

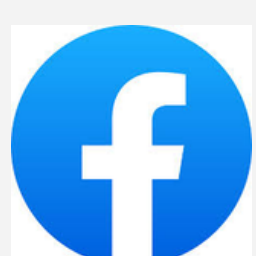


CUMaS
Cambridge University Malaysia Society

CUMaS Application Handbook

Guiding your Cambridge Application

Membimbing Permohonan Kembrij anda



@Cambridge University
Malaysia Society



@cumas94



Website:
<https://www.cumas.org>

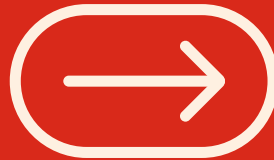


@CUMalaysiaSoc

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Jadual Kandungan

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Foreword

By Rameeya Ganesan
(CUMaS President 2025/26)



Dear reader,

I know I'm not alone in feeling that the most daunting part of applying to university is the beginning, where you're not quite sure where to start, what to do, or how to deduce whether the universities you want to apply to are the right fit for you. Although preparing for this new chapter of your lives does come with its challenges, the right resources can definitely make the journey much easier and more enjoyable.

That's where this handbook comes in! The Cambridge University Malaysia Society (CUMaS) has carefully curated this guide for those applying to Cambridge University, abound with all kinds of key information we wish we had when applying.

To give you a brief overview of our society, we're a tight-knit community of Malaysian students dedicated to supporting, and organizing events for Malaysian students at Cambridge, as well as those aspiring to join us. Together, we aim to create a space for Malaysians to grow, learn, and thrive with one another.

In this handbook, you'll find all kinds of helpful information, such as the application stages for various courses, personal experiences from successful applicants, and so on. If you have any lingering questions, please do not hesitate to contact us over email or on social media. We hope this guide will serve you well, and we look forward to seeing you around on campus in the future!



Introduction to Cambridge

Pengenalan kepada Kembrij



The University of Cambridge comprises **31 constituent colleges**, over 100 departments, 8 museums, over 100 libraries—including the main university library, a botanical garden, a sports centre and much more. Although the campus may sound large, Cambridge is actually a **very bikeable town**. The **departments** are where lectures and labs (if any) are held, whereas the **colleges** provide: student accommodation, meals, social support from various staff, and academic support such as **supervisions**. In supervisions: a small group of students (2-4) get the opportunity to discuss question sheets to a college supervisor of a specific module—similar to a private tuition setting.

Apart from the small-group supervisions and collegiate system exclusive to Cambridge and Oxford, Cambridge is mostly known for its **816 year old history**, strong academic reputation, Harry Potter-styled buildings and famous alumni. Cambridge's **famous alumni** include: Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin, John Maynard Keynes, Xu Zhimo, Tunku Abdul Rahman, Ramanujan and many others.

In general, Cambridge is a charming and historical student town that is more than a hub for innovation and academic excellence.



Introduction to CUMaS

Pengenalan kepada CUMaS



During term time, one of our main focuses is to support the **welfare** of our members —usually through using the power of **food**! Throughout the term, we celebrate cultural festivals like Hari Raya, Deepavali and Chinese New Year. Besides this, we host flagship events like the end of year Garden Party for leavers, Malaysian Food Festival (a buffet of delicious Malaysian Food) and MNight (a celebration of all things Malaysian).

Additionally, we hold **regular social events** like the Pizza Social, Dino Swap and the Roti Canai Brunch. To help combat the mid-term slump commonly known as the “**Week 5 Blues**,” we also distribute Week 5 Welfare Packs to give our members a much-needed boost. Besides food events, we do have other events like **NegaraCUMaS**, a series of talks by interesting speakers, and shockingly, socials that do not entirely revolve around food.

Outside term time, we do our best to work on outreach programmes to encourage people to apply to Cambridge. Although Malaysia is already among the top 5 countries represented at the University, our ambitions reach even further. It may be shocking but, most people who decide to apply to Cambridge don't instantly gain a complete understanding of the application process, life at Cambridge or what degrees are like. When I was applying, resources like this one were incredibly helpful—and we hope it serves the same purpose for you.



Some of our key outreach efforts include our virtual and in-person events where we share what life at university is really like, talk about our journeys through the application process and conduct mock supervisions to help you get a feel of Cambridge life.

Furthermore, during application season, we run the **Cam-bridging fund** (I know, what a clever name) to help cover the cost of applying to Cambridge. As interview season approaches, we also hold mock interviews to help applicants prepare for their real ones.



First Steps to Cambridge

Langkah ke Kembrij

1. Research **courses** and **colleges** on the Cambridge website

- Some colleges don't offer some courses (Corpus doesn't offer Chem-Eng, Trinity doesn't have Geography)
- Some colleges only assign in-person interview in the college

2. Register and fill up **UCAS application form** (with some fees)

- Personal Statement (PS)
- Reference (College/Academic tutor)

3. Admission Tests have a deadline to pre-register by

- **LNAT** for Law
- **TMUA** for Computer Science and Economics
- **UCAT** for Medicine
- **ESAT** for Chem-Eng, Engineering, Natural Sciences, Veterinary Science
- **STEP** for Mathematics

4. **My Cambridge** Application

- An additional form after your UCAS submission
- Includes: results transcript and second PS
- You will need to pay some additional fees

5. **Written work** submission

- This is usually only for essay subjects
- Can vary between colleges

6. The Interview!

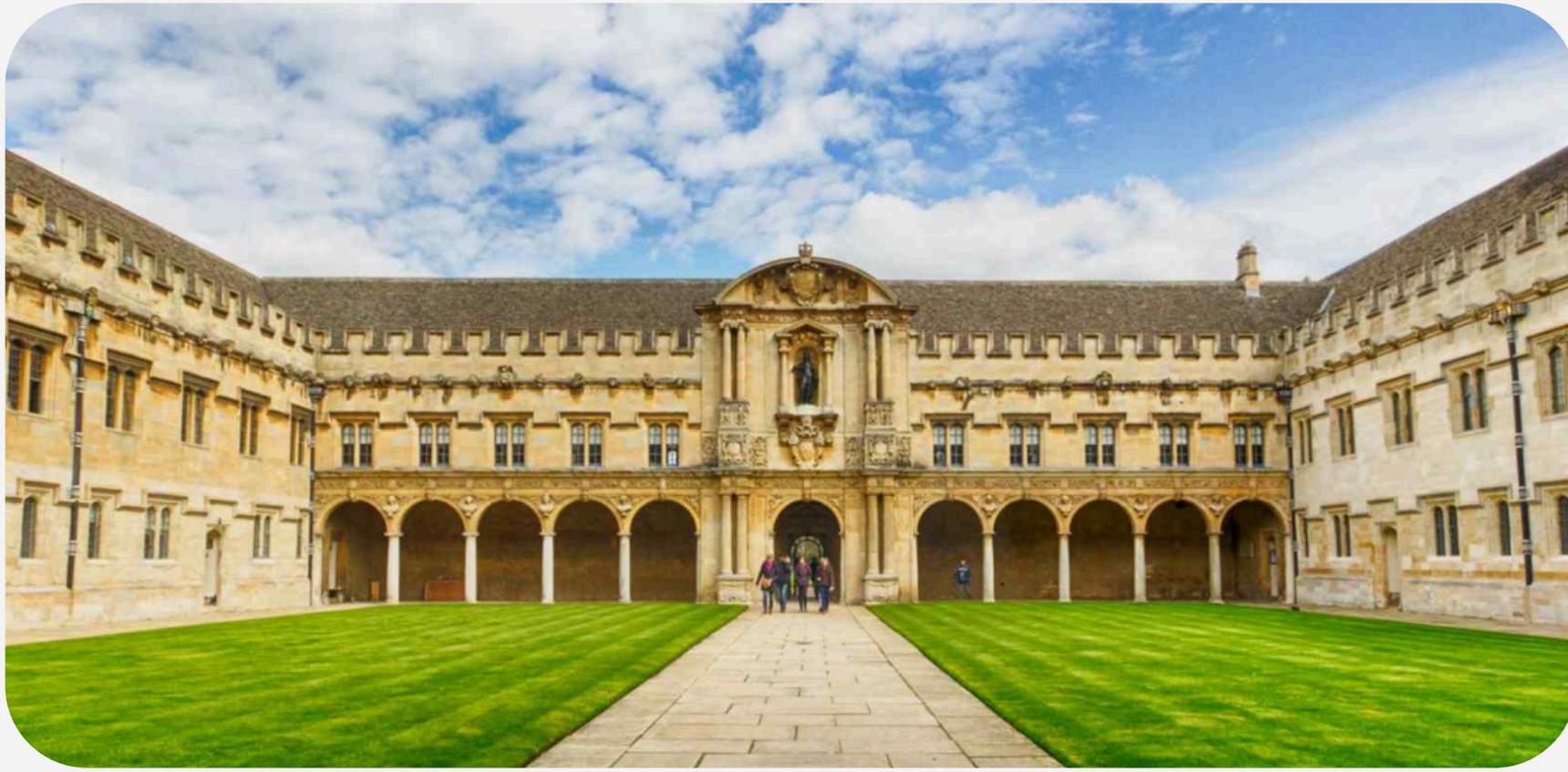
- 1 or 2 interviews (depends on the course and college)



King's College



Trinity College



St John's College



Newnham College

Choosing your College

Memilih Kolej anda

The college you apply to matters — it affects everything from your **daily routine to costs of living**. The University of Cambridge is made up of 31 constituent colleges, of which some are **exclusive** to certain demographic groups:

- Postgraduate only: Clare Hall and Darwin College
- Aged 21 and up only: Hughes Hall, St Edmund's and Wolfson College
- Women's only: Newnham and Murray Edward's College

Colleges provide students with **accommodation, meals, academic support** outside lectures through supervisions, pastoral support through your personal tutor, college nurse and chaplain etc. Most colleges have **bedders** (cleaning staff) that vacuum your room periodically. You can either apply to a specific college, or send an **open application**, wherein your application can land on any college.

When choosing a college, some **factors to consider** are: the distance to your department, the college's surroundings, the quality and cost of accommodation, application competitiveness and available facilities such as the cafeteria, gardens, gyms, meeting rooms and such. Most of this information should be available on the specific college's website. Here are some insights from CUMaS members on why they chose their college:



Magdalene College (Esther)



The **YH2 Capital scholarship** (which both of the CUMas corporate relations officers are under!) requires applicants to be admitted to Magdalene, which made it my first choice. Nevertheless, I did my research as well and found out that the college website highly emphasises on a “**warm, tight-knit community**”. In my past year here, this has certainly been very true.

A college of a smaller-size like ours allows the college community to be very close and bonded. Familiar faces can be seen in the college often, with friendly and welcoming staff, and our college JCR is really active with entertainment and wellbeing activities. Objectively, Magdalene has also been suggested to have more of a “private-school” culture and may be more traditional in ways, but all in all Magdalene already feels like home to me.

Trinity Hall College (Amalina)



When picking a college wanted a **smaller college** that would have a stronger sense of community which is what first drew me to Trinity Hall. I also looked at what the **Director of Studies (DoS)** in the college I shortlisted was interested in and because I’m more interested in social psychology, I also liked that my DoS’s focus was on social psych. The beautiful library that overhangs the river and the location in the center of Cambridge were also big draw for me. I also now love my college for having pretty **good food and the cheapest food prices** in Cambridge.



Robinson College (Hui Hui)



I really like the location of Robinson College. It has a nice garden (not boring patches of grass!). The food in the Garden Restaurant is good and the portions are generous. It's 15 minutes away from the centre of town (you can make it 10 if you walk fast) and I appreciate the peacefulness.

One thing to note is that **laundry is not included in the accommodation fee**. In addition, the **price range of the room** starts relatively high, but it remains consistent throughout the whole degree. The cheapest room is relatively more expensive but it has taken into consideration of inflation over the next 3 years.

PS: The main reason I chose Robinson is because one of my friends said it has the highest **acceptance rate for Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology**, but at the end of the day Robinson is among the most competitive ones. So my advice is that your friend may not provide the best advice XD

King's College (Ka Wai)



If you've never been to Cambridge it makes it much harder to choose, but I heard from a senior at KTJ that King's has very nice accommodations which is why I chose King's.



Fitzwilliam College (Eugene)



If your department is in West Cambridge, pick Fitz – it's the best hill college and closest to West. There's also weekly badminton and unlimited storage over the vacation period (but this gets full quickly during Summer break).

Newnham College (Raisa)

**women only!*



I applied to Newnham because of its reputation for Geography! After being here for a year, I can confidently say that we have the prettiest **flower gardens**, **free laundry** and **standardised rent regardless of the room**. This is unique only to Newnham where rooms are determined based on a random ballot system that gets reversed in 2nd year so people who chose last at the end of 1st year, get to pick first in 2nd year. Alongside this, our kitchens are extremely good – we are one of the only colleges in Cambridge to have **ovens, hobs and fridges in every kitchen** and some rooms even come with their own personal mini fridge and sink!

As a women's college, there is a very warm, wholesome and welcoming community that will definitely make you feel at home. It's like Barbie-land essentially.

Location-wise, it is extremely convenient for Humanities courses (Newnham is directly opposite Sidgwick Site where all the Humanities departments are). It's around a 10 minute walk to town, so decently close by but avoids all the tourists and traffic. Also as a bonus, most CUMaS events are held here due to the free meeting rooms and event spaces so if you want to be active in CUMaS, join Newnham!



Personal Statement Guidance

Panduan Kenyataan Peribadi



Be truthful. Never try to make stuff up. If you find yourself second-guessing on what you're writing, then consider omitting it.

UK universities are not concerned about your personal life, and more focused on super-curricular activities like books, academic online courses etc. What steps have you taken to deepen your understanding of your chosen subject? If you've taken part in leadership roles or volunteer work, did those experiences inspire or reinforce your passion for the course?

The depth of your reflection from an experience matter more than the scale of your participation. e.g. Briefly mentioning a competition or internship without analysis is less impactful than describing a small group project that led to a meaningful idea or outcome

Put more effort into writing a strong introduction and concluding paragraph, preferably link them together if possible.

Highlight skills that support independent, self-directed study such as problem-solving, critical thinking, resilience and curiosity.

Show them that you are ready to explore new things.

In the Cambridge application:

The weighting of the application process is:

PS < Admissions Test < Interview

The PS is generally considered the **least** influential of the three as it is subjective. As long as you're familiar with what you've written and can discuss it confidently during the interview, you'll be fine.



Admissions Test Guide

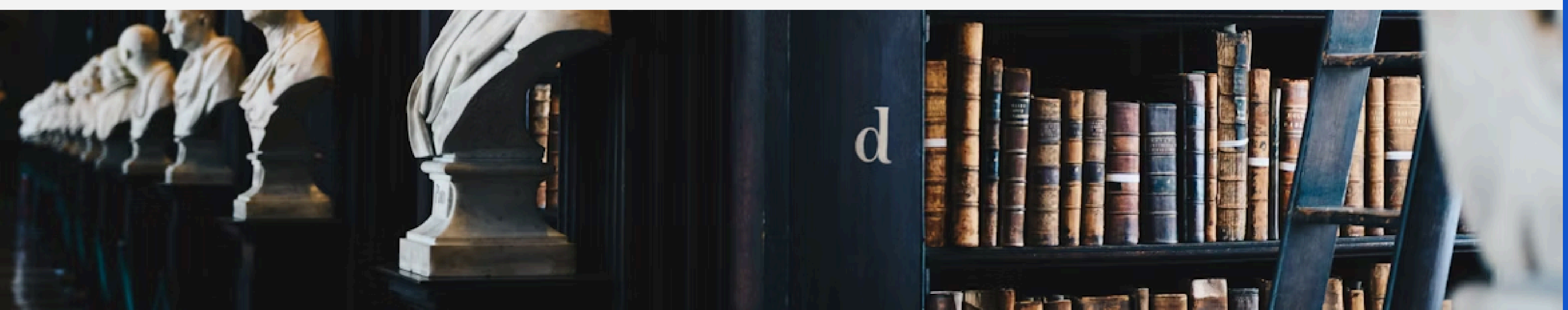
Panduan Ujian Kemasukan

LNAT (Naomi)

For law, Cambridge has chosen to use the **LNAT (Law National Admissions Test)** that is the standard used by many universities in the UK. You must take the test in the UCAS year in which you are applying to university, and you can only take it **once per test cycle**. While a weak performance in the LNAT wouldn't be absolutely detrimental to your application, a strong score may be a considerable factor in your favour so do try your best!

The LNAT is divided into two sections: **Section A (which takes a MCQ format)** and **Section B (which requires writing a short essay)**. Unfortunately it is not a test that you can cram for since it's essentially a skill based test instead of a knowledge based one, so start preparing early! My general advice would be to **read as much as possible** – especially if English is not your first language. This would help your **comprehension skills** for Section A and will hopefully give you a wider knowledge bank to draw on for Section B.

Section A has a time limit of **95 minutes** to answer **42 questions** covering **12 passages**. Doing the maths, that means you should be spending around 8 minutes per passage. You've likely done MCQs before in the course of your academic life so far and you should be applying the same general strategies here. Unlike Section B below, there is **no requirement of prior knowledge** to score well in Section A. You should be answering solely based on the information and wording of the text given to you. I've listed a few common question types below which you can also apply to non-LNAT texts as well for general practice. Unfortunately there are only 2 official LNAT sample papers (which you can find online [here](#)) but please feel free to use non-official LNAT practice books or websites.



Common Question Types in Section A

- What unstated assumption is being made?
- Which of the following is an assertion?
- What is the main idea in the passage?
- What is the main argument in the passage?
- Which of the following is an argument in favour of....?
- What is meant by...?
- What conclusion is reached by the author?
- Which of the following weakens/strengthens the writer's argument?
- Is an argument or assertion being made?
- Is this fact or opinion?

Section B has a time limit for 45 minutes to write 1 essay in response to a choice of 3 questions. Realistically, that means you're likely looking to write **500-600 words**. They are looking for you to clearly pick and cohesively argue for a stance. This can take the form of either **total support, total disagreement or even somewhere in between where there is partial support but only if certain circumstances are met**. The relatively short nature of this section means that you should aim to answer the question clearly in a straightforward manner. Don't waste words on developing the side which you are not taking, you should **spend more time rebutting them by providing counter-arguments**.

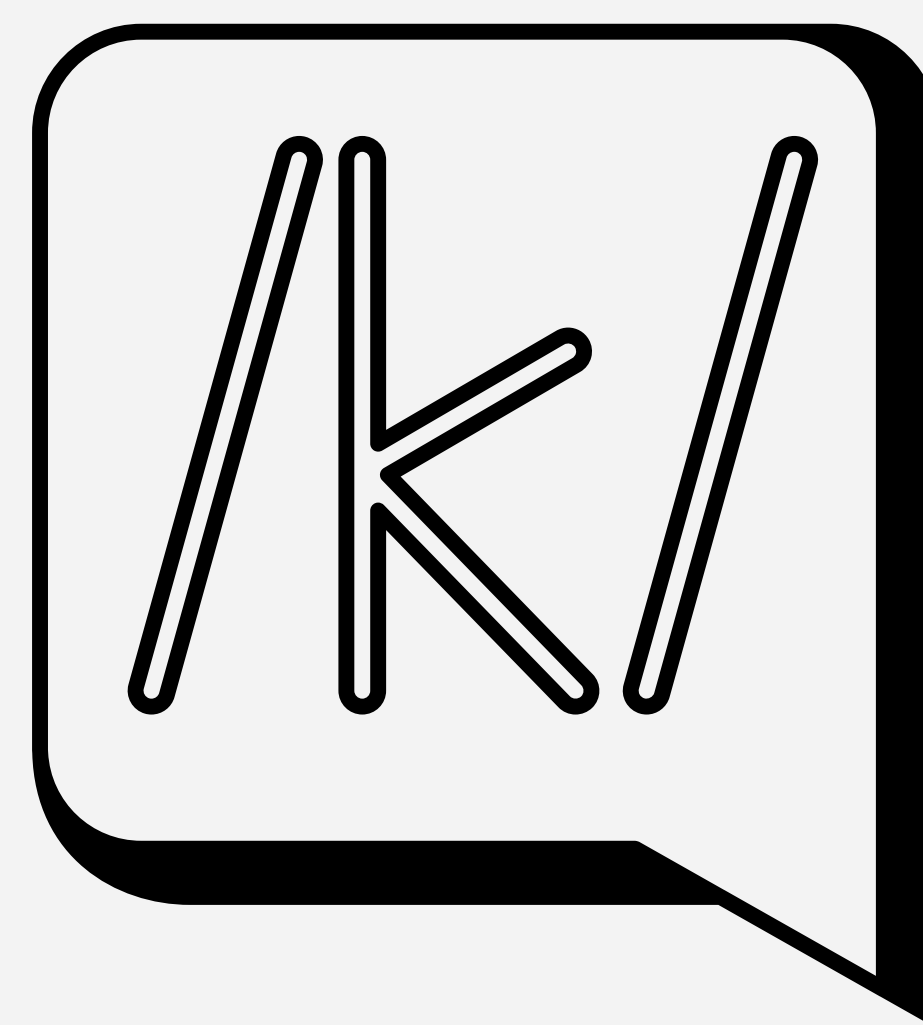
Signposting is highly recommended for clarity. Personally, I think it can be quite helpful to have some knowledge/opinions on recurring themes such as **human rights, justice, and individual liberty**. Knowing about the logical processes of certain philosophers whose work is usually related to ethical questions is useful, as you can essentially just replicate their reasoning, particularly with questions involving government control. For example, concepts such as utilitarianism, social contract and categorical imperatives. Detailed knowledge is not necessary; just a basic understanding of their reasoning would likely be sufficient.

I would also recommend looking up the European Convention of Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998. Most importantly, just try your best! Unfortunately, there's an element of luck to the test, and there's no way to fully prepare for it. I wish you good luck and hope that you enter the exam with confidence and a clear mind.



Linguistics (Esther)

1. First, attempt a **sample admission test** to have a good gauge of the questions.
2. Attempt the **Linguistics Olympiad** questions (involving syntax, morphology, semantics) – UKLO, NACLO.
3. Do the remaining paper.



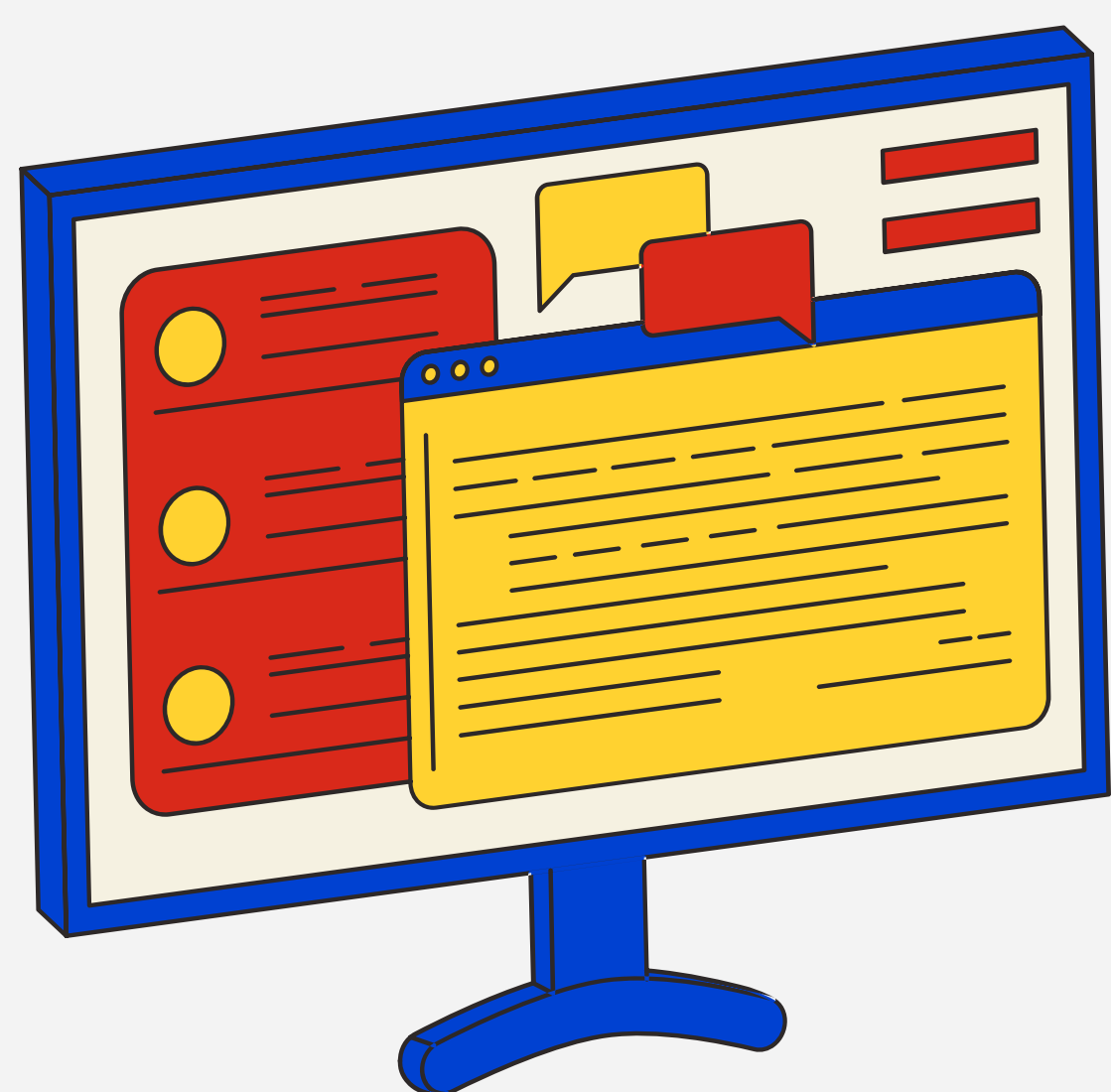
Questions often involve interpreting datasets and understanding experimental observations (intuitive) so require sensitivity towards language.

TIPS:

- Read a few introductory texts to have a good understanding of what linguistics is about – *‘The Language Instinct’* is suitable for beginners
- No prerequisite knowledge from previous education
- Just explore your interest in language!

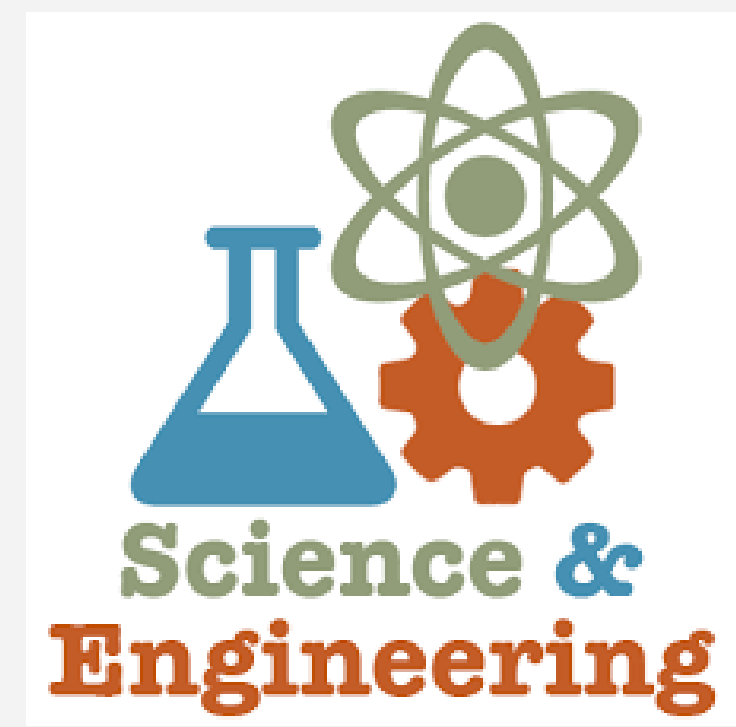
TMUA (Eugene)

- Make sure to manage your time well as the time constraint for the exam is quite short.
- All questions are worth the same mark, so it is equally worth being careful with your Q1 answers as well as solving Q20.
- For Paper 2, make sure you cover the material provided on logic and proofs, and if you would like to be more confident on it, you can cover the first 3 lectures from the Cambridge Discrete Maths course <https://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/teaching/2425/DiscMath/materials.html> as it teaches you how to convert worded problems into symbols which can be more easily manipulated.



ESAT (Alden)

If you want to sit ESAT, I would definitely urge you to start early because the ESAT is by no means easy. Firstly, you should determine the modules you have to take. You can head to the **university websites (Cambridge, Imperial, UCL)** and **check the modules required** for your course.



After that, you should check the ESAT website for the content specifications for each module. You will find that you have learnt most of the content in the A-Levels or other pre-university syllabuses, but there will be **some topics that you haven't learnt**. Therefore, you should spend time learning and making sure you know all of the topics.

Then comes the practice tests. **ENGAA and NSAA** are recommended to understand what to expect from the ESAT. You will find overlapping questions in ENGAA and NSAA, but there is no harm in trying them again. In addition, be mindful that ENGAA or NSAA are not complete replicas of the ESAT, as they **differ in structure** (number of questions and time) and **format** (the ESAT is an **online-based exam**, while ENGAA/NSAA are paper-based).

The first few tests will be challenging, but as you practice more, you will surely see improvements. So, be patient and resilient. I would recommend doing the first few tests at your own pace to understand the structure. Then, you can start **timing your tests**. In many cases, it's not that you can't do the questions, but that you don't have enough time—so simulating time-pressured scenarios will help.

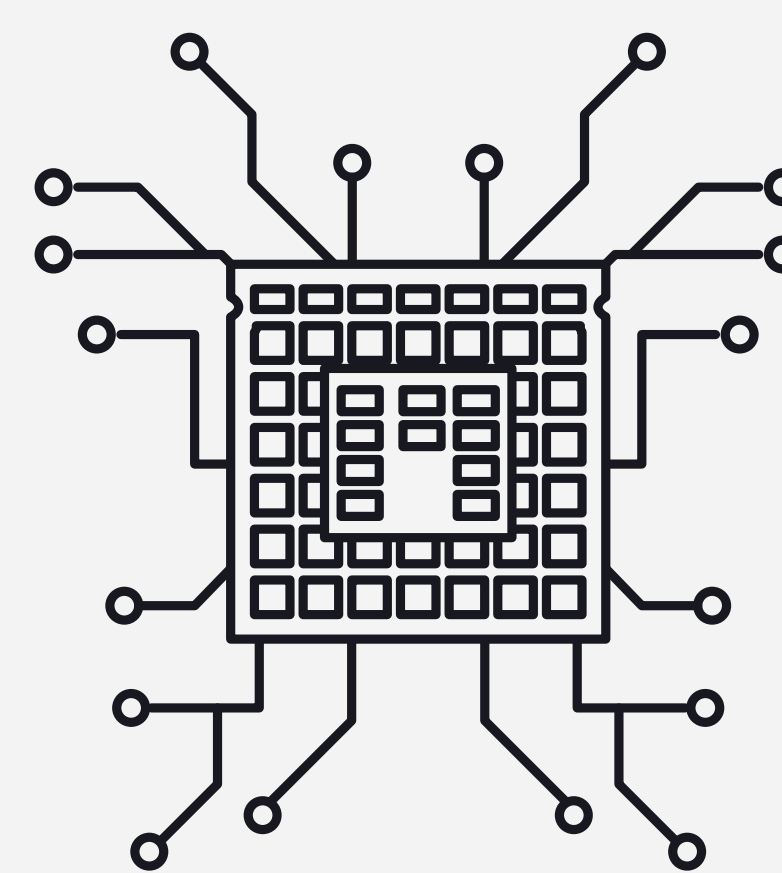
After doing the ENGAA/NSAA past papers, I would only recommend doing the practice tests on the ESAT website. They are very similar to the actual test, but I feel the questions in the practice tests are slightly easier. There will be a few practice tests, and I would suggest saving at least one so that you can use it to prepare closer to your scheduled test date.

Work hard, and all the best!



ESAT (Jun Heng)

- Read ESAT specification at [Prepare – UAT UK](#)
- Study topics you're unfamiliar with.
- Stop using a calculator from now onwards, and train your mental calculation.
- Do past year questions (ENGAA and NSAA). A full set of ESAT contains **27 questions**, so compile the ENGAA and NSAA questions together as your practice.
- Things to know:
 - **Math 1: NSAA math and ENGAA normal math**
 - **Math 2: ENGAA Advanced math**
 - **Physics: ENGAA physics (not the advanced one)**
 - **Chem: NSAA chem**
- For the first few papers, do the questions at your own pace (just to familiarise yourself with them)
- Then, start to time. After 1 paper, rest and reflect, don't continue. (brain dead) Know what your weaknesses are and find simpler/shorter ways.
- Do **TMUA** to sharpen your math skills.
- Laminate papers and write your working on them using some thin Sharpie pens will help you familiarise yourself with the **actual exam settings**.
- Skip and flag questions (difficult/ involving large calculations)
- You can do “**exams ninja**” and the specimen tests too.



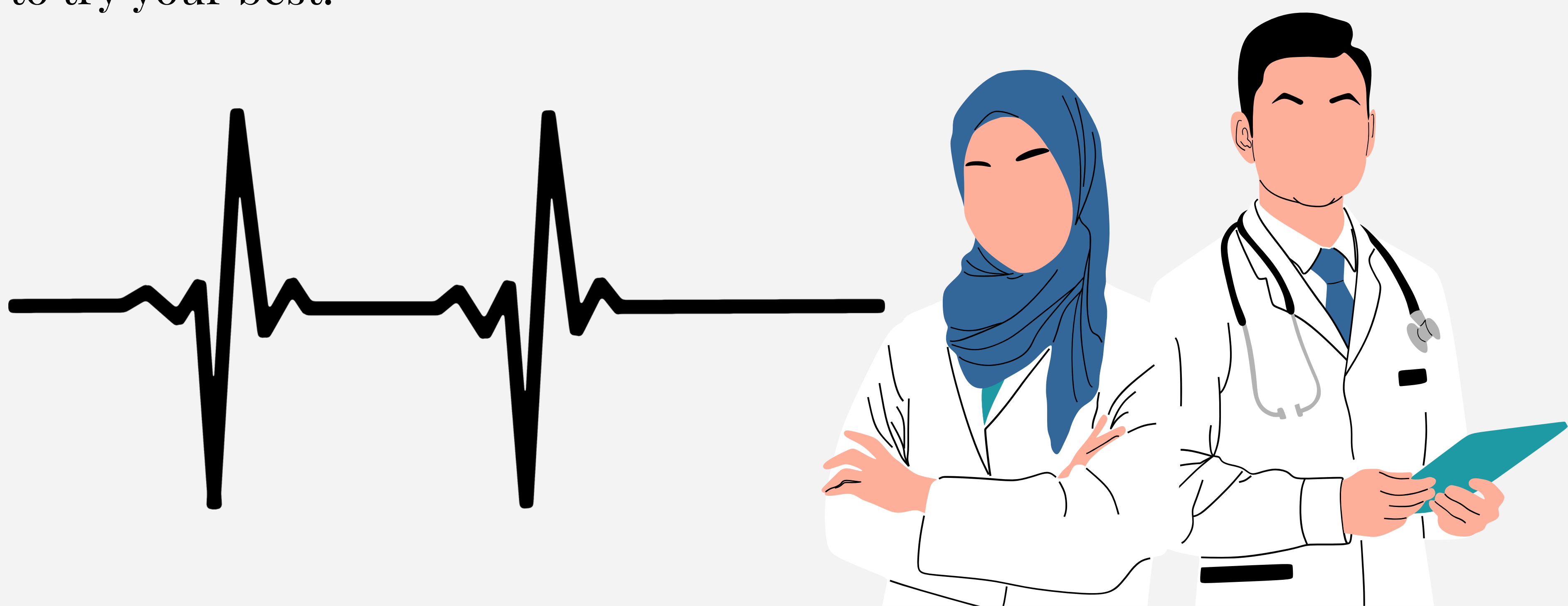
UCAT (Sinan)

I had prioritised the now-discontinued BMAT entrance exam over UCAT, which was previously used for Oxbridge admissions. However, I found the volume of practice to be most valuable in my UCAT preparation. I recommend using a large question bank like Medify, which allows targeting of exam sub-categories alongside timed practice which is extremely important.

The exam is comprised of **four subtests**, each ranging in duration between 20 and 40 minutes. These each function as **aptitude tests in various contexts of verbal reasoning, decision making, quantitative reasoning and situational judgement**. Hence, improvement in performance comes from practice and familiarity with question types as opposed to targeted learning and revision. These are each **highly time pressured, with randomised distribution of difficulty**. This lends to the importance of exam technique and time management as **questions may be moved forward from and revisited**. Of the subtests, situational judgement is the only one which does not contribute to your numerical score and percentile, instead being graded in bands given separately in results.

Do not neglect situational judgement! I have known many people who obsessed over maximising their percentile, allowing their band to slip and leading to pre-interview rejections despite strong stats.

Questions are not standardised, lending to an element of luck which may feel frustrating. However, it allows for more practice through huge question banks. Ultimately, the most important thing is to practice until you are as comfortable as possible in the exam hall, and to try your best!

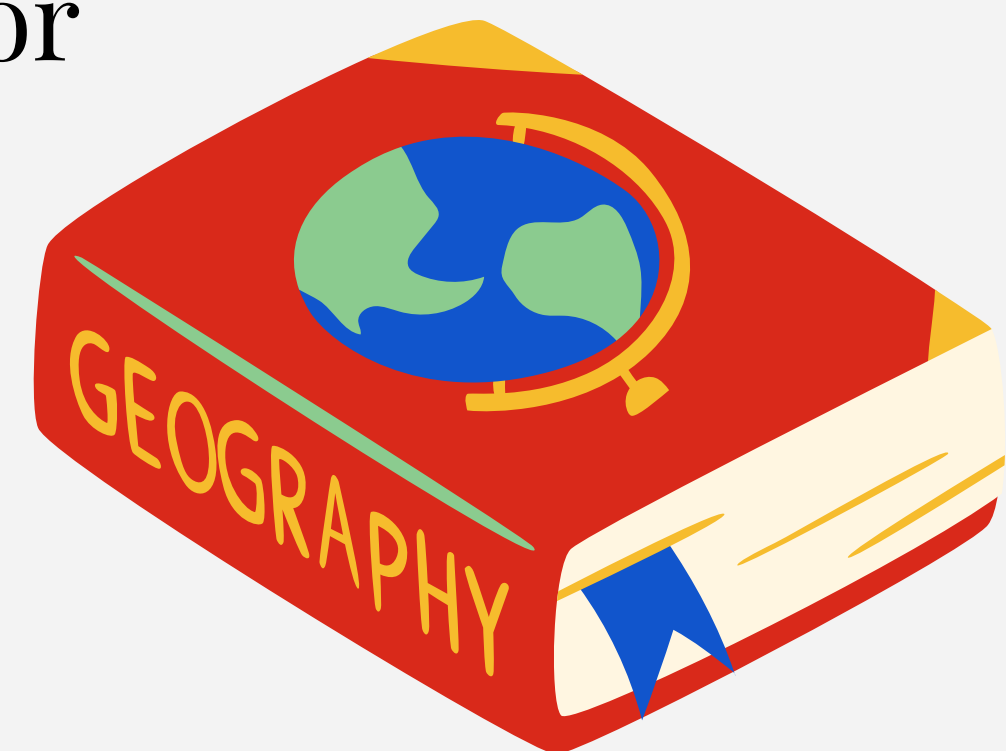


The Interview

Temuduga Kemasukan

Raisa (Geography)

You will have two interviews for Geography: one for the Physical and another for Human Geography.

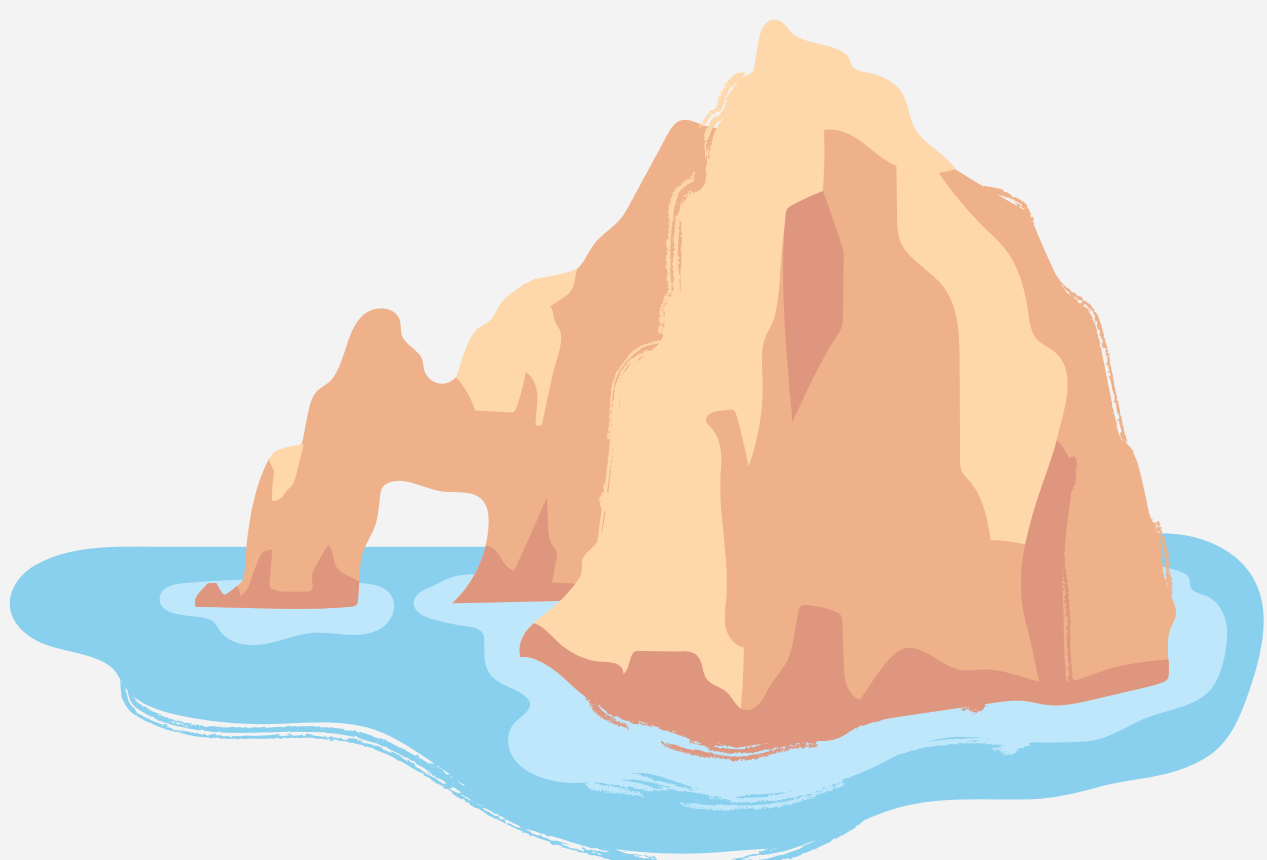


Physical Geography:

- You will be asked many resource-based questions.
- You will be required to interpret a variety of maps and diagrams.
- You should know some basic mathematics so that you can quickly calculate years, timescales, and percentages.
- You should be familiar with major landforms and processes such as glaciers, rivers, volcanoes, the carbon cycle, and the Great Ocean Conveyor Belt.
- You will most likely be given one photograph to analyse.

Preparation for Physical Geography:

- Read the **IPCC reports**, focusing especially on their figures, maps, and indicators of climate change.
- Read the news regularly. There is always a natural disaster occurring somewhere, and it is useful to have examples and case studies to mention.
- Be prepared to discuss **mitigation and adaptation policies** to counter physical hazards; it is important to know relevant examples.
- Learn about **Malaysia**. It is a uniquely diverse country with a wide range of physical geography (jungles, floods, coasts). This can be particularly interesting for interviewers, as they are often more familiar with UK issues such as coastal erosion.



Human Geography:

- Will involve reading a provided news article and discussing it during the interview.
- Interviewers usually ask very broad questions in human geography.
- Topics may include **Economics, globalisation, or even philosophical questions**, for example: "How do we define what a place is?"

Preparation for Human Geography:

- Stay **updated** with the news. Given the current geopolitical landscape, especially with figures like Donald Trump, this is very important.
- Look into **feminist and decolonial perspectives**. Whenever you read news articles or books, consider whose perspective is being represented. Challenge Eurocentric views.
- Learn to confidently express your own opinions. This is crucial for human geography, where there is often no single "right" answer.

Interviews are likely to be structured more as discussions or debates rather than strict questioning. Interviewers want to see how you think about and engage with different topics.



Overall Tips:

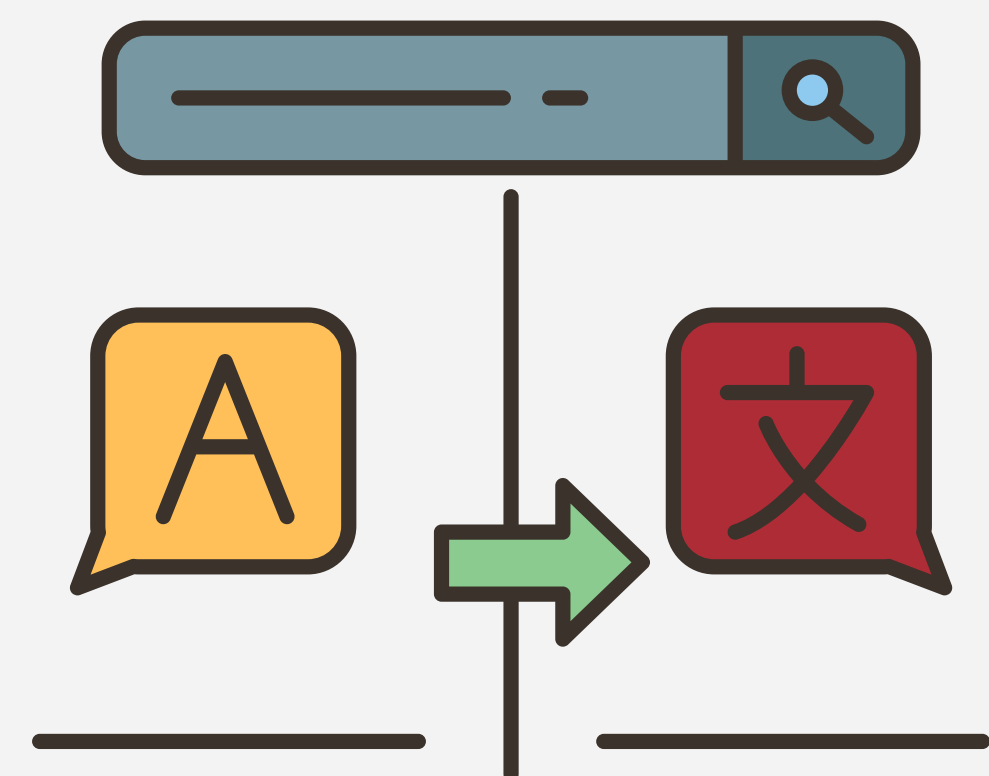
- Read a few books from the reading list available online and form your own opinions on the subject matter.
- Know your personal statement thoroughly, as some colleges will closely question you on it during the interview.
- Critically think about and evaluate your own opinions. Always return to the basic geographical concepts and consider how to approach a question differently depending on factors such as space, place, time, and scale.
- Do not be afraid to link between topics, even across human and physical geography. The beauty of geography is that it is the study of everything!
- Familiarise yourself with the Cambridge Geography course. Select a few modules you are particularly interested in and research them in more depth.
- After receiving an interview invitation, look up your interviewers. More often than not, they will ask questions related to their own areas of expertise.



Esther (Linguistics)



- Explain thought process and any assumptions made when reaching the solution
- Sometimes it's not about getting the 'right' answer, but about how you think through the problem and the intuition behind your approach.
- Reread your Personal Statement to familiarise the ideas you have introduced or your personal experiences.
- Practise vocalising your thought process out loud.
- Show your enthusiasm and passion to learn.
- Join CUMaS mock interview for more practice!!



Amalina (Psychological and Behavioural Sciences)

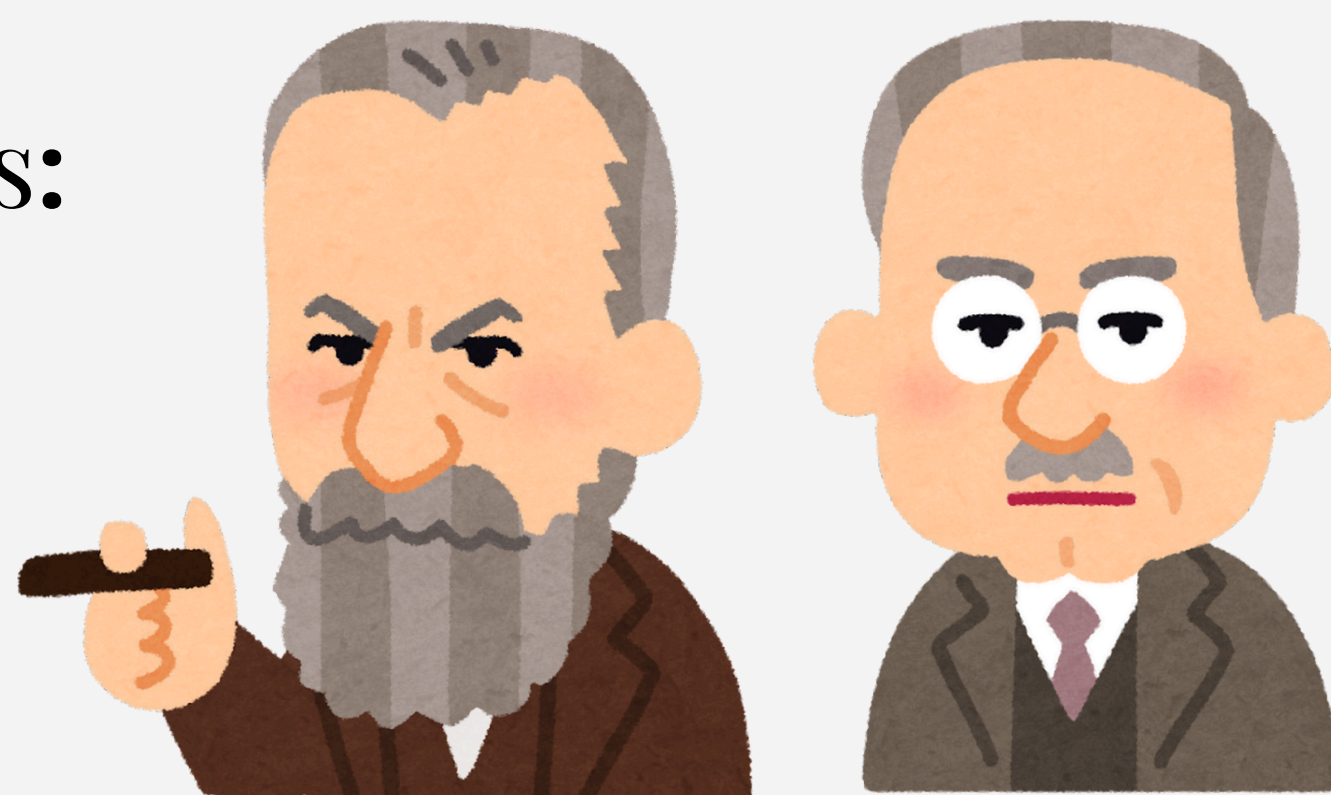
- Know A-level Statistics well (if you did Maths)
- Work on a Statistics paper before the interview
- One of my interviews was completely statistics and data extrapolation
- Remember: **Correlation does not equal causation**



Falsification VS Validation

This is a super important distinction in research and is very helpful to know when approaching stats in psychology and when planning experiments.

The **Wason selection task** is good to illustrate this:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7BnLELjsYI>



Stats breakdown

- **Descriptive and Inferential stats are the most important to know**, the rest is just extra. Know what exactly they are measuring and how you would use each test. You don't really need to be able to use the stats measures practically (e.g. solving a stats question) so just know how it works and what it measures.
- **Descriptive Statistics:**
 - Measures of Central Tendency: Mean, Median, Mode
 - Measures of Dispersion: Range, Variance, Standard Deviation.
- **Inferential Statistics:**
 - T-Tests: Used to compare means between two groups.
 - Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Used to compare means among multiple groups.
 - Regression Analysis: Examines the relationship between one dependent variable and one or more independent variables.
 - Multiple Regression: Extends regression to multiple predictors.
 - Logistic Regression: Used when the dependent variable is binary or categorical.
 - Chi-Square Test: Examines the association between categorical variables.
 - Correlation Analysis: Measures the strength and direction of a linear relationship between two variables
- **Factor Analysis:**
 - Used to identify underlying factors that explain patterns of correlations within a set of observed variables.
- **Structural Equation Modeling (SEM):**
 - An extension of factor analysis that allows for the testing of complex relationships among variables, including direct and indirect effects.
- **Cluster Analysis:**
 - Identifies groups or clusters within a dataset based on similarities between cases.
- **Longitudinal Analysis:**
 - Techniques such as repeated measures ANOVA, growth curve modelling, and mixed-effects models are used to analyze data collected at multiple time points
- **Meta-Analysis:**
 - Combines results from multiple studies to draw more generalizable conclusions.
- **Survival Analysis:**
 - Examines the time until an event of interest occurs, often used in studies involving time-to-event data.
- **Bayesian Statistics:**
 - An approach that combines prior knowledge and current data to update beliefs about a hypothesis.



Other advice that I found helpful:

Focus on application, not knowledge

- With each psychological concept you learn, try to see how it applies to your day-to-day life—especially in the context of your local community, where appropriate. Consider why a psychological concept might not always be valid or applicable in certain situations.
- There's no point in regurgitating loads of facts—you can't know everything, and they know that. The interviewers also know more than you, so they're not going to be impressed by a list of facts alone.

Experimental focus

- The courses for Psychology at Oxbridge are very experimental-focused.
- Practice planning experiments and doing so in a structured way out loud (e.g. hypothesis, alternate hypotheses, variable (specifying each type and how you will measure/control them).
- Also mentions potential flaws or areas for error in your experiment, no experiment can be perfect.
- They may also ask you how you maintain ethics in your experiment, or alternatively, how you would conduct your experiment if ethics were not an issue.

Reading results and drawing conclusions

- Always remember that correlation does **NOT** equal causation and always mention this when drawing a conclusion from data.
- There can always be confounding variables or room for experimental error, even if the question is just “What does the results of this data suggest?” Always see if there could be an alternate explanation.
- An easy one is that pretty much every old psychology experiment was done on white men from **WEIRD** (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) societies so may not be applicable to the general population /in other cultures.
- Learning specific types of experimental bias and experimental error, makes it easy to criticise experiments and look for confounds.



If you don't know the answer start with something you do know

- Especially with Psychology, a lot of the connections are intertwined so if you don't know the answer to any question, see if you can use a piece of information you do know to approach the question.
- You can also approach the question from different schools of thought like developmental psychology, evolutionary psychology, behavioural reasoning etc.
- Also, don't be afraid to ask questions if you are not sure about anything!

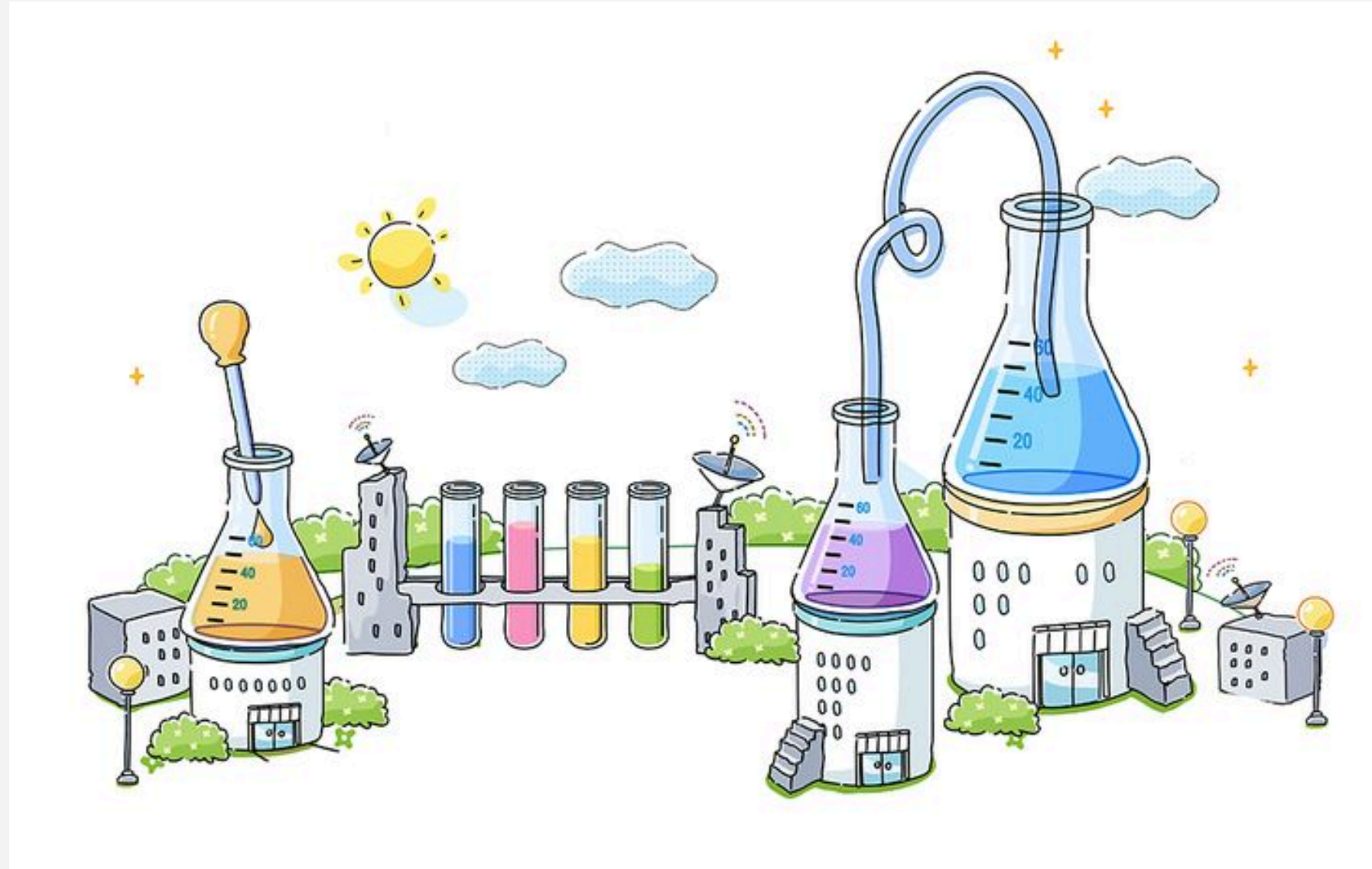
Just don't stop yapping!

- Talking shows that you're thinking — expressing your thoughts out loud will allow the interviewers to understand where your head is and offer you more help.
- I also found it very useful to talk to people who know nothing about Psychology and explain things that I was currently reading/interested in. It helped me to practice talking about Psychology in my own words and break down harder concepts into simpler ones.



Yi Hang

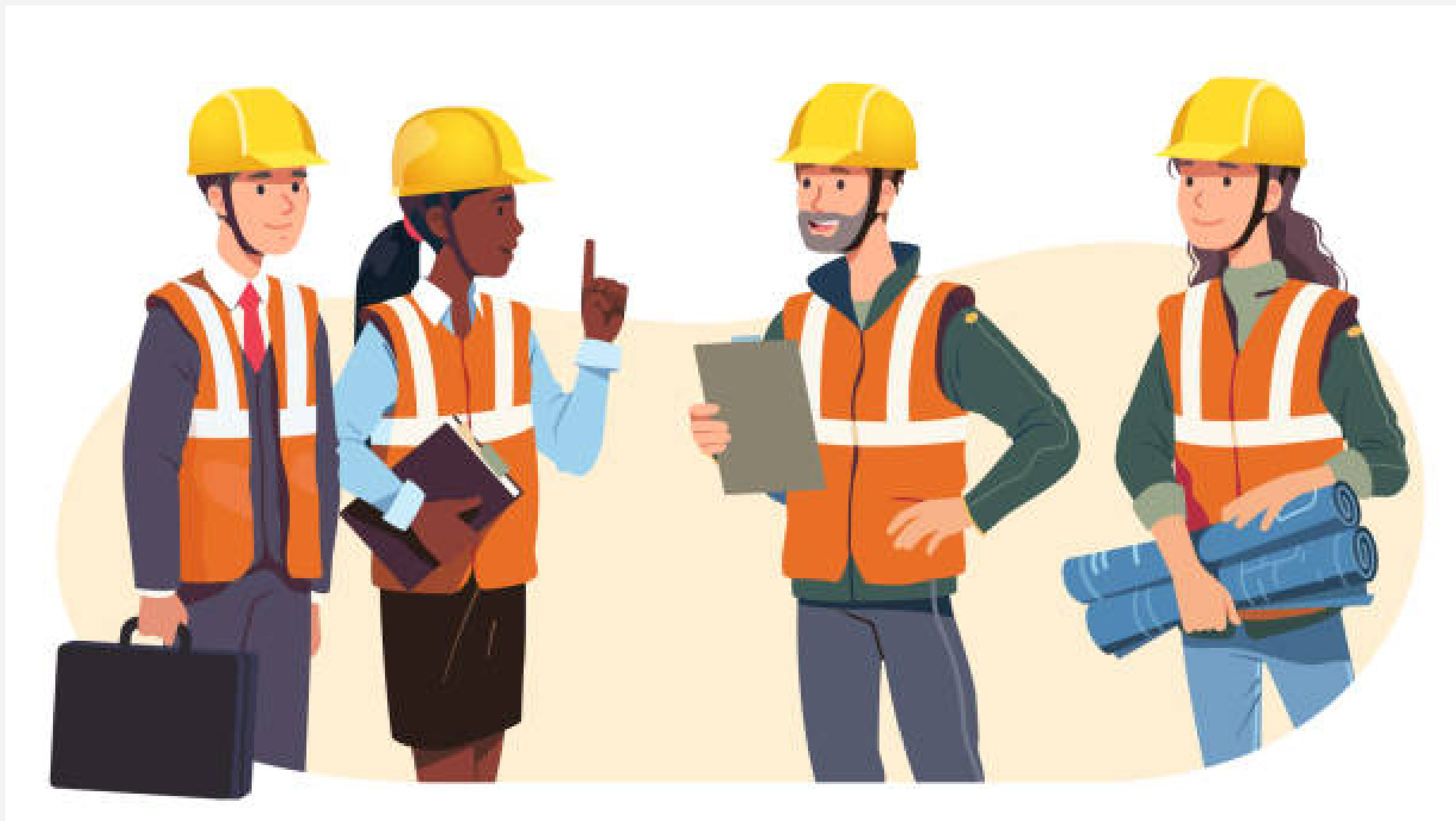
(Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology)



- Preparation:
 - All **A-Level Maths, Chemistry** (very important), some Physics, Biology and Further Maths if possible
 - **Chemical Engineering basics** (e.g. Plants Design, Pipe System, Equilibrium System, Thermodynamics)
 - **Graph sketching** (you'll be given an equation where you'll have to sketch a graph or you'll be given a graph then will need to derive an equation)
 - **Probability + Integration**
 - Solving problem for a chemical plant/heat exchanger (e.g give **suggestion/improvement** on a system to optimise its kinetic/thermodynamic efficiency)
- Mode (with 2 interviews–my experience):
 - 1st Interview: more to discussion/ idea proposing/ imagination (e.g. how does candle work)
 - 2nd Interview: **Calculation**, Math, Chemistry, Chemical Engineering (e.g number of mole of water in a cup)
- Tips:
 - Show every step with **verbal explanation**, don't skip steps.
 - List all the assumptions made.
 - Use diagrams (especially the chemical plant systems) with clear labels
 - Ask for some hints (indirectly) if you are stuck or start with something related that you know.



Rui Hao (Engineering)



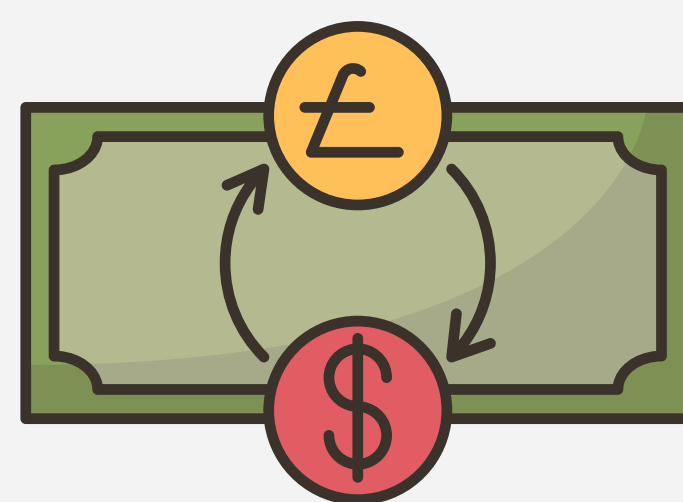
- Preparation:
 - Be comfortable with **A-levels/IB Math and Physics syllabus**, particularly **mechanics and electricity** for physics.
 - **Know your personal statement** inside out. Interviewers might ask about a certain research project you did, and how it relates to Engineering.
 - You **MUST** know **why you are applying** to Cambridge engineering (Not only for the prestige, but why the course structure and small group supervision system)
- Mode (with 2 interviews):
 - 1st Interview: half of it about **personal statement** and half was **function sketching** (sketch $\sin(x)+x$)
 - 2nd Interview: Only questions. **One probability question** (The birthday paradox: search it up) + **One conservation of energy question**
- Tips:
 - Show every step with **verbal explanation**, don't skip. Voice out your thought process.
 - List **assumptions** made
 - If you don't know or you are stuck, just **ask for help politely**. Never lie about your understanding, **humility and engagement** with your interviewer is key.
 -





Rameeya (Economics)

- **Practice solving maths questions out loud.** Screen record yourself solving a further maths question, for example, while explaining your thought process from start till the end. Start practicing early to make it a habit!
- **Talk about economic concepts with your family members.** Practice explaining common things that happen around us, like changes in inflation, why it's happening and it's wider macroeconomic consequences... Trust me your parents would love listening to you talk about these things and it would be very useful for your interview as you would need to talk about real life economic scenarios comfortably.
- Also practice solving **logic games and game theory questions**, search it up on YouTube to see how to tackle these kind of questions to get a feel for it and to understand how to think about these kind of questions.
- Finally be ready to expect the unexpected! Be confident yet humble during the interview, show your willingness to learn and don't be afraid of making mistakes :)



Eva (Economics)

- Learn to **explain real-life concepts** as it's more applicable than theory, and will separate you from candidates who only know A-Level content.
- If you are able to find out who your interviewer is beforehand, it might be beneficial to do some **research on the work they do** or the books they wrote or their specialty which can serve as a **good ice breaker**.
- If the interviewer is your Director of Studies (DoS), they will probably ask you something related to their line of expertise/work.



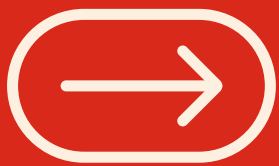
Eugene (Computer Science)

- Useful to study a **particular area of computer science in depth** (of your interest) to include in your **personal statement / talk about during interview** to demonstrate your understanding capability.
- For CS interviews, if given a CS (algorithm-heavy heavy question, there are **often more than one correct ways to solve the problem**. Some solutions might be more elegant than others, and it is best not to keep delving deeper into your current solution if your interviewer suggests you should take a step back, **possibly hinting at an alternative, different way**.

Sinan (Medicine)

Year of Study	What you will study	Subjects and Courses	Qualifications Obtained
Year 1 - MetST IA	Scientific knowledge	Medically relevant core scientific knowledge and skills, together with some optional specialisation.	2nd MB, Tripos IA
Year 2 - MetST IB			2nd MB, Tripos IB
Year 3 - Part II	Part II course of specialised study	A wide range of courses and subjects (other Tripos courses are also available to Medics)	BA
Years 4 - 6	Clinical studies based at Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Trust (Addenbrooke's Hospital and partner hospitals in East Anglia) and GP practices throughout the Eastern Region.	Clinical medicine leading to the development of clinical skills and knowledge in a range of specialities.	Final MB, leading to MB BChir

The course structure of medicine at Cambridge is, as shown, **highly academic and traditional**. Unlike many medical schools which focus on integrating pre-clinical and clinical studies, **the first three years at Cambridge medicine are purely scientific study**. Hence, academic grounding is important: you must **know A-level content extremely well**. Questions at interview stem from concepts at A-level, and build in complexity to **gauge your thought process**.





Hence, mastering the fundamentals of factual/conceptual knowledge is the first step, providing a platform to show how you think and problem solve. **Thinking out loud is the next step**, with questions gauging your ability to apply new information and understand underlying concepts. These generally are not single logical steps, so **speak as you think**. This allows interviewers to guide your response and understand your thought process.

It is important to **understand your personal statement very well**, as it is often used as a starting point for discussion. Talking about academic interests as a pre-university student with world leading academics in those fields might be intimidating at first, but it is also a unique opportunity, albeit pressurised. **You are not tested on your factual knowledge, but curiosity and aptitude for learning**. It truly can be a launching point!



Interview Format

Interview formats and content vary between colleges, but generally are split into a **scientific and clinical interview**.

Scientific interviews may be purely biomedical, ranging from biological and chemical problem solving to more quantitative mathematical style questions. For example, these could **range from looking at microscope slides to analysing chemical structures of drugs to sketching graphs of given functions**.

Clinical interviews maintain a problem-solving focus, requiring the application of biomedical scientific knowledge to clinical scenarios. It may be **worth looking at the physiological mechanisms of some conditions such as septic shock and fever**.

I have personally found **ethics and work experience to feature less frequently**, with more emphasis on the academics than other medical schools. However, this should not be neglected as interview styles are highly variable by college and may have changed since my time in the admissions process.

Tips

Questions are often given through **diagrams and graphs**, whereby information is presented, and you are asked to analyse and talk through it.

It's easy to get flustered, so I recommend practicing **'zooming out then zooming in' in your response**. **State axes and units, making the big picture clear to the examiner and to yourself**. Only then should you analyse trends and then the smaller scale detail of information given. This helps to build a **safety net** for yourself if you are confused by data, allowing you to reset and move on from mistakes.

Medical fellows may be viewed on college websites. As these are the people interviewing you, looking at their fields may be useful to pre-empt styles of questions. This is a very minor tip, however.



Zander (Law)

Format:

There are 4 types of questions asked:

1. They give you a statute and ask you to apply it to different scenarios
2. They give you a scenario and ask what your judgment is for the scenario
3. They give you a case judgment to read and ask you questions on it
4. They ask general questions like “what recent books/cases have you read?”, or maybe some questions about your PS (but they have trended towards asking about PS less recently)

Question types 1-3 are more important and Question type 4 is more of a warm-up.

Some colleges send you pre-readings ~30 mins before the interview, while some colleges require you to read the statute/scenario on the spot.

Tips:

1. Do many **mock interviews** (Question types 1-3)
2. Have a good structure
 - For **type 1**, identify the main elements of the law, then apply each element to the scenario one by one (explain why it is or is not satisfied), then reach to a conclusion in the end
 - For **type 2**, give arguments for and against and reach an evaluation in the end
3. Always consider **counterarguments** and rebut them
4. Identify situations when the facts are **unclear**, and use “**If it is X, then...; If it is Y, then...**”
5. Read the question given carefully, every **detail matters**
6. Interviewers are **not looking for legal knowledge** (it is not required), only **legal reasoning**, so just use your critical thinking and explain your reasoning clearly





7. Interviewers are looking for **teachability** and not perfect answers. Therefore, when interviewers raise counterarguments, use them to evaluate if you should change your answer. Changing answers is sometimes better than merely defending it when you are clearly wrong.

8. The areas of law asked about might align broadly with your interviewers' academic research area. For example, if your interviewer teaches contract law, the scenario might relate to contract law. However, they are unlikely to present a scenario on your interviewer's specific research topic, so don't waste time reading their article(s).

9. Reading law books might or might not be helpful, as they are looking for legal reasoning and not knowledge. You are also likely be asked something that you knew nothing about before. Thus, only if you have time, you can read some legal books on your interviewer's area of law, to familiarise yourself with the legal reasoning behind it. It's not a must, though!



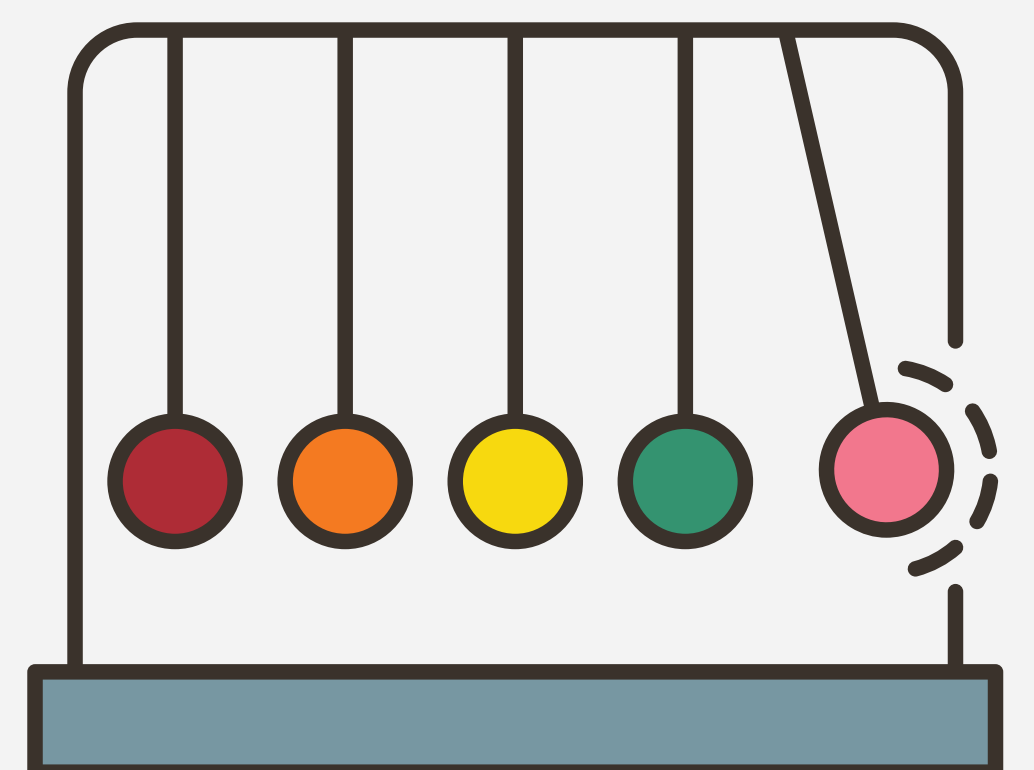
Anrong (Natural Science-Physics)

Interview format and content depends on your college. They will base the interview on topics you've submitted on the **My Cambridge Application**, and in the case that unfamiliar content comes up, you'll be given hint.

I had a single 35 min interview, covering Maths, Physics and Chemistry (my PS was only about Chem so I got asked a lot of Chem). Read your **interview invite** carefully because they might outline the subject covered and also **researching your interviewer** might help.

How to prepare:

- Most importantly, make sure you know your PS well and have a firm understanding of the topics in your **My Cambridge Application** (fluent Maths, know proofs of Physics equations etc, and have your own interpretation on the theories).
- Next, do some mock interviews (resource: CUMaS, CUMSA, your school's alumni, Elevate / MABECS)
- Make a collection of the questions asked and keep on improving your answers by reading/researching (bonus if you can include ideas not covered in the curriculum).
- On the interview day itself, make sure your clothing and environment is comfortable and ONLY view the interview as an opportunity to learn.
- **Don't be discouraged when you have no clue / make a mistake**, your interviewers will guide you, so just make sure you're using their hint (really important, it happened to me) and communicate your thoughts clearly.



Life in Cambridge

Kehidupan di Kembrij

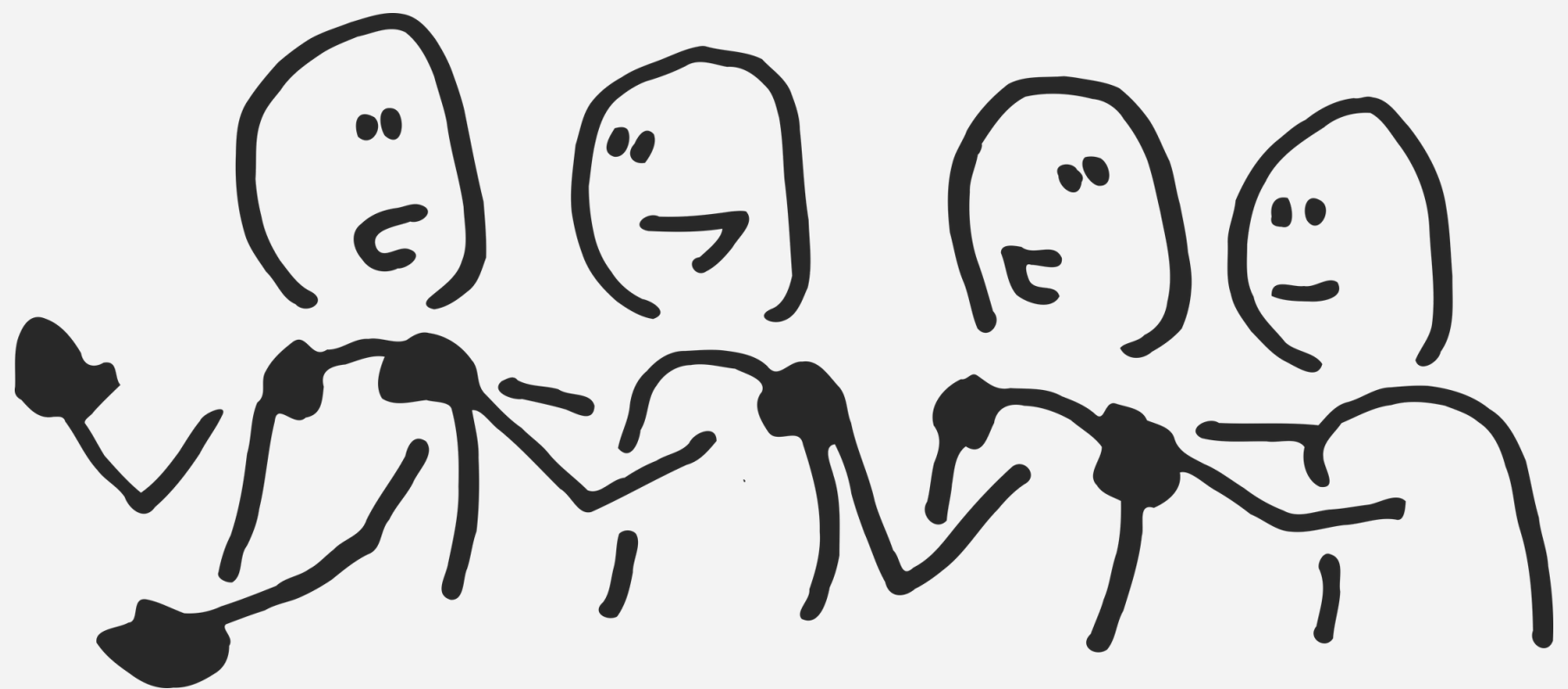
Karen

(Human, Social and Political Science)

Warm tea on a cosy fall evening. Rain pattering outside a dimly lit library. The scent of old books. Footsteps echoing across hallowed halls illuminated by sunlight streaming through stained glass windows...

If you're a fan of the dark academia aesthetic (the romanticisation of higher education, the arts, and literature), Cambridge will not disappoint. From the moment you start exploring the cobblestone streets, you'll be spellbound by architectural grandeur and historical richness. Marvel at the graceful arch of the Bridge of Sighs, the serenity of Selwyn Gardens in full bloom, and the towering majesty of King's Chapel as you gradually make Cambridge your haunt. As a student, you are invited to the exclusive Harry Potter-esque world of Cambridge life as you revel in candlelit dinners, don flowing gowns, debate with wise professors, and converse in university slang.

Walk through a canopy of lush green trees as you head to Sidgwick Site, where the humanities faculties are congregated. You reverently absorb precious knowledge given by renowned academics in the lecture theatre. Later, arms full of books and head bursting with ideas, you enter one of the many on-site libraries to chase supervision deadlines. Gruelling hours pass by as you engage with the academic challenge before reaching the oh-so-satisfying 'eureka' moment. Intellectually satiated, you pack up and make some evening plans. Should you attend the society meeting? Or maybe enjoy a night out with friends?



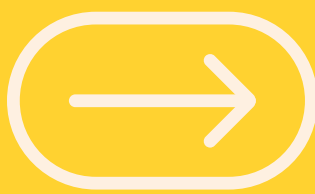
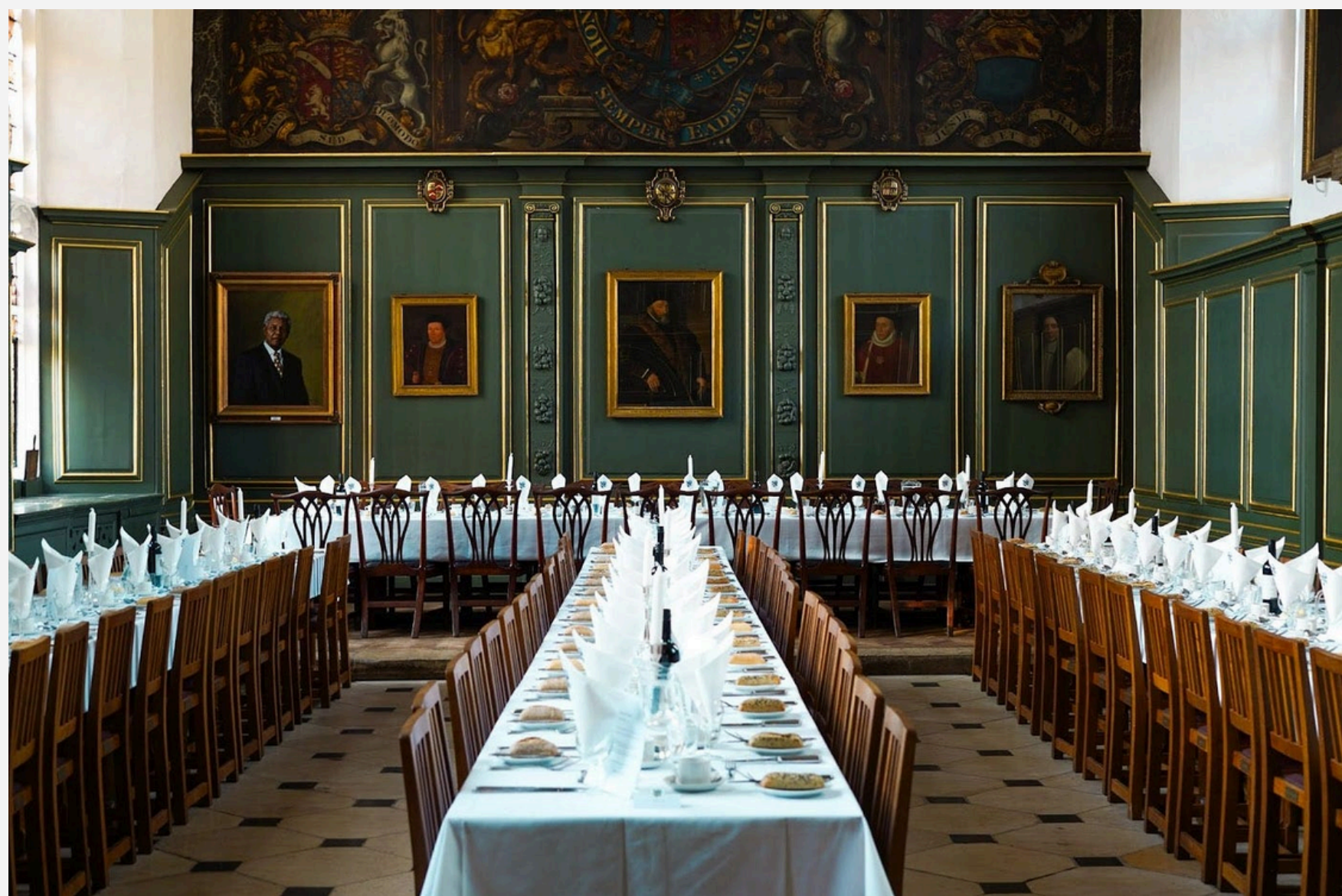
A common misconception is that Cambridge students are all work and no play. The reality is that most have time for some extracurriculars and socialising. During Freshers Week, you'll be spoiled for choice as societies ranging from music, debating, sport, tech to tiddlywinks compete for your attention. University is a time for new experiences, so don't be afraid to attend taster sessions for fencing, rifle shooting, and rowing. Who knows, you might just be talented enough to represent the University as a Blues athlete.

In the evenings, enjoy a pint with friends in College bars as you prepare for a fun night out. The eclectic nature of Cambridge nightlife and the flourishing arts and music scene mean that there's something for everyone. Boogie down at nightclubs (Taylor Swift or K-pop Club Night anyone?), unwind to live jazz in the Hidden Rooms, or laugh out loud with Cambridge's famous Footlights troupe at the ADC theatre. Either way, if you're feeling peckish later, nip down to Market Square and enjoy some late-night cheesy chips.

During weekends or breaks, embark on an adventure by taking a 1-hour train ride to London to visit iconic sights, eat delicious food or watch the annual Cambridge vs Oxford Boat Race. Missing the cool sea breeze? Head to the vibrant coastal city of Brighton and enjoy a lovely beachside holiday. Want to travel somewhere a little closer (and cheaper)? On a lovely spring day, ramble (a long walk in Cambridge slang) to the tranquil village of Grantchester where you can picnic in the meadows, go wild swimming, or have afternoon tea at The Orchard Tea Garden.



From formal dinners with diplomats, to spotting swans and their cygnets while punting along the River Cam, from watching fireworks displays during the magical May Ball week, to participating in a snowball fight at 2am, from matriculating with strangers to graduating with lifelong friends...The Cambridge experience is truly unique and worthwhile. Here, you'll find genuine camaraderie, personal growth and comfort in the fact that you can always come back to a place you can call home.



Rameeya (Economics)

Life in Cambridge is simply what you make out of it. Contrary to the stereotype of a typical Cambridge student, let me reassure you that we do have a life outside of our books, and not just any life but a very vibrant, exciting and joyful one alongside friends that grow to become family 🌟😊❤️

I'm not going to deny the fact that there's no academic pressure, academic stress is quite certainly everyone's best friend. Nonetheless, the thing I love most about Cambridge is you'll never have to face it alone, whether it be friends that you're struggling together with to stay above waters, CUMaS families to cry and laugh about life with or academic tutors who's constantly giving the reassurance that we're here for you – you'll have a strong support system to guide you through your journey here in Cambridge 🤝

A quick snapshot into my life – it's literally a roller coaster ride from boring lows like lectures and supervision work to extreme highs like spontaneous 5am sleepovers and Europe tours with friends. I can't lie I've definitely had some of the best times in my life in this very place we now call home 😂❤️

Ultimately, it comes down to the life you wanna live. Follow your heart, and enjoy your own unique journey and rest assured, you'll be making beautiful memories any where you go 🌟😊





Esther (Linguistics)

In three words: **fast-paced, fun-packed, unpredictable**. The weeks fly by so quickly, I still have not fully come to terms that first year has ended because I still remember my trepidation and uncertainty during matriculation.

I spend most of my time socialising and attending events, ranging from sports clubs to career-oriented societies, but I also had incredible opportunities to explore new fields such as learning how to DJ, travelling to other places in the UK for national sports tournaments, planning (and attending!) **May Balls** which is the most Oxbridge experience as it gets.

It is quite endearing to realise that some activities in Cambridge has now quickly become a source of comfort for me, such as **getting Jacks with friends, playing board games from 10pm to 7am, and of course hanging out with the Malaysian people.**

Overall, most of the people I've spoken to (including alumni, when i did the telephone campaign to raise funds for college) can generally agree that time passes by VERY fast here but you form core memories that are irreplaceable and foundational to who you will become.



Great Expectations

How to manage them?

Caitlin (Law)

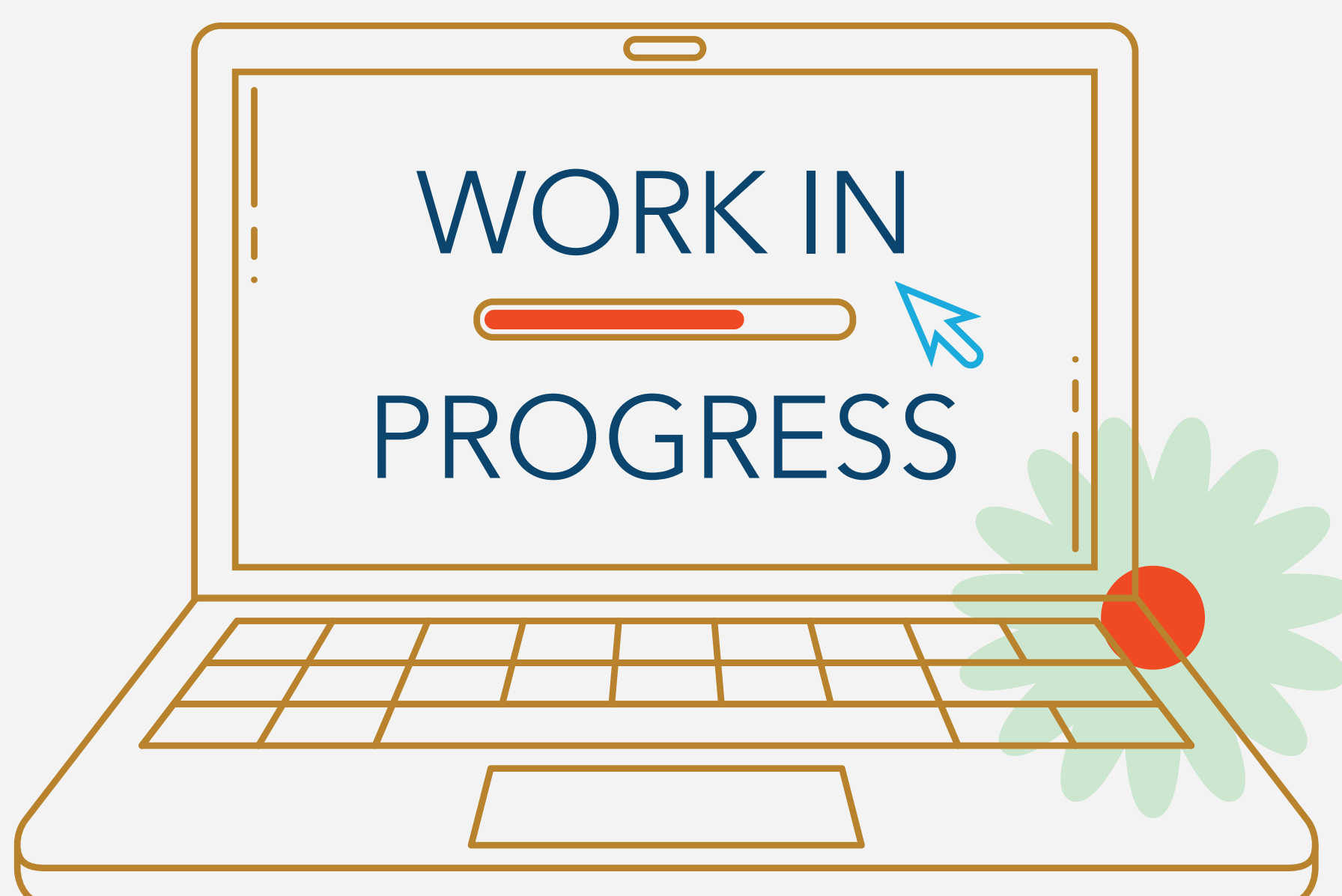
Picture this: all that time and effort has paid off, and you've landed an offer at Cambridge University! You've spent such a long time working up to this point, so what's next?



For me, amidst all the excitement and pride was the lingering fear that Cambridge was a whole different ball game; the players being some of the world's most talented students. Naturally, one faced with such a revelation would be eager to prepare themselves.

As much as I commend your drive, I'd like to take a moment to calm your nerves. You aren't expected to come into university with the knowledge and skill of a third year student. Universities know that you've likely never been taught this subject in your life, and it's the job of your lecturers and supervisors to **give** you that knowledge.

That being said, it definitely doesn't hurt to do what you can before university starts. Personally, I'd recommend doing research, reading and learning around your first year modules. For example, as a law student, I made sure to read legal articles and keep up with current events in the legal sphere.



You could also consider looking at winter work schemes for your courses, as those normally open up around the summer, where you have the most time to work on your applications. Overall, I'd recommend doing enough to keep your mind active and boost your confidence, but also taking the opportunity to enjoy your summer before university to the fullest!

In terms of logistics, you'd definitely want to get your **BRP** sorted out as soon as your place is confirmed. I'd also recommend watching youtube videos on what to pack/ buy for university. Trust me, this will save you **a lot** of space and money on unnecessary items.

When you enter university, do your best to put yourself out there! You don't have to talk to **everyone** you meet, but be friendly, participate in some fresher activities (they are made for YOU), and join societies you'll enjoy with likeminded people (like CUMaS hehe). Finding new social circles can be daunting, but just remember to take your time, enjoy the process, and know that it's normal not to meet all your closest friends in your first week of university.

Besides, all of us at CUMaS are more than happy to help you adapt to your new environment. Whether you need a senior to help you navigate your course, someone to tell you all the good eats, or just a friend to talk to, don't hesitate to reach out to any of us. We are more than happy to help!



Realistic Day in the Life

Karen

Your alarm rings at 7.00 am. You awake bleary-eyed from 5 hours of sleep, having spent the night before rushing supervision work. You check the Weather app and sigh at the abysmal forecast. Zipping up your coat, you brace yourself for the winter chill and head to your Michaelmas lectures.

It's the first term of your first year. During Week One, you were akin to the Malay saying “seperti rusa masuk ke kampung” or like a deer in headlights facing your new life in a foreign country. Now, you've kinda fallen into a familiar routine during the week. Wake up. Go to lectures. Do work in the library. Attend supervisions. Come back and scroll TikTok. Socialise? Sleep (we don't ask how many hours).

The first term is always the hardest, and you struggle with adapting to the harsh weather, the bland food, and the heavy workload. You don't understand the ramblings of a certain professor and spend hours rewatching the lecture recordings. During supervisions, you stare blankly, head empty as your supervision partners discuss the problem sheet with ease while your supervisor gives you a kind, pitying smile.

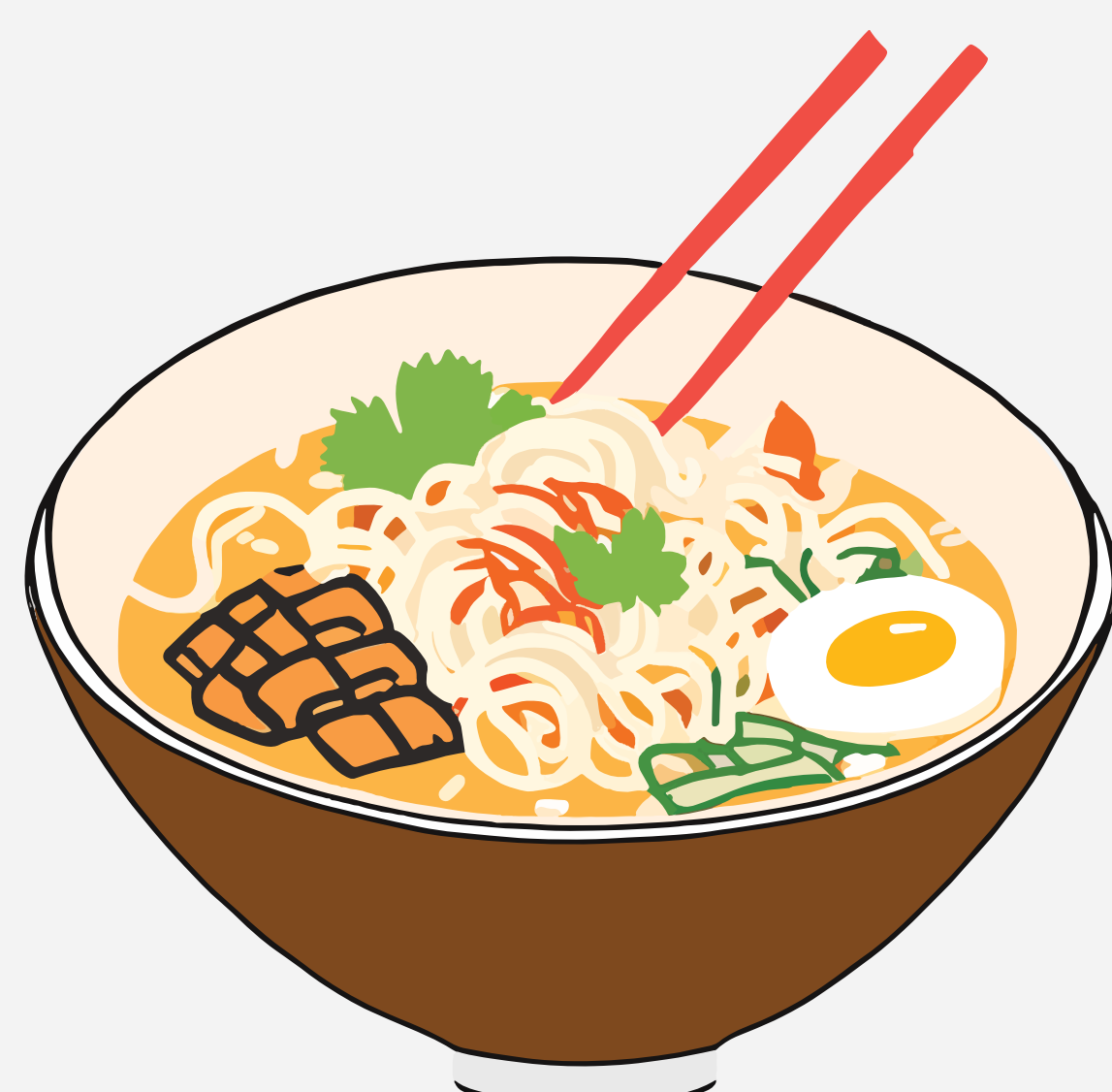
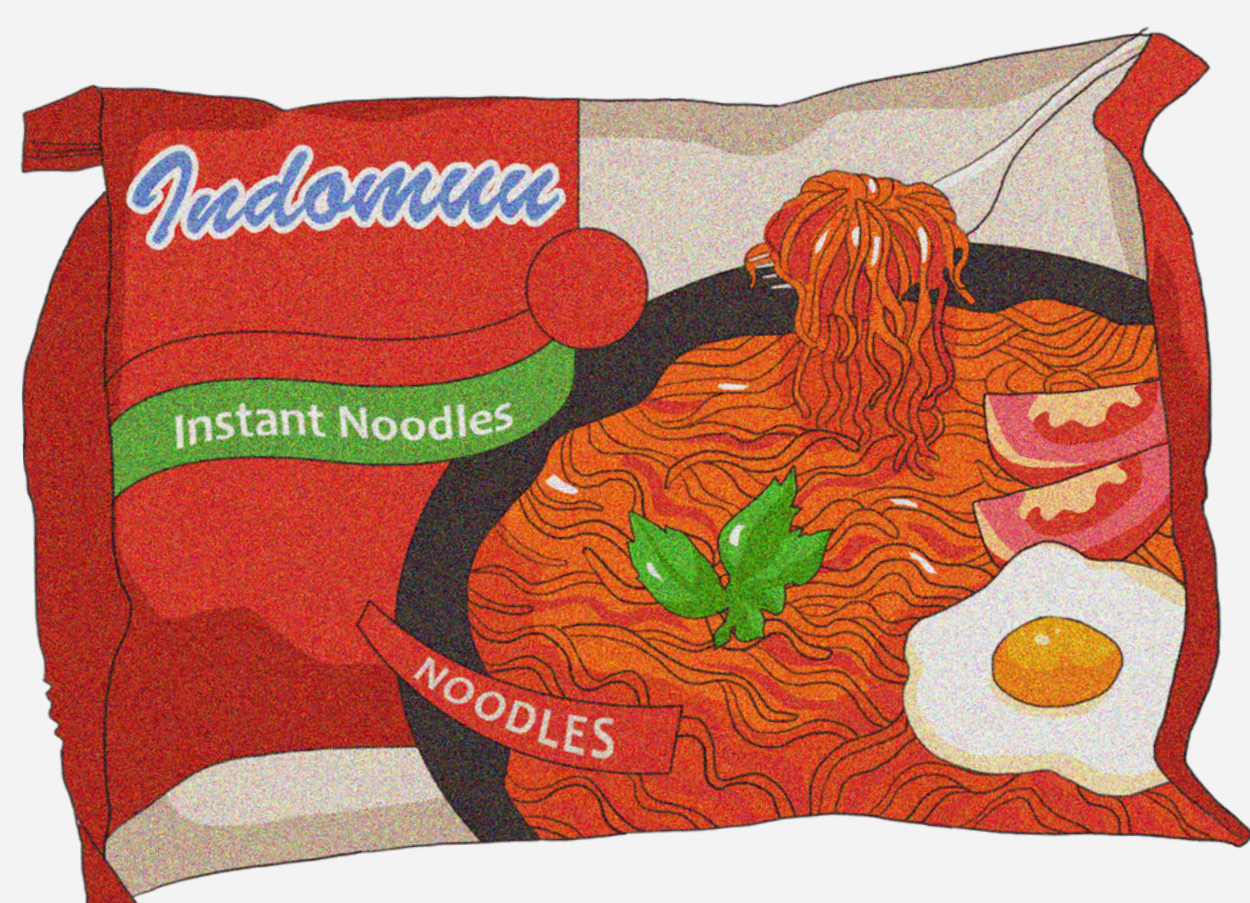


In winter, the sun sets at 4pm and the night stretches menacingly long. You feel depleted. An inkling of doubt creeps into your mind: did you make a mistake choosing this course, coming to this university? Did Cambridge make a mistake choosing you? These thoughts echo in the back of your mind, and you feel alone in your inferiority at this prestigious university.

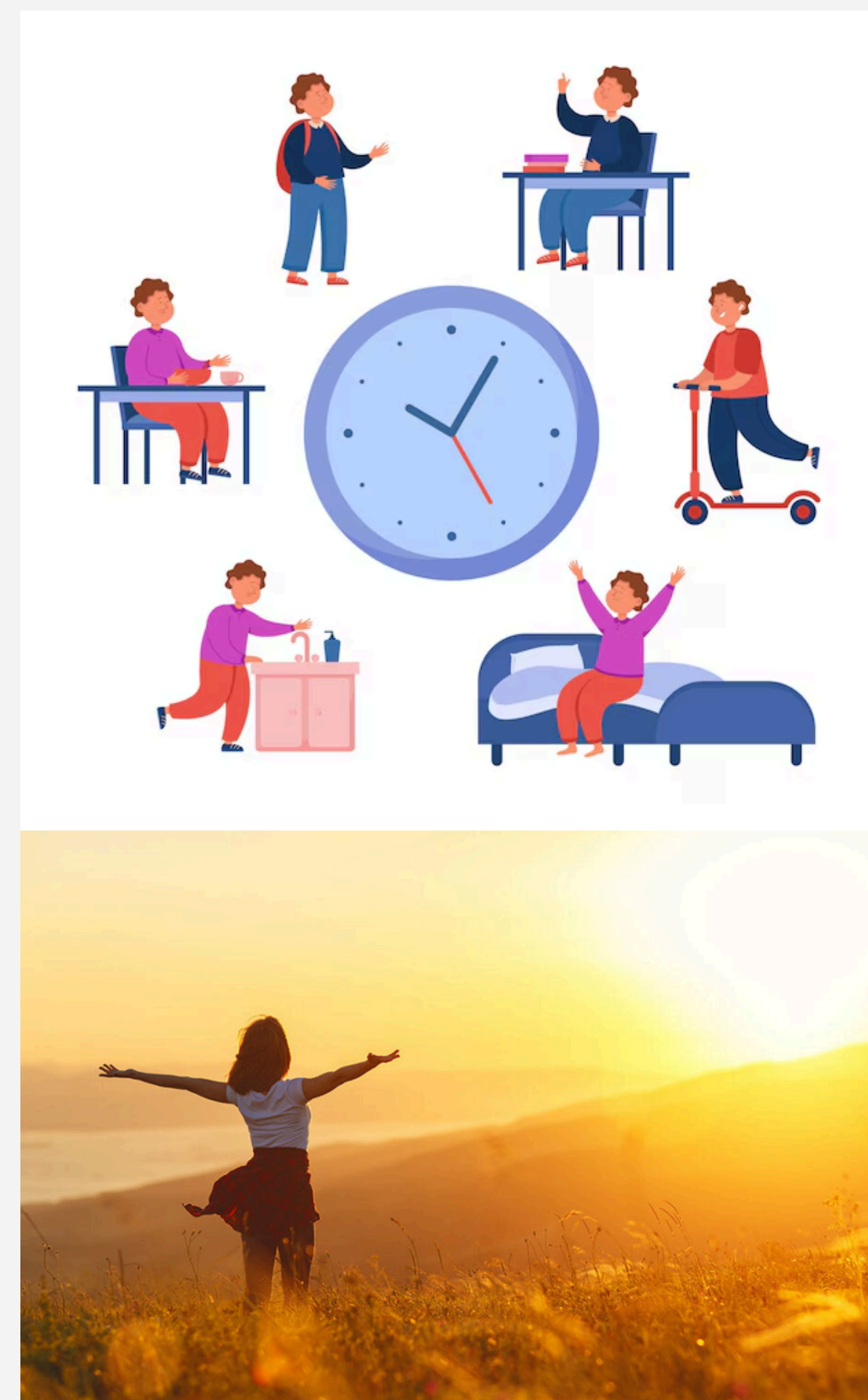
You're not alone. Many Cambridge students and alumni have felt the same. The first term, and the first year is tough for everyone. Know that your feelings are valid. Most importantly, know that it will pass and you'll be met with love and care on the way.



Talk to your College Tutor, who you can consult with for any pastoral support. Your supervisors will be more than happy to discuss any academic issues. Whether from your college or course, meet new people. Attend CR or society events. Pick up a new hobby — the variety of Cambridge societies will entertain any interest. Take little steps day by day, even if it's just getting out of bed and submitting supervision work on time. Of course, your home away from home — your CUMaS family, the committee, and each member will always be here for you. Bond over Bak Kut Teh dinners with soup packets smuggled from Malaysia, get invited to formal dinners at other colleges, and when you're preparing for a long night of studying, enjoy some IndoMie from our Welfare Packs. Slowly but surely, you'll find your footing in Cambridge, building up a community of people who will support you every step of the way.



The weeks pass, the seasons change. Winter always gives way to spring. It's gradual at first, but you begin to notice a change in yourself during Lent term. You've gotten the hang of the Cambridge system. You receive praise from your supervisor. You've found a steady group of people to hang out with. You don't get lost in the maze of the town anymore. You become more confident in yourself. There is a spring in your step that wasn't there in Michaelmas.



With spring in full bloom, Easter term arrives. You spend hours upon hours in the library revising for exams, entering at the first sign of daylight and exiting in the velvet hours of the night. Your brain feels mushy, your back sore, but there's brief respites on the weekends. You and your friends take advantage of the lovely weather to picnic among flowers and punt down the River Cam before continuing the grind.

And then one day, you are cycling back to College with your best friend after revising in the library. Both of you stop by a meadow of flowers, admiring the warm glow of the sunset across the soft pastel sky. In this moment, you realise that you still have a lot to learn, and many challenges still lie ahead. But you find yourself eagerly awaiting what lies next, knowing you believe in yourself and have loved ones by your side. And knowing that you've already come so far in your personal growth, your heart feels so, so full.



Some Important Deadlines

15/10/2025 (18:00) UK time
UCAS deadline (Oxbridge)

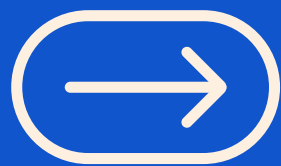
	LNAT	UCAT	ESAT	TMUA
Registration Open	1/8/2025	17/6/2025	31/7/2025	31/7/2025
Registration Deadline	16/9/2025	19/9/2025	29/9/2025	29/9/2025
Date of test	Before 15/10/2025	7/7/2025 – 26/9/2025	9/10/2025 or 10/10/2025	13/10/2025 or 14/10/2025

22/10/2025
Deadline for ‘My Cambridge Application’

For interview, written work submission and college admission test, follow email from respective colleges (around November–December)



RESULT: End of January



Resource Bank

Cambridge Online Prospectus 2026

A complete guide to all you need to know about Cambridge as an undergraduate applicant for entry in 2026, including:

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

Undergraduate Studies

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

- Link: <https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/>

Graduate Studies

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

- Courses that Cambridge offers
- How to apply for postgraduate study
- How an application is processed
- How to apply for funding
- Link: <https://www.postgraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/>

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: <https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/parents>

Information for international students

As an international student, deadlines will differ and additional requirements may be needed to be fulfilled before you can begin your studies in the UK and in Cambridge. Make sure that you are well-informed with regard to your application and well-prepared as you come to the UK to study.



Engineering

- The Uni's reading list | [link](#)
- Interview Practice Questions: <https://i-want-to-study-engineering.org/>
- Suggestions that may not be as academic, for personal reasons to apply for engineering
 - [Skunk Works: A Personal Memoir of My Years of Lockheed](#)
 - [How to Build a Car: The Autobiography of the World's Greatest Formula 1 Designer](#)
- Some cool places to get into that Engineering groove (nothing too deep but always interesting)
 - [IEEE Spectrum](#)
 - [Popular Mechanics](#)

Computer Science

- Interview Prep: <https://openclimb.io/csat/>

Geography

- Human Geography case studies: [Feral Atlas](#)
- Physical Geography resource: [IPCC reports](#) (Physical Science Basis is good to start with – don't need to read the entire report! Just understand the diagrams/maps)

Economics

- [TMUA Papers + Worked Solutions](#)
- [TMUA videos](#)

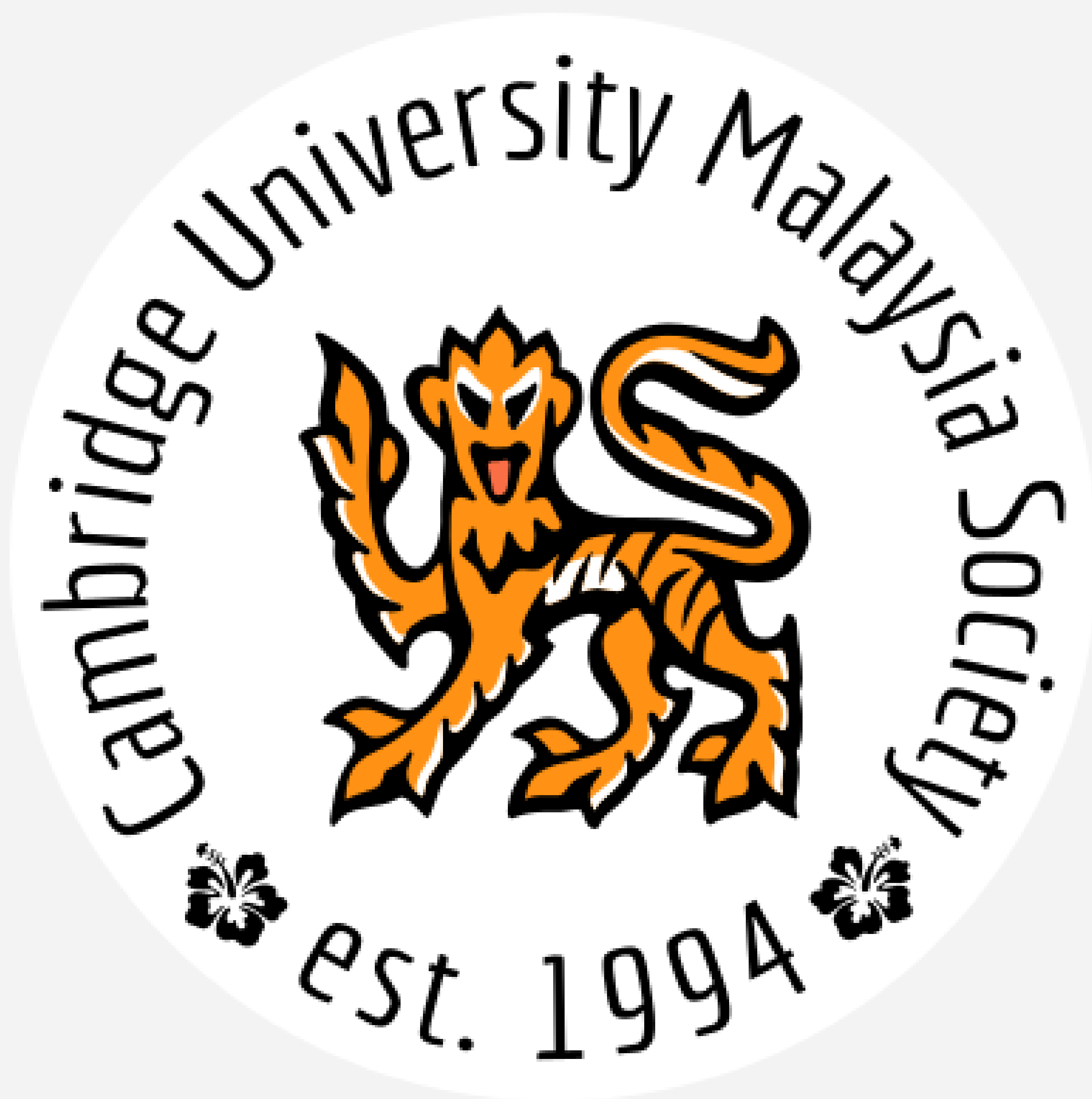
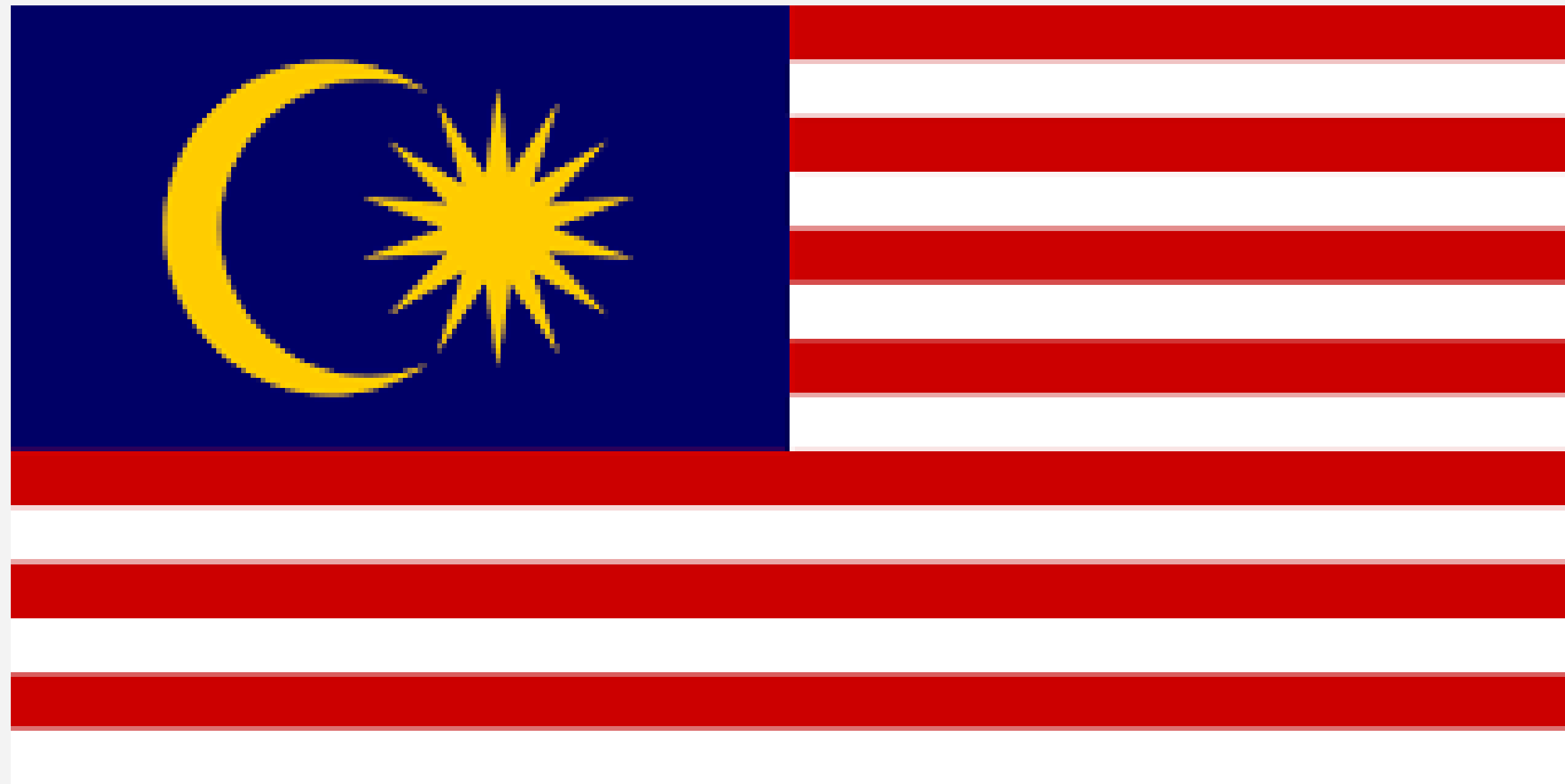
Psychological and Behavioural Science

- **Podcasts:**
 - The Stanford Psychology Podcast
 - That Neuroscience Guy
 - Speaking of Psychology
- **YouTube Channels and Series**
 - Crash Course– Psychology
 - Study Hall–Psychology
 - VSauce MindField
- **Books**
 - **The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat – Oliver Sacks**
 - **Thinking, Fast and Slow– Daniel Kahneman**
 - Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers – Robert Sapolsky
 - Mothers and Others: The Evolutionary Origins of Mutual Understanding
 - Between Us: How Cultures Create Emotion – Batja Mesquita
 - Inventing ourselves: the secret life of the teenage brain – Sarah-Jayne Blakemore
- **Marginalia Science Newsletter**
 - Monthly email newsletter with research by minorities in Psychology
- **The Psychologist**
 - Magazine by the British Psychology Society
 - Monthly editions on science articles + Podcast 'PsychCrunch'

These two are really good and popular, so it would be better if you don't use it in your PS.



MALAYSIA BOLEH



SEKIAN TERIMA KASIH

*Prepared by: Raisa Roslan, Lok Yi Hang and Rui Hao
(CUMaS Committee 2025/2026)*