How to apply

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

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 for the PhD and MPhil must identify a supervisor and agree on a research project before submitting their application.
   You do not need to identify a supervisor for the MPhil in Basic and Translational Neuroscience.

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)
   The deadline for those applying for University funding for courses starting in October 2024, January 2025 and April 2025 has passed.

   Gates USA funding round deadline is
   
   Wednesday 11 October 2023, at 23:59pm (midnight) UK time

   The PDN application deadline for the consideration for University Funding Opportunities is

   Thursday 4 January 2024, at 23:59pm (midnight) UK time

Application deadlines:
   For entry in: October 2024 the final deadline is: May 16, 2024
   For entry in: January 2025 the final deadline is: October 2, 2024
   For entry in: April 2025 the final deadline is: January 15, 2025

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 taken into account 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.

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 pilot
The course to which you are applying is piloting an additional step in the application process for postgraduate study this year. 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 Physiology, Development and Neuroscience

MPhil in Biological Science (Physiology, Development and Neuroscience)

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 Basic and Translational Neuroscience (Additional course information)

MPhil in Biological Sciences by advanced study to apply for October 2024 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/blblmpcs
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/

Applicants to the MPhil in Basic and Translational Neuroscience course based in the School of Biological Sciences (SBS), who have received a conditional offer of admission to start in October 2024, are 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.
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.

Note: You do not need to identify a supervisor before applying for the MPhil in Basic and Translational Neuroscience.

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

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

The main funding deadline has passed for the majority of funded opportunities including Cambridge Trust, Gates Cambridge, Vice-Chancellor’s Awards and Cambridge International Studentships, Harding Distinguished Postgraduate Scholars Programme, and some Colleges (check individual College webpages and the funding search for deadlines).

Some research groups may have specific funding for students from time to time, these will be advertised on this webpage.

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
Full details on whether there is an application fee for the course you are applying to can be found at this link

The PhD in Physiology, Development and Neuroscience course is exempt from the application fee.

For MPhil in Biological Sciences (Physiology, Development and Neuroscience) applicants will need to pay an application fee of £50 before you can submit your application. Note: The Postgraduate School of Life Sciences has a scheme which enables three applications to be made with payment of a single application fee. A list of eligible courses and further information can be found here. Information on the application fee beyond this can be found at this link.

Information on the application fee for the MPhil in Basic and Translational Neuroscience can be found at this link. Note: The Postgraduate School of Life Sciences has a scheme which enables three applications to be made with payment of a single application fee. A list of eligible courses and further information can be found here.

Information is also provided on eligibility for application fee waivers.

We recommend you read the information at the following links:

How do I apply  References
Postgraduate Admissions Pages  What happens after applying
Supporting documentation

Hopefully most of your questions will be answered. For other queries please refer to our FAQ guide which is available on our website.