



## How to apply

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

If you are applying to start in January or April 2027 (Lent or Easter term 2026/27), please check the [Course Directory](#) for details:

[PhD in PDN](#)  
applying for admission in  
January or April 2027

[MPhil Biological Science in PDN](#)  
applying for admission in  
January or April 2027

**Applications for the 2027/28 academic year will open in September 2026.**

- 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 2026, January 2027 and April 2027 has passed.*

**Funding deadlines for admission in 2027/28:**

The PDN application deadline for the [Gates USA Funding Round](#)  
Will be added here when available

The PDN application deadline for [University Funding Opportunities](#)  
Will be added here when available

**Application deadlines:**

For entry in:	Final application portal deadline at 23:59pm (midnight) UK time on
January 2027	October 1, 2026
April 2027	January 14, 2027
October 2027	To be confirmed
January 2028	To be confirmed
April 2028	To be confirmed

**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:

We encourage applicants with the best academic potential to apply for our courses. We welcome and encourage applications from people from groups that are under-represented in postgraduate study, as well as students who may have faced an educational or socio-economic disadvantage. If you love your subject, have an aptitude for study or research, and have gained, or are on course for, a **good Upper Second class degree** or **overseas equivalent** (to check if your international qualification meets the University's minimum requirement, please see [here](#)), we would very much like to hear from you.

Further details about the University's commitment to **widening participation in postgraduate study**, including the AIM: Explore support programme that offers Home students help with preparing their application, are available [here](#).

**Contextual Data:** Applicants to PDN courses have an option to provide contextual data in the application process via the University Applicant Portal. Such data allow assessors to better understand an applicant's prior achievement by considering their background, as we recognise that not all applicants will have had equal access to educational and social opportunities. Providing contextual information is optional. If you choose to submit contextual data as part of your application, it will support assessors to make a well-informed decision about your potential for postgraduate study. Contextual data may also be used to assess your eligibility for certain funding opportunities. For more information, see [here](#).

Please be aware that meeting the University's 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 have 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](#)

**Personal data:** For information about how the University collects, uses and shares your personal information, please see [here](#).

## Decide which course to apply for:

### PhD 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.

### MPhil Biological Science in PDN

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.

## MPhil by Advanced Study degree courses

**MPhil in Biological Sciences by Advanced Study** to apply for October 2027 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** to apply for October 2027 entry, please see

<https://www.postgraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses/directory/blpdmptn>

Applicants to taught courses based in the School of Biological Sciences (SBS), who receive a conditional offer of admission to start in October 2027, 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. Admissions for October 2026 has closed. Deadlines will be published on their webpages from September 2026 onwards for any future rounds of admission.**

**[Cambridge Biosciences DTP PhD Programme – How to apply](#)**

**[The Loke Centre for Trophoblast Research](#)**

**[MRC Doctoral Training Programme iCASE PhD](#)**

## **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 **[2026-27 Supervisor List](#)** which will be updated in September 2026 or in the **[PDN research themes](#)**.

Make contact with the supervisor(s) by email to find out more information about possible projects and whether they will consider your application for a PhD or MPhil. 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](#), Departments (research groups may have specific funding for students from time to time, these will be advertised on the PDN webpage), and central University funds.

See the information and video on the '[Postgraduate funding at Cambridge](#)' webpage.

There are two deadlines to consider when applying for funding, the application deadlines and the funding deadlines (not applicable for January and April 2027 applicants). Application for both is via the same online form but you must apply by whichever deadline comes first. Which this will depend on the course and your status as explained at this link: <https://www.postgraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/application-process/how-do-i-apply>

[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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