

Candidate FAQs

A. Technical queries

1. Am I eligible?

If you are a graduate of a University, plan to be resident in Cambridge during your Fellowship, you do not hold a Fellowship at another Cambridge College, and your postdoctoral research is in one of the subjects listed in the further particulars you are eligible to apply.

2. Can I upload my questionnaire answers as a PDF to help formatting?

Answers in the questionnaire are required in plain text format as to ensure that applications are standardised for the avoidance of bias, and the questionnaire answers should not require the use of special characters.

Please ensure that you can provide your academic record and answers about your research in plain text. Any special formatting or special characters can be used in the PDF files to upload.

3. Can I use special characters in my questionnaire?

Please see the answer to FAQ 2.

4. I am having problems uploading my PDF files

If you get the following error message when uploading a PDF file: *"The file Writings.pdf has not been uploaded. It has problems that will prevent it being merged with others."*, please create a new file and upload that. You can do so by opening the original file, select "Print as PDF", and then use this new file.

If the problem persists, please contact sjcamrf@joh.cam.ac.uk.

5. Can one of my "extra writings" be a CV or self-introduction?

No. The CV is requested in the Questionnaire section of the application (Academic record), the "extra writings" should be samples of your academic work.

6. Do I need a supervisor in mind for my Fellowship?

No. This Fellowship is an opportunity for you to carry out independent research, you will not need a supervisor during your tenure.

7. If I have a one-year Fellowship at another College, can I still apply?

No. As stated in the guidance, you are not eligible to apply if you will be holding a Fellowship at another College at the same time as the Fellowship at St John's. You are welcome to apply after your other Fellowship ends.

8. Q9 in the questionnaire: what does it mean to upload "Dates and classes or grades of degrees awarded"?

"Classes" is used at Cambridge University to refer to grades you receive for your degree. You do not need to upload a list of all classes you took, simply the overall mark you received for your degree(s).

9. How strict is the word limit?

It is essential to stay within the word limit for all answers. Any words above the limit will not be considered with your application.

10. What if my referee does not upload their reference?

We advise that you request your references as soon as possible through the application portal, and that you **contact your referees personally** to make sure they are happy to write a reference. If your referee does not upload a reference, please make sure their email address is correct in your application, and **get in touch with them directly** to ensure they have received the reference request.

Please note that sometimes reference requests might go into the referee's spam folder, therefore it is important that you also contact your referee directly if the deadline is approaching and the reference has not been received.

11. Can I change my referees if someone says no?

Yes. You can change your referee details by going in the "References" section of your application, and clicking the "Edit" button to the left of the referee you want to remove. You can then delete the previous name and contact details, and insert the new ones.

12. Are 2 references acceptable instead of 3?

No. Applications without 3 references will be considered incomplete.

13. Do all references need to be academic references?

3 Academic references will make your application more competitive. If you cannot provide 3 academic references, a character reference is acceptable, but it will make your application less competitive.

14. I am unable to send a reference request to my referees.

Please ensure that you have completed the "Personal" section of your application before sending reference requests. If the problem persists, you can contact sjcamrf@joh.cam.ac.uk.

15. If I have two research supervisors, can they both be my referees?

Yes, if you have two research supervisors, they can both be referees.

16. Can I change my application after submitting?

No. Please ensure that you are satisfied with your application before submitting it. Any additional achievements after the submission date will not be considered.

17. Can the pre-submit and the post-submit documents be the same?

No. As stated in the instructions, *"the materials submitted as further writings should be different than the ones submitted with the application"*.

18. Does the word limit of the writings refer to the total words for all the writings or is it a number for each document?

The word limit of the writings refers to the **TOTAL** word limit for all documents combined, including any footnotes, references, translations etc.

B. Application queries

1. **What should I include in Q9?**

Please note that for the sake of fairness to all applicants, the College is unable to advise individual candidates on any matters concerning the content of their application.

For this question, please state your full academic record at university level, including any grades you received, in a CV-style format.

2. **What should I include in Q11?**

Please note that for the sake of fairness to all applicants, the College is unable to advise individual candidates on any matters concerning the content of their application.

In this question, you can state if your research is unequivocally cross-disciplinary. You should provide details of your research achievements so far, and you should explain them in simple language that can be understood by academics outside of your specific field.

3. **What should I include in Q12?**

Please note that for the sake of fairness to all applicants, the College is unable to advise individual candidates on any matters concerning the content of their application.

For this question, please use simple language that can be understood by academics outside of your specific field to explain what you intend to do during your Fellowship.

4. **What if my research is inter-disciplinary?**

If your research is inter-disciplinary, please select the main field of study in the “Personal” section of your application, and specify additional fields of study in Question 11 of the questionnaire, as per the following instructions: *“if your research is unequivocally cross-disciplinary please state your fields of study immediately below”*.

5. **What is a reference, and what should it include?**

A reference is a letter of recommendation in support of your application. Referees will receive specific guidance once you send them a reference request through the application portal. You should choose a referee who is familiar with your research work.

Referees will receive the following instructions: *“You are kindly requested to provide a brief indication of the contents of the candidate's work and the contribution it makes to the subject; a statement as to how much of the work appears to be new, and, where the work is collaborative, an indication of the contribution made by the candidate; an opinion on the quality of the work, the originality shown by the candidate and in particular the promise of future distinction. You are also invited to suggest up to four assessors of the candidate's writings.”*

6. **Can I submit my references using a shared administrative address (e.g. interfolio)?**

Please ensure that you provide different email addresses for each of your three referees, as a shared administrative address (e.g. interfolio) may not be used.