge/preparing-for-tsa-cambridge/>

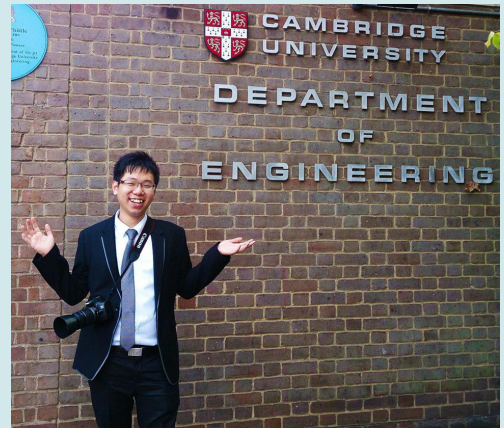
You can also practice with A-levels Thinking Skills past year papers available for download at <http://papers.xtremepapers.com/CIE/Cambridge%20International%20A%20and%20AS%20Level/><sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The views expressed are our own and do not necessarily reflect the views of University of Cambridge. We thank Livia Chan Lih Wen (2<sup>nd</sup> year Economist from Murray Edwards College) for her input.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.admissionstestingservice.org/our-services/thinking-skills/tsa-cambridge/preparing-for-tsa-cambridge/>

## My Point of View



*“Excelling in the Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA) requires a good comprehensive ability and critical reasoning. The 50 multiple-choice questions in the TSA are comprised of the analysis of data and graphs, devising a solution for problems given, identifying an assumption made, drawing a conclusion based on information given, etc. Only basic mathematical knowledge such as arithmetic operations are required. In my opinion, do a lot of practice, especially using A Level Thinking Skills past papers, as this will help in time management and it will improve your familiarity with the type of questions asked. All the best and hope to see you all soon!”*

**Kok Zhi Hao,**  
Logistics Officer 2014/2015

# BMAT (BioMedical Assessment Test)

## Introduction

The BMAT is an admissions test used by the top universities in the UK. Since we are talking about the University of Cambridge in this booklet, here are the courses which require the BMAT for the University of Cambridge:

- A100 Medicine
- D100 Veterinary Medicine

This section will aim to give an insight into what it entails and also general preparation advice. More details can be found on the BMAT website ([www.BMAT.org.uk](http://www.BMAT.org.uk)).

## Components of the BMAT

The BMAT is a 2-hour test, divided into three sections (each on a separate booklet).

### Section 1 (Aptitude and Skills)

- 35 questions, MCQ or Short Answer questions
- 60 minutes
- Similar to the TSA
- Involves understanding arguments, problem solving, and data analysis

### Section 2 (Scientific Knowledge and Applications)

- 27 questions, MCQ or Short Answer

- questions
- 30 minutes
- Is a science and math paper of SPM-standard
- Involves Biology, Chemistry and Physics

### Section 3 (Writing Task)

- An essay question
- 30 minutes
- Involves constructing arguments and developing ideas
- Also similar to the Essay component of the TSA

## FAQ on BMAT

The examination results are only accepted by the university during the year of application. You cannot use the 2014's result if you are applying in 2015.

### When?

Usually in early November (5<sup>th</sup> November 2014)

### Where?

It is held in a few specific locations, but most colleges host the examinations.

### How much?

If you take the test in Malaysia:

74 GBP ≈ 400 MYR as of 23/7/2014.

If you take the test in the UK/EU:

44 GBP ≈ 238 MYR as of 23/7/2014.

### How do I sign up?

It's best to be in touch with the centre you will be taking the examination in, usually your own college. Signing up begins on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September and ends on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October.

### When are the results released?

Around the 26<sup>th</sup> of November. Your university will also receive the results on this date independently, you don't have to tell them your scores.

## Preparation advice

(a.k.a. how and when to panic)

It's the same with any assessment; you need to practice and practice and practice. Make sure you know what you're doing then try some practice questions. Lather, rinse, repeat.

### Paper 1

Since this section is similar to the TSA, you would benefit from reading and learning from those books. They give a clear structure on what to look out for in an argument and how to think about the questions, for example. Try out the past year questions for the TSA as well.

### Paper 2

This is *just* SPM-level science. It would help if you refreshed your knowledge by skimming through simple concepts which you have noted down before. Start revisiting it up to at least 2 months before and all the way to the exam. This gives you time to recall and practice.

### Paper 3

Practice planning your essays. There are many resources which you can use for this, both online and offline. Some of the essays run in a similar vein, so you can mix and match your points. It's good to plan to organize your ideas so you know what to think and write about during the time constraint of the examination. Also, collaborate with your peers to discuss essay topics and see what you can come up with after brainstorming. Timed practice essays will help manage your time, too!

## Resources

### Get into Medical School. 400 BMAT Practice Questions.

Publisher: ISCMedical

Authors: Lydia Campbell, Olivier Picard

### How to Master the BMAT: Unbeatable Preparation for Success in the BMAT

Publisher: Kogan Page

Authors: Chris John Tyreman

### Preparing for the BMAT: The Official Guide to the BMAT

Publisher: Heinemann

### Thinking Skills

Publisher: Cambridge University Press

Author: John Butterworth

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The views expressed are our own and do not necessarily reflect the views of University of Cambridge. We thank Justin Koh - 2<sup>nd</sup> year medic (Queens'), Marcus Sim - 2<sup>nd</sup> year medic (Churchill), Christine Wong - 2<sup>nd</sup> year medic (Gonville and Caius), Magdalene Ting - 2<sup>nd</sup> year medic (Trinity Hall) and David Wong - 2<sup>nd</sup> year medic (Trinity).

# STEP (Sixth Term Examination Papers)

## Introduction

STEP is part of the entry requirements for the Mathematics course in Cambridge and Warwick. It consists of 3 papers (Papers I, II and III) but you will only have to do one or two papers.

## Format

Each paper has 13 long questions, 8 of which are Pure and the remaining 5 shared between Mechanics and Statistics. Each question is worth 20 marks. The time limit for each paper is 3 hours, and they will mark a maximum of only 6 questions (so maximum total mark is 120).

For each paper you will be given a grade: (from lowest to highest) U, 3, 2, 1 or S. Very roughly, the grade boundaries in the past few years have been around 90 for an S, 70 for a grade 1 and 55 for a grade 2, but they change significantly every year.

More info here: <http://www.admissionstestingservice.org/for-test-takers/step/scoring-and-results/>

Papers I and II are based on the A-levels Mathematics course, and paper III on the A-Levels Further Mathematics course. Although you won't need to learn new material to tackle the course, you will very likely find the papers to be extremely difficult at the start. This is **normal**.

The questions are designed to really challenge how well you understand (not memorize!) your syllabus, and how fast you can adapt to new mathematical techniques. Very often, one actually learns a new piece of mathematical trick after coming out from the exam. The examiners are more interested in seeing how you think rather than catching you out with knowledge beyond your ken.

It's hard to describe, but try a few Paper I questions at <http://www.admissionstestingservice.org/for-test-takers/step/preparing-for-step/>

Generally, if you are trying to enter Cambridge, they will ask for an A\*AA in A-Levels (Maths and Further Maths required of course), and usually, grade 1 in both STEP Paper II and III (not Paper I).



## Tips & advice

**One complete answer is valued more than two half-answers.**

For example, a rough guide would be that answering  $\frac{1}{2}$  the question would probably give only  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the 20 marks, while answering  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the question would get about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the marks. STEP rewards deep understanding of mathematics rather than a broad but shallow one.

Looking at the marks, you only need to fully answer 4 questions from a choice of 13 questions to more or less secure a grade 1 in any paper, and you have 3 hours. This might sound easy, but it really isn't. The only way to prepare for STEP is to practice lots of questions. The STEP website is very good for this: their booklets of questions "Advanced Problems in...", and the past papers (all of which can be found in the previous link) are enough to prepare you for the exam.

For the keen beans among us, here is a good repository that stretches back till 1987: <http://www.mathshelper.co.uk/oxb.htm>

Solutions for the older papers are available at: [http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/Step\\_solutions](http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/Step_solutions)

Again, at the start, you will find a lot of questions to be nearly impossible. This is NORMAL. Do not be discouraged and remember that almost everyone doing STEP feels like this in the beginning. Even by the day before the exam, you will find that you struggle with many questions on the paper. But this is a good preparation and taster for university mathematics: unlike A-Levels, you will find that you can't be good at everything. Remember this and do not despair. If you don't like this feeling, then you may want to reconsider doing mathematics.

**Start EARLY.**

The STEP exam is held in June. I would say start doing some questions in January (if not earlier!) and see how you do. The best way to prepare for STEP is to do as many questions as possible, which means working through the booklets till you feel comfortable with the type of questions, and then the past papers. Give yourself two hours per question at the start (that is not a joke, you'll get faster once you're used to it).

Alternatively, you might want to start by doing some STEP I papers, and then only moving on to the other two. Also, based on the shared experience of many who have taken the exam, it is generally best to focus on the Pure questions as they tend to be more accessible in terms of required knowledge. The Mechanics, and especially the Statistics, questions tend to be harder and more advanced.

But of course, different people have different background knowledge and different strengths, so this advice should be carefully considered.

## Closing remarks

STEP is frustrating and difficult, but hopefully, you will find a certain satisfaction every time you finish a question. You would probably learn more about mathematics practising the papers than you would in your Pre-U Maths course. And perhaps you'll start to enjoy being stuck on difficult problems, and suddenly, after a few hours, seeing the solution in your head. That's Mathematics.

Everything you need to know about STEP is at their official website: <http://www.admissionstesting-service.org/for-test-takers/step/about-step/>

Talk to your university exams officer (or teacher) to see if they can offer STEP exam for you. Otherwise the British Council in KL, Penang, Sabah and Kuching offers STEP.

The signup deadlines, prices, etc for 2015 have not yet been announced, so keep checking.

### Disclaimer

The views expressed are our own and do not necessarily reflect the views of University of Cambridge. We thank Tan Jiann Meng (3<sup>rd</sup> year Mathematician from Sidney Sussex College) and Kaif Hilman (1<sup>st</sup> year Mathematician from Christ's College) for their input.

# MATHS WRITTEN TEST

## Who's Required to Take It and What of It?

For those who wish to be interviewed in Malaysia for Mathematics, there will be a compulsory maths written test a day or two after the interview instead of the TSA abovementioned. This test will be held parallel to the TSA in the same hall. Along with the interview, the maths written test will be taken into account by the admissions tutor.

## Format

- Two hour paper
- Two sections:
  - \*Section I has 10 questions and you can answer all
  - \*Section II has 6 questions, but choose only 2
- Marks for Section I is higher than that of Section II

Section I questions are shorter than those of Section II. There will be one mechanics question and one statistics question in each of the sections. Knowledge of Further Maths is not required in this test.

## How to prepare?

Practise on some recreational maths questions (eg: prove that an integer is divisible by three if and only if the sum of its digits is a multiple of three). Working through the STEP workbook “Advanced Problems in...” will also help. Details of this workbook are available in the STEP section earlier in this booklet.

### Disclaimer

The views expressed are our own and do not necessarily reflect the views of University of Cambridge. We thank Kaif Hilman (1<sup>st</sup> year Mathematician from Christ's College) for his input.

# CAMBRIDGE LAW TEST

## Introduction

Unlike most universities, Cambridge does not require applicants to sit for the LNAT. Instead, applicants will have to sit for a test unique to Cambridge, which is designed to better distinguish students with an aptitude for legal study. The Cambridge Law Test will require you to answer one of a choice of three questions: a comprehension question, a problem question and an essay question. If you take the test in Malaysia, you are expected to complete an essay question and two problem questions in 2 hours. Each question tests your logical reasoning and ability to analyse and construct arguments.<sup>1</sup>

No prior knowledge of the law is expected!

## Essay Questions

Essay questions typically ask candidates to consider a statement of opinion and to discuss it, giving reasons for their answer. This may be done by asking for discussion of a quotation or asking a direct question.

### What is Cambridge looking for?

Although essay questions refer to law-related matters, that does not mean that you are expected to have knowledge of the law, nor is Cambridge expecting you

to. Applicants who have studied or are studying law (e.g. at A-levels) will therefore not be at an advantage over others. Each question is intended to solicit applicants' views rather than to invite the provision of factual information. In particular, essay questions are designed to test applicants' ability to identify and engage with the issues raised by the question; to write clearly; and to construct a coherent, well-structured and balanced argument.

## Problem Questions

In a problem question, applicants are given a statement of law - for example, a particular chapter in tort/criminal law, an excerpt from a statute or a passage from a judgment of a judge given in a court - and are asked to explain how it would apply in certain factual situations.

### What is Cambridge looking for?

Problem questions are not designed to test applicants' knowledge of the law. No prior knowledge of the law is expected or needed: all of the law-related information necessary to answer the question is provided in the given statement of law. Problem questions are designed to test applicants' ability to understand the given statement of law; to apply it accurately to the given factual situations, drawing relevant distinctions; and to explain their reasoning in a clear and logical way.

## Comprehension Questions

In a comprehension question, applicants are presented with a passage of text - for example, an excerpt from a judgment or article - and are asked to summarise it and to answer specific questions about it.

### What is Cambridge looking for?

Comprehension questions are not designed to test applicants' knowledge of the law. No prior knowledge of the law is expected or needed: all of the information necessary to answer the question is provided in the passage. Comprehension questions are designed to test applicants' ability to understand the text; to write clearly; and to develop balanced, well-reasoned arguments.

For specimen questions, please refer to [http://ba.law.cam.ac.uk/assets/misc/Cambridge\\_Law\\_Test\\_Specimen\\_Questions.pdf](http://ba.law.cam.ac.uk/assets/misc/Cambridge_Law_Test_Specimen_Questions.pdf)

## Tips & Advice

### Don't over-prepare

As for all tests, the temptation is to study really hard, and even to memorize model essays. Please DO NOT do either. This test, like an actual law exam, is designed to assess the candidate's comprehension and argumentative skills. It is more important to have a full grasp of what each question is asking than to produce an excellently written essay which fails to address the key issues presented. The better way to prepare is to read widely. I am not referring to books on specific law

subjects, but rather law-related books, e.g. the issue of the death penalty, human rights, etc, so that you are exposed to pertinent issues and the style of writing that these authors employ to convey their arguments.

Recommended books:

- Justice: What's the right thing to do? (2010) – Michael Sandel
- The Rule of Law (2011) – Tom Bingham

### Understanding is key!

In law, it is not who knows the most that wins, but who understands the best. Whenever you read any form of literature, be it a book or an article in the newspaper, make a conscious effort to absorb and understand what you are reading. A key indicator of understanding is your ability to explain what you read in your own words. As you listen to the news, or follow up on legal issues happening around the world, e.g. the Oscar Pistorius' trial, think about the rationale behind the laws involved and the reasons why they were applied as they were. These will equip you with the skills necessary to help you extract what each question/passage is trying to ask of you without getting drowned in the multitude of words and legal jargon.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.oxbridgeapplications.com/our-support/admissions-test-support/cambridge-law-test/>

<sup>2</sup> The views expressed are our own and do not necessarily reflect the views of University of Cambridge. We thank Victor Chang (2<sup>nd</sup> year Lawyer from Christ's College) and Wong Sher Lin (1<sup>st</sup> year Lawyer from Queens' College) for their input.



## KEY DEADLINES

### Application submissions

**20<sup>th</sup> September 2014** – Applications (both UCAS and COPA) from students wishing to be interviewed in Malaysia to be submitted

**15<sup>th</sup> October 2014** – Applications (both UCAS and COPA) from students wishing to be interviewed in Cambridge to be submitted

**22<sup>nd</sup> October 2014** – SAQ to be submitted

(Deadline may vary depending on college but you will be kept informed)

### Interviews

**End October 2014** – For applicants who are interviewed in Malaysia

**First three weeks of December 2014** – For applicants who are interviewed in Cambridge

### Medicine and veterinary students

**1<sup>st</sup> October 2014** – Deadline for registration to take the BMAT

**5<sup>th</sup> November 2014** – BMAT to be taken by applicants



# SPONSORSHIP INFORMATION

## Undergraduate (Updated July 2014)

Name of Scholarship	Awarding Body	Bond	Deadline (Based on 2014)	Course	Other Details
Khazanah-Cambridge Scholarship Programme	Yayasan Khazanah	Yes	March	Almost any course	Cambridge only
Shell Overseas Scholarship	Shell Malaysia	No	February	Engineering (Not limited)	Various courses accepted
Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam (JPA) Scholarship	Public Service Department of Malaysia	Yes	July	Any course	Application period of 7 days only
Petronas Education Sponsorship Programme	Petronas	Yes	June	Engineering (Not limited)	Various courses accepted
Bank Negara Malaysia Scholarship Programme	Central Bank of Malaysia	Yes	March	Economics or law	Application period of 7 days only
Maybank Foundation Scholarship Award	Maybank Foundation	Yes	March	Social sciences and technology	Various courses accepted
Sime Darby Foundation Education Scholarship Programme	Yayasan Sime Darby	Yes	N/A	Almost any course	Usual pre-university sponsored first
Education Sponsorship Programme (ESP)	Malaysia Airports	Yes	July	Social sciences and technology	Various courses accepted

Name of Scholarship	Awarding Body	Bond	Deadline (Based on 2014)	Course	Other Details
Maxis Undergraduate Scholarship	Maxis Berhad	Yes	May	Social sciences and technology	For Maxis customers
Astro Scholarship Award	Astro Malaysia Holdings Berhad	Yes	April	Not specified	For Astro customers
Jardine Scholarship	Jardine Foundation	No	October (year before offer)	Any course	Downing, Magdelene, Peterhouse or Trinity College students
DayaDiri Cambridge Scholarship	Yayasan DayaDiri	No	November	Any course	Bumiputera only
Malaysia Chevening Cambridge Scholarship	The British High Commission and The Foreign and Commonwealth	No	January	Science and technology (Not limited)	Post-graduate Masters only
UEM Scholarship	UEM Group Berhad	Yes	April	Economics or engineering	Application from pre-university only
Tenaga Nasional Berhad Scholarship	Yayasan Tenaga Nasional	Yes	March	Engineering	Civil, electrical or mechanical only
Securities Commission	Securities Commission Malaysia	Yes	April	Economics or law	Various courses accepted
Bank Pembangunan Scholarship	Bank Pembangunan Malaysia Berhad	Yes	July	Social sciences and technology	Various courses accepted
MyBrainSc Scholarship	Ministry of Education Malaysia	Yes	January	Science or mathematics	Degree, Masters or PhD

Name of Scholarship	Awarding Body	Bond	Deadline (Based on 2014)	Course	Other Details
Jeffrey Cheah Foundation-Sunway Group Scholarship	JCF & Sunway Group	Yes	N/A	Social Sciences & Technology	Various Courses accepted
Gamuda Scholarship Award	Gamuda Berhad	Yes	April	Engineering	Civil, Mechanical, Electrical only
The Cambridge Commonwealth Trust	Trustees of the Malaysian Commonwealth Studies Centre and of the Cambridge Commonwealth Trust	No	N/A	Any Course	Partial Scholarship
College Trust Funds*	Cambridge College	No	-	N/A	Subject to Cambridge college

\*Each college normally has a bursary set aside to assist students who experience any form of a financial shortfall. For more details, please check the website of the respective college or contact the college directly.

Note that all the information above may be subject to changes and it is important to look for updated information from the various official websites.

For more scholarship opportunities, please refer to <http://www.malaysiascholarships.my/>

# LIFE IN CAMBRIDGE AS...

## ... an Engineer

There are 4 papers and 8 subjects in the first year: Mechanics, Thermofluid Dynamics, Structures, Materials, Electrical Eng, Digital & Information Eng, Mathematics and Computing. There are no options, no exemptions and no escape! Muahahaha!

Actually, life's pretty grand as an Engineering student. You usually get about 2 hours of lectures per day, followed by 2-4 hour lab or drawing sessions. Everything is done in the Cambridge University Engineering Department (CUED) according to a regular schedule, so there's no need to dash between lectures\*. The classes and labs differ greatly in content, so you may enjoy some of them more than others. Last year, we designed Lego machines, assembled transistor radios, constructed bridges, invented products, wrote C++ trading programs and built sentry guns! [citation needed]

The workload is quite tolerable: You get 3 or 4 example papers a week, report assignments for 4 long labs and one (1!) essay for the year. In case you miss anything, handouts, notes, past year papers, cribs AND lectures are available online on the Department website! The Tripos exam isn't quite a slog as the other

**Tang Ji Jian**

*Engineer*

Churchill College

*(Matriculated in 2010)*



**Lee Kin Wai**

*Engineer*

Emmanuel College

*(Matriculated in 2010)*



subjects either, though you are expected to have completed a good number of past year questions. Your result is based on the bell curve, with nearly equal numbers of students in each class.

Beyond the lecture hall, the CUED is home to a number of geeky societies, such as the CU Eco Racing team and the Spaceflight Society. The Engineering Society holds free lunch talks (on the Engineering industry) and study trips too. The CUED Language Unit also deserves a mention for its free weekly classes.

Pro-tip: Free coffee and tea is provided in the cafeteria!

\*except for (groan) Exposition.

**Ji Jian and Kin Wai**



## ... a Chemical Engineer

The Chemical Engineering (ChemEng) course is slightly different in that it's a second year course. In your first year at Cambridge, you'll either be doing Engineering or Natural Sciences (which should be detailed on their respective pages). Then in your second year, you'll be able to take on the vastly superior Chemical Engineering course.

The second year course covers quite a wide range of subjects, from Fluid Mechanics to Thermodynamics, Mathematics to Economics, and also some lab work. Those who were Engineers in their first year will also have lectures and supervisions on Chemistry. Likewise, ex-NatScis will have some side lectures on Structural and Mechanical Engineering. Furthermore, you'll have a few mini-projects (called Exercises) to complete. These Exercises involve modelling and problem solving using software packages, and are designed to mimic the work of a real Chemical Engineer, which I found pretty interesting. As with any other course, there are supervisions (approximately 2 per week) to supplement the lectures. I say supplement, but in actual fact, I find that you do learn a lot more from supervisions than from the lectures. All this may sound like a lot, but it's relatively chilled compared to most courses.

In your third year, the course structure is still largely the same as in your second year, but the material is slightly more specialised to tailor you into the perfect Chemical Engineer. Also, there is zero lab work, and a lot more emphasis is placed on the Exercises. You'll also be done with exams a lot earlier than your peers, but there's the dreaded Design Project after exams are over. This is a 6-week long team project in which you

Loh Yi Jun  
Chemical Engineer  
St John's College  
(*Matriculated in 2011*)



create an initial model for a manufacturing plant from scratch. In my year, we designed an instant coffee processing plant, which was super cool. However, it was a mad rush towards the end of the project as everyone was sleep-deprived and slightly ludicrous.

A large component of the fourth and final year in ChemEng is the Fourth Year Project. You'll work as an individual or in pairs to assist one of the many leading chemical engineers in the world that just so happen to be a staff member of the department. The project lasts for two terms, and you'll be researching on something that (hopefully) you find interesting. By the end of the project, you are required to submit a research paper, which will be graded and perhaps even published! Other than the project, there are also elective lecture courses which you'll be examined on.

The Chemical Engineering course will definitely mold you into a great Chemical Engineer, but it'll also give you an edge if you ever venture into other fields (i.e. Consulting, Banking etc.). If that's not enough to entice you to join ChemEng, there's currently a new site being built for a new ChemEng department, so by the time you're in Cambridge, you'll have a brand new department all to yourself!

Well that's all from me, do drop me an email if you wish to know more about the course or Cambridge in general. All the best in your applications!

**Loh Yi Jun**

## ... a Lawyer

All first year lawyers take 4 subjects: Constitutional Law, Criminal Law, Civil (Roman) Law and Law of Torts. By just looking at the “structured” hours we have, 1<sup>st</sup> year may seem like a pretty light course. Lectures are only on weekdays, and add up to a mere 11 hours a week (8 from Lent onwards). Supervisions are usually held in the afternoon, and average at 2 per week. The duration of each supervision ranges from 1-2 hours, depending on the supervisor you get (and perhaps the keen-ness of the students). That leaves at least 5 afternoons and 7 evenings entirely free!

But not really. You’ll find much of your time being spent working through your “supervision sheets” – tackling what may initially come across to you as an impossible reading list of cases, statute, textbooks and other secondary literature. Having said that, you’ll slowly learn the art of going through them fast, be it by digesting the texts quicker, reading more speedily, or simply strategically selecting what to read! And if you’re lucky to be nerdy (or “jobless”) enough, you’ll find yourself enthusiastically engrossed and carried away in your books!

The “interestingness” of the lectures would depend a lot on the lecturer, slightly less on the topic and your taste for the subject, and perhaps also mildly on how early you have wake up for it. Attendance isn’t compulsory, but it’s probably worth

**Jinho Clement**  
*Lawyer*  
Corpus Christi College  
*(Matriculated in 2010)*



sticking to for the first few months before you get the hang of when it’s probably more productive to not go. But at all costs, don’t miss Virgo’s Criminal Law lectures. If you forget everything else in first year, you’ll remember his antics and the bicycle helmet he walks into the hall with.

The supervisions are probably the most awesome part of studying Law at Cambridge. Styles can differ quite widely between (and within) colleges, but it is in these sessions that you’ll get to explore the “whys” and the “what ifs” that your teachers back in SPM or A-Levels never had the capacity or time to entertain. So be bold and participate, prepare well and don’t forget to jot down the “precious jewels” that you and your peers discover in these wonderful escapades!

There’ll be essays too, the workload depending largely on your supervisors. But there’ll definitely be stressful moments for everyone. There’ll always be loads of work that needs to be done, so it may be useful to occasionally remind yourself about other potentially more worthy priorities in life. You know, like remaining alive, staying sane and keeping yourself emotionally stable!

**Jinho Clement**

## ... a Medic

Here's a brief introduction to the first year of the six-year course on which you're about to embark.

The three main subjects medics do in year one are **FAB (Anatomy)**, **MiMS (Biochemistry)** and **HOM (Physiology)**. You will have three MiMS and HOM lectures every week, and two for FAB. Each lecture lasts for one hour.

There are also practical classes for all three subjects. You will have a two-hour HOM one every week, while MiMS (mercifully) has only one practical a term. The catch is this session would last for four hours! FAB practicals are fun though. What you do is dissect a cadaver for 2 X 2 hours a week. Some of you may get stuck in on day one of term (don't worry if you don't, your turn will come the very next day). They actually have an introductory session the day before term starts. I haven't seen anyone faint at any of these dissections so don't worry about it!

There are also another three subjects that attempt to teach you the less sciency bits of medicine. These are nowhere near as academically challenging as the big three, but need to be passed. **PfP (Preparing for Patients)** consists of going to clinics and patients' houses to conduct basic medical interviews. **SCHI (Medical sociology)** is rather interesting, while **ISBM (Medical statistics)** is not. You will be given a

**Nicole Soh**  
*Medic*  
Magdalene College  
(*Matriculated in 2010*)



**Ian Beh**  
*Medic*  
Girton College  
(*Matriculated in 2010*)



lecture on both every week.

Your college will provide you with supervisions for the three main subjects. There will be one every week, each lasting approximately one hour. The style of supervision depends on your supervisor, so styles differ widely between colleges. There are normally three to five students in a supervision. A common element is the essay. Your supervisor will set you an essay title and you will spend the week on it. As there are three subjects, one normally has to contend with three essays a week. So that's what you're basically up against. It isn't that scary... right? Do come and talk to us about books you should be getting. Some of us may even be willing to sell some of what we have.

First year was really different from anything I had ever been through. Scary, mind-boggling and stressful but also interesting and fun! Tell us what you feel after your first year!

Always, always remember to SMILE! :)

**Ian Beh & Nicole Soh**

## ... a Mathematician

If you come into Cambridge as a mathmo (that's what we call mathematicians), you have chosen to lead a humble life. A life where knowledge is a luxury, a life where people give you funny looks when you say, "Oh, I'm reading Mathematics."

First-year students have a very simple schedule: for two terms you'll have lectures from 10 am - noon, six days a week, eight weeks a term. That includes Saturdays. Don't cry! Your courses in the first year are fixed, and will teach you the most important foundations in the field of mathematics. You will speed through new, advanced aspects of familiar topics such as Vectors and Matrices, Differential Equations, and Probability, but with a new level of rigour. You'll also encounter new fields of Mathematics not (usually) covered in Pre-U courses, such as Groups and Analysis. These courses are taught from scratch, and for some reason, not very popular among us Malaysian students...

For each course you will have four examples sheets to finish over the term. Each sheet has about 12 questions, so on average you have 3-4 days to finish 12 questions. A decent student will probably spend an hour per question (you'll get used to it!), but somehow there is never, ever, ever, EVER enough time to finish your sheet. It may seem strange, but finishing  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an example sheet is something to be proud of, and actually

Tan Jiann Meng

*Mathmo*

Sidney Sussex College

*(Matriculated in 2011)*



finishing the whole sheet is a fantastic achievement.

Example sheets are your 'homework'. They are marked by your supervisors (one for each course). You will, on average, have two hours of supervisions per week. Supervisions are arranged by your college. Supervisions are always one or two students (very rarely, three) sitting with your supervisor at a table, discussing the example sheets which were assigned by your lecturer. This is the best time to ask questions, clarify problems, and maybe talk about the mathematical concepts you've just learnt. The first supervision or two might be intimidating but you'll find that most supervisors are informal and rather friendly.

The key to enjoying Maths is to remember that you will -always- be stuck on something. That is the nature of mathematics! Being stuck on a particular question and futilely working on methods which don't lead anywhere is what we do most of the time, but the intellectual payoff when we do figure things out is immense! Never be afraid to ask your supervisor/coursemate if you're stuck, even on something simple, because we are always happy to explain things (several times, if needed). After all, we love convincing people that we're right, no matter how long it takes :)

**Tan Jiann Meng**

## ... an Economist

As Economists, it's our job to make assumptions—more often than not very misguided ones. When I chose to read Economics at Cambridge, I made two important assumptions: I *assumed* that the course would be less mathematical than at LSE, and even if the reality turned out to be otherwise, I *assumed* that I would somehow be able to handle the math.

One year on, I have a little secret I'd like to share: a Cambridge offer imbues you with an oh-so-naïve sense of optimism.

As a first year Economist, you will have to take 5 subjects: Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Math & Stats, Politics and History. It is a heady mix of quantitative reasoning and academic writing. Some students prefer the writing papers, others may see them as a burden. My advice: hone both your quantitative and qualitative skills in order to survive.

Lectures are only on weekdays and last for, on average, 2–3 hours a day. They usually end before 12pm (1pm at the latest), so you have the rest of the day to yourself. However, you'll be busy completing your supervision assignments most of the time. Being at university—whether at Cambridge or elsewhere—means a lot of disciplined self-study!

Each term, you are expected to attend four supervisions with each of your

Livia Chan Lih Wen  
*Economist*  
Murray Edwards College  
(*Matriculated in 2012*)



subject supervisors. Supervisions are usually conducted in groups of two to four, though you can request for one-on-one sessions. For History and Politics, you are expected to submit an essay every other week. You will have to read many academic journals and articles to write these essays (fair warning: I found the reading very dry).

For Macro and Micro, there are good textbooks and exercises on which you can rely. As for Math & Stats, there is a tendency for the lecturers to be so smart that mere mortals have difficulty understanding their genius-speak. Expect to have to go through the material and work problems out yourself, with the help of friends, textbooks and Google. And pray hard for good Math/Stats supervisors!

My first year was a struggle (remember what I said earlier about naïve optimism?) But I am extremely thankful to the five other Malaysian Economists for helping me pull through. Hint: they're pretty awesome people whom you should get to know! We had hardcore study sessions during Easter (exam) Term where we plowed through past year papers together, frantic midnight Skype calls just days before exams and a really spammy Facebook group. It's important to find a group of supportive peers—whether your college mates or strangers



you meet in lectures—to help you along. The journey is a long one, and going it alone is unwise.

Life at Cambridge is tough—there's no question about that. But it's also a uniquely fulfilling experience. Besides,

## ... a Natural Scientist

Hey guys, I am Sue Hern, a Bio NatSci from Peterhouse. Basically if two or more of your subjects (excluding mathematics) are biological subjects then you are considered a Biological NatSci; if two or more of your subjects are physical subjects then you are considered a Physical NatSci.

In my first year I did Biology of Cells, Physiology of Organisms, Mathematical Biology and Chemistry. For Cells, a good book to buy would be Molecular Biology of the Cell, by Alberts et. al. For Physiology, Eckert Animal Physiology by Randall would be useful. All these books will be found in your college libraries so you don't actually have to buy these books! (:

Unfortunately, NatScis have Saturday lectures. :( You will have three lectures per week for each of your four subjects. Each lecture is an hour long. The practical is probably longer than what you are

there is always the big CUMaS family who always have your back, creating memorable moments of life which you'll treasure for many years to come.

**Livia Chan Lih Wen**

**Haw Sue Hern**

*Nat Sci*  
Peterhouse College  
(*Matriculated in 2010*)



used to – Cells practical is from 11am to 4pm for instance! And for those taking Chemistry, it is stated that practical is from 11am to 5pm but don't be alarmed, our practical usually ends at 3pm or even earlier.

Supervisions will be in groups of two or three and every week there will be one supervision per subject so in total it is four supervisions per week.

**Haw Sue Hern**

## GRADUATES' SECTION

For the academic year of 2013/2014, 37 Malaysians out of the 158 who applied to Cambridge received confirmed admission to graduate courses ranking 11th among the other countries with success rate of 23%. There are two categories of qualifications for graduate studies: courses with taught elements, and research programmes. Either category, the best way to research on the available programmes and the criteria of admission is via the Graduate Admissions website of the University of Cambridge.

### **Applying for graduate studies at Cambridge:**

It is crucial if you are planning to apply for research programmes to communicate with your potential supervisor to find out more about the research group and the interests of the group. It doesn't bring any harm to have a clearer idea of what the expectations of your supervisor are before you apply. Also, it also helps you in your decision-making process. Apply for admission only when you are certain that your potential supervisor is keen to having you. Online application makes it so convenient! As my basic degree was awarded by Malaysian university, which was not conducted fully in English, I was required to submit proof of English competency. The accepted English Language Tests include IELTS (International English Language Testing System) Academic, CAE (Certificate of Advanced English) with grade A

**Cindy Chan Kher Xing**  
*PhD (Probationary) in  
Biological Anthropology  
Fitwilliam College  
(Matriculated in 2014)*



(with other conditions to fulfill) or CPE (Certificate of Proficiency in English) with grade A or B. TOEFL is NO LONGER accepted according to the Home Office requirement. Minimum required score is according to the course applied. In the application for research programme, a research proposal would be required, and this can be discussed between you and your potential supervisor.

Other than that, it is important to take notes of the deadline of applications to funding and scholarship. If your potential supervisor has a research grant to sponsor you, then it is wonderful. If not, you might want to research on other available scholarships, as well as to apply to the Cambridge Trust fund and Gates Cambridge scholarship when you apply for admission. Usually the deadline for the latter two is around December.

In my opinion, the important elements to successful application include:

- 1) Excellent English competency,
- 2) acceptance of your research proposal by the department which you are applying to,
- 3) acceptance by one of the colleges,
- 4) financial conditions.

Be meticulous and prompt with the list of conditions to fulfil the admission process!

Once all the conditions are fulfilled, the Graduate Board of Studies will award you with the offer letter and CAS for you to apply for Tier 4 student visa. The CUMaS community will be at Cambridge waiting for your arrival.

### **A little on the life of a Cambridge graduate student:**

I completed my BSc. (Biotechnology) in University Malaysia Sabah and hold the Erasmus Mundus Masters in Forensic Science awarded by the consortium of host universities (University of Cordoba, Spain, Egas Moniz University, Portugal, University of Lincoln, UK). The university systems which I had experienced previously were different from my current experience here, as University of Cambridge is a collegiate university, and all students are members of a college. I am a member of Fitzwilliam College. Usually graduate students would be offered a room in the college, either in the main college site or the college houses. From what I know, all colleges provide housekeeping services to college accommodations. Each college has its own traditions and system, which you could read more on its website. At term time, Fitz organises formals twice a

week and members of the college who wish to attend the formal could make reservation via our college account. Once a year, the graduate students are invited to dine with the Master and fellows at the high table. I am assigned a graduate tutor in the college whom I try to meet at least once a term for a chat. Also, graduate students belong to the Middle Combination Room (MCR) community of the college, where the MCR committee would organise events for the graduates in the college. The MCR room of Fitz is housed in the Grove, which used to be the abode of Emma Darwin, the wife of Charles Darwin. I find my college a very friendly yet conducive environment for my stay as a graduate student.

Besides my supervisor, I have been asked to nominate a secondary adviser according to the statute of the university. All research work is being supervised by the department. Being in my first year, I am still a PhD (probationary) student. Only upon submitting a first year report and passing it would I be a proper PhD student. I look forward for the day to come end of this year! Though it takes a lot of hard work to be a graduate student of Cambridge, it will be worthwhile to work in an environment so conducive and supportive of on-going research.

**Cindy Chan Kher Xing**

# USEFUL LINKS

## Cambridge Online Prospectus 2015

A complete guide to all you need to know about Cambridge as an undergraduate applicant for entry in 2015, including:

- Application process
- Entrance requirements
- Teaching, learning, and living
- Support and financial issues
- Future careers after graduation
- Subject & Course information
- Colleges

**Link:** [http://www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/publications/prospectus/docs/UGP\\_2015.pdf](http://www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/publications/prospectus/docs/UGP_2015.pdf)

## Undergraduate Studies

An interactive website for further information that is not covered by the Online Prospectus, including application statistics, country-specific entrance requirements, updated deadlines and admission tests

**Link:** <http://www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/>

## Graduate Studies

Step-by-step guide to help you with your Cambridge application, including:

- Courses that Cambridge offers
- How to apply for postgraduate study
- How an application is processed

- Immigration information

**Link:** <https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/students/gradadmissions/prospec/>

## Parents Guide

All parents will have a myriad of concerns as their child ventures overseas to study. As such, this guide is written to assuage their worries. This contains information about fees and accommodation, an explanation of the system of teaching in Cambridge, as well as the sources of funding available..

**Link:** <http://www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/publications/docs/parentsguide.pdf>

## Information for international students

As an international student, deadlines will differ and additional requirements may be need to be fulfilled before you can begin your studies in the UK and in Cambridge. These are essential to note and this link will ensure that you are well-informed with regard to your application and well-prepared as you come to the UK to study.

**Links:** <http://www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/publications/docs/international.pdf>

and

<http://www.internationalstudents.cam.ac.uk/>

# CONTACT INFORMATION

## Websites

Cambridge University Malaysia Society  
(CUMaS): <http://www.cumas.org>

OUTREACH 2014 website:  
[www.outreach.cumas.org](http://www.outreach.cumas.org)

Follow OUTREACH KL at:



[https://www.facebook.com/  
events/323286844501919/](https://www.facebook.com/events/323286844501919/)

## Contact Personnel

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