

MABECS *QuickGuides*



ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT
APPLYING TO THE

University of Cambridge

SPECIALLY CURATED FOR YOU BY



BEFORE WE GO FURTHER...



Who is MABECS

MABECS is Malaysia's most experienced advisory service on UK degrees.

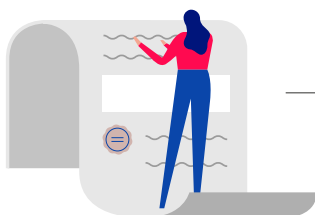
Our service is free of charge.



To find out more about MABECS' history and services, turn to the inside back cover. To reach a MABECS Education Advisor, call or WhatsApp us at +603-7956 7655 or email enquiries@mabecs.com

From enquiry to successful student placement, we take care of it all.

Advice & guidance
Find guidance on the right course and university including rankings, research ratings, entry requirements, and more.



1



2

Application

Our experienced UK education advisors will advise you on the required documents and relevant procedures. Note that the application method is different from the postgraduate level.

Test Preparation & Mock Interviews

We provide assistance through podcasts, webinars and seminars for the ESAT, TMUA, LNAT and UCAT admission tests that are required for certain courses. We also provide mock interviews, some of which are free of charge, for Oxbridge applicants and those applying for Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science courses.

3



4

Air tickets & accommodation

Yes, we also help to provide guidance from flight bookings, visa applications and suitable accommodation to stay in.



Study in the UK!

CONTENTS

01

BEFORE APPLYING

Cambridge or Oxford: Should I apply?	02
Cambridge Colleges	04
Cambridge Degrees (Tripos System)	05

02

APPLYING TO CAMBRIDGE

Start here: UCAS & Admissions Assessment	10
Interviews	11
Personal Statement	12

03

FIND OUT MORE

How MABECS can help	17
Contact MABECS	18

Have a different set of questions about studying in the UK?

Call us* at **03-7956 7655** to reach us immediately, or email **enquiries@mabecs.com** if you're the shy type.

*Our Education Advisors have all been educated in the UK with over 10 years of experience in counselling. They help provide first-hand information on UK education as well as student life in the UK.



DISCLAIMER

The MABECS QuickGuides are for reference purposes only.

*Course content, entry requirements, and tuition fees could change from time to time.
You're advised to check the specific university website for the latest information.*

01



BEFORE APPLYING

Cambridge or Oxford: Should I apply?

This QuickGuide is primarily about the University of Cambridge; there is a separate QuickGuide for the University of Oxford. However, you might note the similarities between Cambridge and Oxford.

Cambridge and Oxford are certainly two of the most famous universities in the UK and are the only universities which you cannot put together on your UCAS application. Additionally, Cambridge might email a link and ask applicants to complete an additional questionnaire(s). Academic levels at entry for these two universities are higher than any other UK university, and on top of that, competition is intense.

But the fact that they are famous and that they are difficult to get into, are not good reasons for applying.

<https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/apply/after/admissions-policy>

Detailed selection criteria vary from course to course but in all Cambridge is looking for:

- academic ability and potential
- motivation and suitability for the chosen course
- commitment and self-discipline

Every applicant is considered individually in an holistic assessment using all the information available to them:

- their academic record, including GCSE and AS (or equivalent) grades and marks and A level (or equivalent) grades or predictions, this record being considered in the context of the quality (but not type) of schools/colleges at which it was achieved
- the school/college reference
- the personal statement
- submitted work, where requested
- performance in any written assessment
- contextual data
- performance at interview, if interviewed

Although Cambridge and Oxford can be very different from most UK universities, they also have many similar features. This means that it's not good enough to say that you'd want to apply to Cambridge or Oxford because "they're famous", or that "they're the best". Before making your decision to apply to either of these universities, you should study and research the entry requirements and what Oxford and Cambridge are looking for in applicants carefully so that your decision is based on valid and wise reasoning.

Both Cambridge and Oxford are collegiate universities so the sense of community is very strong as you spend three or four years in the same College, living and socialising with the same group of people, who are studying a wide range of subjects. Durham University, also, has a similar, strong collegiate organisation; although at Cambridge, the colleges have a supervision role as well.

All degree courses at Cambridge have a strong theoretical foundation and are academically challenging. The supervision system that is unique to Cambridge (and Oxford) means that you have very small group work, with 1, 2 or 3 students in a tutorial each week. This means that learning is rigorous and intense as well as incredibly fulfilling and stimulating in a subject that you need to be passionate about.



Cambridge Colleges

Successful candidates will receive an offer from a College at Cambridge, not from the university. When applying to Cambridge, you can apply to a specific college or can make an open application. If the latter, the university will assign you a college because it is the colleges that assess the applications, not the university. Around 5-10% of students make an open application. The university department will play a strong role in ensuring that applicants are assessed fairly and equally across all colleges to ensure that the university as a whole selects the top students regardless of which college was applied to or if an open application was made. This is done through the winter pool system that means that around a quarter of students who get offers receive them from a college that they did not apply to.

There are 29 colleges that offer undergraduate courses. Check that a college you are interested in offers the course that you are looking at. Two colleges are female only: Murray Edwards and Newnham. Three colleges offer undergraduate courses only to mature students (over the age of 21): Wolfson, St Edmund's and Hughes Hall. Nearly all colleges offer online interviews for all international and UK candidates. However, two colleges require in person interviews: King's and Emmanuel. Two Colleges have in person interviews for all UK applicants and optional in person or online for international students: Gonville & Caius and Trinity. Colleges also differ in terms of size, facilities, accommodation, location and atmosphere, although there are also many similarities. Research the colleges' own pages on the Cambridge website <https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/colleges> and check out their social media to get a sense of the culture. You can also reach out to Cambridge University Malaysia Society (CUMaS) for great advice. <https://www.cumas.org/>

Whilst you will live, eat, socialise and do tutorials in your college, you will still have university department lectures, exams and some tutorials outside of your college. There are many clubs, societies and events in the universities at other colleges, so you will socialise with people from outside of your college.

Cambridge Degrees

First of all, the word “Tripos” can usually be understood to mean “degree”. Secondly, all Cambridge courses start with a wide, strongly theoretical base on which later applications are developed. So in scientific and engineering areas, you start with several subjects and choose your specialisation later.

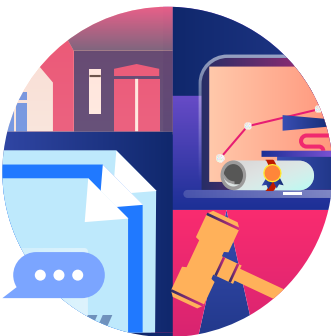
This delays major decision-making about the educational base of your life and career until you have your own knowledge and experience to judge by. This also gives you better understanding of related disciplines and career plans

Thirdly, there is a tremendous amount of flexibility in the system, not only in each Tripos but also between them. This allows many combinations to be developed as you become more certain of your own interests and skills.

Having said that, most students stay in the same Tripos throughout their time at Cambridge. Nevertheless, you should understand how the complex Tripos System works.

There are over 30 undergraduate courses at Cambridge so be sure to explore all of them rather than picking the standard Engineering, Economics or Law by default. Check out the course and department pages on the Cambridge University website in detail to ensure that the structure is a good fit for your interests.

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





A. The Cambridge Medical Tripos

Make sure that you look carefully at how medicine is taught at Cambridge as it may differ to other universities.

<https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses/medicine-graduate-course-mb-bchir>

The course lasts 6 years:

- for the first 3 years you focus on scientific principles underlying medicine, alongside a clinical strand. You'll also get to conduct a full-body dissection, which very few medical schools offer
- the last 3 years you apply that knowledge to medical practice as a clinical student, spending much of your time learning directly from patients in GP surgeries and hospitals

You'll also have opportunities to pursue research and project work throughout the course.

This course is for you if:

- it's your first undergraduate degree
- it's your second degree – you'll complete the first half of the course in 2 years instead of 3. You can also apply to study the Medicine course for graduates.

Clinical teaching is delivered on the wards and in general practice. There are also additional opportunities to attend general and specialist outpatient clinics.

The course is based in Cambridge. Some of the course is also delivered regional opportunities they offer.

This Cambridge Medical course embodies teaching from world experts, progressive technology and modern facilities.



B. Natural Sciences Tripos

Natural Sciences (NST) offers a wide range of physical and biological science subjects from 14 departments. The broad first year is combined with increasing specialisation in the second year, and the possibility of total specialisation in the third year. The breadth of the course reflects the blurring of boundaries between the different sciences, and before committing yourself to one department, you get to study a variety of subjects, some of which may be new to you. This means you can change your mind about which subject to specialise in.

You'll have the option to study a wide range of physical and biological science subjects from 14 different departments:

- Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics
- Astronomy
- Biochemistry
- Chemistry
- Earth Sciences
- Genetics
- History and Philosophy of Science
- Materials Science and Metallurgy
- Pathology
- Pharmacology
- Physics
- Physiology, Development and Neuroscience
- Plant Sciences
- Zoology

When you apply, you pick between Biological or Physical Sciences, and your interview questions will be tailored to your choice.

On the course, you can take physical and biological science options, and you can decide which subjects to study within the Natural Sciences course when you arrive. <https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses/natural-sciences-ba-hons-msci>



C. Cambridge Engineering Tripos

Part I (Years 1 and 2) provides a broad education in engineering fundamentals, enabling you to make a genuinely informed choice about the area in which to specialise from your third year (many students change direction as a result). Part II (Years 3 and 4) then provides in-depth training in your chosen professional discipline.

You can specialise in:

- Aerospace and Aerothermal Engineering
- Bioengineering
- Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering
- Electrical and Electronic Engineering
- Electrical and Information Sciences
- Energy, Sustainability and the Environment
- Information and Computer Engineering
- Instrumentation and Control
- Mechanical Engineering

In the third year, there's an opportunity for a small number of students to spend the year studying abroad. This is through our exchange schemes with École Centrale Paris and the National University of Singapore.

By the end of your third year, you'll need to complete 6 weeks of industrial experience.

The 4-year course is accredited by the Engineering Council and by all the major institutions. A major individual project occupies about half of your time in the 4th year.

<https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses/engineering-ba-hons-meng>

Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology

Alternatively, you could apply for Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology, which is a 3 year BA degree, or a four year MEng one. This course is taught within the Natural Sciences and Engineering departments. <https://www.ceb.cam.ac.uk/>

02



APPLYING TO CAMBRIDGE

Start here: UCAS and Admissions Assessment

If you are applying for next year's entry i.e. October of next year, you need to submit the UCAS application by 15th October 2026 for October 2027 entry. Please note that your school or college may have earlier deadlines and you must follow this deadline to allow enough time for references, which must be submitted with the application.

Make sure you check the entry requirements for your subject on the official Cambridge University website <https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/apply/before/entry-requirements>, including whether you will need to take an admission test, submit written work requirements or have an interview reading given. <https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/apply/how/admission-tests> Cambridge uses the UAT-UK administered admission tests of TMUA, ESAT and TARA. These cannot be done in your school and you need to register at Pearson's UAT-UK portal. <https://esat-tmua.ac.uk/>. You must take the tests between 12th and 16th October 2026 and you can only sit the tests once in a cycle. Booking closes on the 28th September but you are strongly advised to book early to get your preferred date and venue once booking opens on 20th July. Some courses may require the STEP papers <https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/apply/after/sixth-term-exam-STEP>.

Students applying to Law (Jurisprudence) must sit the LNAT test, booked through the official LNAT website <https://lnat.ac.uk/>, before 15th October. Booking is only open 1st August to 15th September. Do not book an exam on the deadline as it is advisable to have the option to reschedule an exam to one a few days later in case you are ill.

Students applying for Medicine must sit the UCAT test, booked through the official website of <https://www.ucat.ac.uk/>, during the booking window of 23rd June to 16th September, and you are strongly advised to book early as some venues can get booked up. You must sit the test between 13th July and 24th September. Do not book an exam on the deadline as it is advisable to have the option to reschedule an exam to one a few days later in case you are ill.

MABECS also offers advice on preparing for and completing admission tests in its BEAM Pod podcast on Spotify, and provides supplementary mock tests and seminars.

Interviews

Nearly all colleges offer Online interviews for all international and UK candidates. However, two colleges require in person interviews: King's and Emmanuel. Two Colleges have in person interviews for all UK applicants and optional in person or Online for international students: Gonville & Caius and Trinity. All interviews will be done by the college to which you applied to or were assigned.

You may have one 40 minute interview with 2,3 or 4 interviewers, or two shorter interviews with 1 interviewer in each. You may be invited for a second round of interviews at a different college due to the winter pool system designed to result in the best applicants across the whole university receiving offers regardless of the college that they initially applied to.

Cambridge University and each department provides a lot of advice on the interview structure and what they are looking for. The official departments also often provide sample interviews on YouTube and colleges can offer useful tips on their social media accounts such as Jesus College, Oxford, Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge and Trinity Hall, Cambridge).

MABECS also offers interview advice in its BEAM Pod podcast on Spotify, and provides free and supplementary mock interviews.



Personal Statement

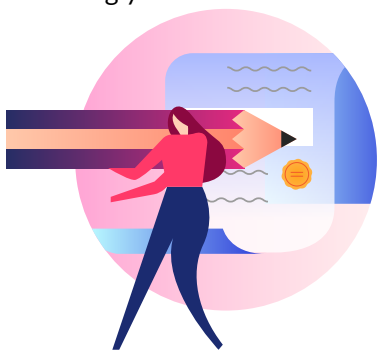
A very important part of your application to a competitive university is the “Personal Statement”. You write one statement that is read by all 5 universities that you apply to through UCAS. You cannot write separate statements or different courses or universities. Unlike Cambridge, there are no additional essays or application forms.

Top universities read your PS carefully to assess your passion for your subject, academic ability and potential and suitability for the course. It must be at least 80% academic in focus and demonstrate, with examples, why you will make a great Economics and Management student at Oxford for example.

You should ensure that you

- Use concrete examples to show rather than tell the admissions tutor that you are passionate about PPE, for example;
- Discuss aspects of your super curricular exploration of the subject outside of the classroom that is of a high level - not just to A Level;
- Show what you think about a book or idea and you don't just repeat what the author's theories are;
- Demonstrate that you have or are developing, with concrete examples from your activities, the transferable, hard and soft skills needed to succeed as a PPE student at Oxford, for example;
- Don't lie on it or exaggerate - you may be asked about your PS in an interview; and,
- Don't use AI, other PSs or other people's opinions in your PSs - this must have your personal voice in it (and the universities use AI and plagiarism checks).

MABECS has a guide on writing Personal Statements (PS) and we can help you by reviewing your drafts.



03



FIND OUT MORE

“How can MABECS help me?”



If all that information is making you feel overwhelmed, don't worry. You're not alone. Countless students have felt the same way and they've found it helpful to consult MABECS for their UK degree applications. For an overview of our services, check out the Inside Front Cover page.

Here is how your MABECS Education Advisor can help you in detail:

1

BEFORE APPLYING

MABECS provides detailed information on:

- UK universities' environment, fees, and facilities
- course structure, content and specialisation
- entry requirements and university standards
- specific university's research ratings and teaching quality assessments



We can also recommend suitable and relevant universities based on your academic results and preferences.

2

APPLICATION

MABECS provides detailed information on:

- undergraduate degree application explained from start to end
- personal guidance for your Personal Statement
- mock interviews
- monitoring the progress of your application
- providing advice at stages where important decisions need to be made
- being the intermediary (middle person) between you and universities if our assistance is required
- counselling sessions with visiting UK admissions tutors and university representatives
- IELTS registration with the British Council

3

PRE-DEPARTURE HELP

MABECS provides guidance on:

- visa applications
- accommodation arrangements
- flight bookings



About Us

MABECS was set up in 1985 to assist students in Malaysia to find suitable places at universities in the United Kingdom.

Since 1985, students we have counselled have successfully enrolled in top UK universities – both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Whether you're an individual student seeking counselling for your UK degree application, or an education institution hoping to achieve the same for your pre-university students, MABECS is here to help.



Visit our website at www.mabecs.com for a quick overview of how MABECS helps students from start to end of their UK degree application process. You'll also find many helpful articles on studying in the UK, including real student stories!

UK degree applications made easy

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Monday to Friday:
9:30am to 4:30pm

**Saturdays, Sundays and public
holidays:** Closed



UK degree applications made easy.

We take care of everything in your UK degree application with your cooperation - free of charge.



Student-centred

Our strong student-centred approach to counselling means that we give students the fullest possible information on all available options to help them make sensible decisions.



Free Consultation

Advice, information and assistance with applications, are given free of charge and our Education Advisors are always ready to sort out any problems that may arise, and to brief you on preparations for travel to the UK.



Accessible

Our friendly multi-racial, open-access office, can be easily reached by public transport, and no appointment is necessary to drop in and browse through the reference library, talk to an Education Advisor, or complete and send an application.