



How to apply

Step-by-step guide on how to make a University application (*Applicant Portal*)

If you're applying for 2025/26 Lent or Easter terms (starting in January or April 2026), please check the [Course Directory](#) for details:

PhD in PDN
applying for admission in
January or April 2026

MPhil Biological Science in PDN
applying for admission in
January or April 2026

Applications for the 2026/27 academic year will open in September 2025.

- 1. Check your eligibility** (*see page 2 of this document*)
- 2. Select your course** (*see page 2 of this document*)
- 3. Contact supervisor(s)** (*see page 3 of this document for detailed guidance on finding a supervisor*)
*Applicants **must** identify a **supervisor** and **agree** on a research project **before** submitting their application.*
- 4. Look at sources of funding** (*see page 3 of this document*)
- 5. Check deadlines you are working towards (funding or application – whichever comes first)**
Note: the deadline for those applying for University funding for courses starting in October 2025, January 2026 and April 2026 has passed.

Funding deadlines for admission in 2026/27:

The PDN application deadline for the Gates USA Funding Round is **Wednesday 15 October 2025, at 23:59pm (midnight) UK time**

The PDN application deadline for University Funding Opportunities is **Tuesday 2 December 2025, at 23:59pm (midnight) UK time**

Application deadlines:

For entry in:	Final application portal deadline at 23:59pm (midnight) UK time on
January 2026	October 2, 2025
April 2026	January 14, 2026
October 2026	May 14, 2026
January 2027	October 1, 2026
April 2027	January 14, 2027

Applicants must secure the support of a supervisor within our department before their application will be considered. You should not wait until the day of the deadline to submit your application or supporting documents, as there is no guarantee that places will still be available.

6. Apply online via the Applicant Portal:

Applicant Portal

Please read on for more detailed guidance

Eligibility and entrance requirements:

Postgraduate study at the University of Cambridge is intense and very intellectually demanding, so the University has high academic entry requirements. You are normally expected to hold or to have achieved by the start of your course:

- minimum of a good 2:1 honours degree from a UK university or an equivalent standard from an overseas university in a relevant biological subject; and
- completion of, or release from, any current training or education course

To check if your international qualification meets the University minimum requirement, please consult the [International section](#) of the University website.

Entry requirements: you should be aware that meeting the University's or departments' minimum academic requirements does not guarantee entry; it is only one of the factors considered when academic selectors make their decision. Many other factors are also important, such as suitability for the course, proficiency in English, relevant experience, references, availability of a suitable supervisor, and the number of available places. We can consider applications from external intercalating medical students providing they meet the [eligibility and entrance requirements](#).

Competence in English: if English isn't your first language, you will be required to submit evidence that you meet the University's English language requirement before you are admitted to your proposed course of study. *Note:* You do not need to take the language test before you apply. If you are made a conditional offer and have not already met our language requirements, one of the conditions of your offer will be that you pass a test at the required level. Please note that test results only remain valid for two years.

[FAQ for international students](#)

Widening participation: We are committed to widening participation at postgraduate level.

[Contextual Admissions](#)

The course to which you are applying has introduced an additional step in the application process for postgraduate study. We are including this step to improve contextualised understanding of your application. The additional step will be presented to you as part of your main application process on the Cambridge Graduate Applicant Portal. For more information about what the pilot aims to do and how your data will be used, please see [here](#).

Decide which course to apply for:

PhD in PDN	MPhil Biological Science in PDN
The PhD degree normally involves a minimum of three or maximum of four year course of research, although part-time degrees are now possible.	The MPhil degree is a one year course of research and is also available as a part-time degree.

Both culminate in the submission of a dissertation which is defended in an oral examination. Training involves a combination of instruction from within the research group, learning the skills and developing research experience on a day-to-day basis, and formal training courses. The latter are designed to develop extra technical and transferable skills.

Other courses

[MPhil in Biological Sciences by advanced study](#) to apply for October 2026 entry, please see:

Biomolecular Science: <https://www.postgraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses/directory/blblmpbms>

Cell Science: <https://www.postgraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses/directory/blblmpces>

Developmental Biology: <https://www.postgraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses/directory/blblmpdby>

Reproduction and Embryogenesis: <https://www.postgraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses/directory/blblmprae>

Link to course information and other pathways: <https://www.mphil.bio.cam.ac.uk/>

[MPhil in Basic and Translational Neuroscience](#)

Applicants to taught courses based in the School of Biological Sciences (SBS), who receive a conditional offer of admission to start in October 2025, may be eligible to apply for an SBS Master's Bursary Award in support of their studies here at Cambridge, subject to the eligibility criteria listed on this [webpage](#).

There is a single round of admissions each year for the following funded programmes and studentships. Deadlines will be published on their webpages.

Cambridge Biosciences DTP PhD Programme – this will open up in September **How to apply**

The Loke Centre for Trophoblast Research – see this **link for closing date**

Finding a supervisor

Applicants for the PhD and MPhil **must identify a supervisor and agree on a research project** before submitting their application. Find a supervisor and research project area from the groups listed in the **PDN research themes**.

Make contact with the supervisor(s) by email/telephone to find out more information about possible projects. You are advised to do this as early as possible.

Funding:

Look into the **costs and fees** for postgraduate training in Cambridge.

Postgraduate Funding Search *Explore awards administered by the University of Cambridge (departments, faculties, colleges, central offices and other internal sponsors)*

There are several funding opportunities at Cambridge for prospective postgraduate students, from a wide variety of sources including the **Cambridge Trust**, **Gates Cambridge**, **Vice-Chancellor's Awards and Cambridge International Studentships**, **Harding Distinguished Postgraduate Scholars Programme**, **Colleges** (check information on individual College websites), Departments (research groups may have specific funding for students from time to time, these will be advertised on the PDN webpage), **Research Councils** and central University funds. See the '**Postgraduate funding at Cambridge**' YouTube video

There are two deadlines to consider when applying for funding, the application deadlines and the funding deadlines (not applicable for January and April 2026 applicants). Application for both is via the same online form but you must apply by whichever deadline comes first. Which this will be depends on the course and your status as explained at this link: <https://www.postgraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/application-process/how-do-i-apply>

Some research groups may have specific funding for students from time to time, these will be advertised on the PDN postgraduate webpages.

See the '**Postgraduate funding at Cambridge**' YouTube video

External funding and Loans

FindAPhD.com *Helpful information on sourcing funding for graduate studies.*

Vacancies pages *Individual studentships may be advertised on the University of Cambridge vacancies page*

Selecting a College

For guidance and tips on how to select a College see: **overview** and **how to choose a College**

Making your application

All applications must be made using the:

Applicant Portal

Application fee

We recommend you read the information on this **webpage** to find out more information on how to apply, references, supporting documents, how to write a research proposal and what happens after applying. Hopefully most of your questions will be answered. For other queries please refer to our **FAQ guide**.

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