There couldn’t be more support in College. In terms of your academic progress and general welfare, your supervisors, Director of Studies and Tutor are with you every step of the way. Merryn, 4th year, Modern and Medieval Languages

All the staff are on your side, and will go out of their way to help you.
Sarah, 1st year, Natural Sciences

TEACHING AND LEARNING

This guide contains many facts about Pembroke. We hope that it answers most of the questions you may have. Of course, no set of facts can tell you what it is like to study at Pembroke. Besides, the picture changes constantly. The nature and the friendly atmosphere of the College are created by those who are studying and teaching in it at any one time; everyone contributes. Our students come from a wide variety of backgrounds, from across the UK, as well as Europe and the wider world. They all have two things in common: first, their deep interest in their subject, and secondly their success – recent examination results place Pembroke consistently in the top third of Cambridge colleges, and we consider such success to be very important. If you are keen to study your subject at the highest level in a warm, supportive environment, then Pembroke is the place for you!

Dr Caroline Burt, Admissions Tutor, Pembroke College, Cambridge

Undergraduate Study

Pembroke admits students to study all the Honours Degree courses (known as ‘Triposes’) available at Cambridge, except Geography and Education Studies.

The Cambridge Tripos courses are distinctive for their breadth and flexibility. Most courses cover their subject very broadly in the first year or two, and then become more specialised in the second or third year. This breadth allows you to choose from an exceptionally wide variety of options, and thus, to a great extent, to design your own programme of study. Unlike at other universities, it is not necessary to have a very clear idea when you apply or the detailed options you may wish to study.

Most students take successive parts of the same Tripos. However, it is possible to change subject after Part I. Not all changes are clearly possible or desirable. If you think you might like to combine two different Tripos subjects, it is sensible to consult the Admissions Tutor about your choices before you apply.

There are three terms in the academic year. In the first two, Michaelmas and Lent, there are eight teaching weeks, while in the third term, Easter, teaching is for four or five weeks with the remainder occupied by preparation for the examinations and the examinations themselves. The vacations are long, but private reading and study during them are essential elements of all Cambridge degrees. On request, second and third year students, and overseas students, can use College accommodation during vacations for academic purposes, and small vacation grants are available to help fund this.
What support will I have while studying?

Every undergraduate has a Director of Studies who arranges each term’s ‘supervisions’ (teaching in small groups, usually two or three students) and gives advice about study and University lectures. Pembroke is well provided to cover a wide range of subjects and topics with supervisors from within the College but, like all Colleges, we also arrange teaching by experts from University departments or other Colleges to match the interests and needs of our undergraduates.

In addition to a Director of Studies, each undergraduate has a personal Tutor. This is someone to whom you can go to ask advice about non-academic matters, such as personal or financial problems. The Tutors also administer the various College funds which are available for student support.

College Library

The College has a very well-stocked library, which is a quiet and pleasant place to study. It is open 8am – midnight during term time and 8am – 10pm during the vacation. In an era when many textbooks are expensive, it is one of Cambridge’s major advantages that the excellent University and departmental libraries are supplemented by the libraries of undergraduate Colleges, each providing copies of books commonly recommended by lecturers and supervisors, in addition to other facilities. Pembroke’s library has an excellent collection in all the main teaching subjects, and undergraduates are encouraged to order books for it according to need. The library has a terminal to the University data network for consultation of University catalogues and bibliographic databases. An extension to the library includes a Law Library and a lift.

Information Technology

All undergraduate rooms in College, and the College-owned hostels, are connected to the University-wide high speed data network. If you have your own computer you can use it in your own room for fast access to internet services such as email and the web, for which there is a small termly charge. All rooms have telephone sockets. However, it is certainly not necessary to have your own computer at Pembroke: with the additional computer room in Foundress Court, the College has over 30 PCs for student use. Many other University departments also have their own facilities. Further information for students planning to bring their own computer, including recommended hardware and software, as well as technical and cost details of networking, is sent to successful candidates.

We have a beautiful library staffed by dedicated and charming (provided you abstain from using your phone!) librarians. It’s a very calm, inspiring space that always makes me feel privileged and excited by the wealth of knowledge and ideas that line the walls and the possibilities they present.

Archy, 2nd year, Natural Sciences
There is plenty to get involved with at Pembroke – including excellent facilities for rugby, soccer, hockey, cricket, tennis (both grass and hard court), rowing, netball, squash and croquet among other sports. There is an exercise room with multi-gym in College itself.

Accommodation
Pembroke is slightly smaller than the average Cambridge College. There are some 434 undergraduates, 208 graduates and 65 Fellows. We are able to accommodate all undergraduates in College, or in College-owned houses, for the three or four years of their undergraduate degree course. Rents in College-owned property are substantially lower than commercial rents charged in Cambridge.

Rooms in College
Over half our undergraduates, including all first-years, live in College on the central College site. The remainder live in College-owned houses. Two rooms in our most recent building, Foundress Court, have been adapted for wheelchair use. A ballot decides priorities in choosing rooms for second and third year undergraduates.

Nearly all rooms are study-bedrooms. A few sets (separate study and bedroom) are occasionally available to second-, third- and fourth-years. No rooms are shared. All staircases have direct access to baths and/or showers and to a small kitchen, where facilities are limited, but suitable for the preparation of light snacks. Most rooms have background heating and their own washbasins; some student rooms in hostels/houses are ensuite.

College houses
These are conveniently situated, either very near the College, near the arts and sciences faculties, or slightly further away but close to the College sports ground. Our recent experience is that while all appreciate the benefits of residence in College during the first year, many students prefer the slightly greater independence afforded by residence in College houses in their second, and sometimes in their third years. Rents in College houses are also somewhat lower. Most third years are now able to live in College itself, if they wish. A bus service links the College to departments and College houses in west Cambridge, and is subsidised for those with a valid University card (given to all students free on arrival in Cambridge).

Rents
The termly rent covers the eight weeks of compulsory residence and any extra period, up to a total of ten weeks. Residency beyond this period may be allowed for academic reasons, and vacation rent charged. For details of rents and an indication of other expenses, see the enclosed leaflet The cost of studying at Pembroke.
Food
All meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner) are available in Hall. None is compulsory and most are self-service. At lunch and buffet dinner there is a choice of main course, as well as soup, salads, pudding, yoghurt, fruit and coffee. A three course set dinner is also served. Vegetarian meals are always available, and other dietary regimes can be accommodated. The student representatives on the Food Committee ensure that undergraduates have a say in what is served. The College has recently gone completely Fair Trade in its purchasing of food.

The Bar is open until 11pm during Full Term. It is next to the Common Room (called the Junior Parlour). Both are situated right by the largest of the College’s several garden areas, and this part of the garden is a popular place for relaxation during the summer term. Café Pembroke also serves delicious coffee and snacks throughout the day.

Societies
The leading College societies include the Stokes Society for Mathematicians and Scientists, the History Society, the Pembroke Players, our theatrical group which has spawned a number of famous comedians (including Peter Cook, Clive James, Tim Brooke-Taylor and Bill Oddie, two of the ‘Goodies’), and the Music Society. There is also an Art and Photographic Society. Whatever you are interested in you are sure to find someone else in Cambridge who shares that interest! For more details you should consult the student pages on our website.

Student representation
Pembroke undergraduates elect student representatives to the Junior Parlour Committee, whose members promote both the social and academic interests of undergraduates. They attend meetings of a Consultative Committee of Pembroke’s students and academics and represent the students at meetings of the Governing Body of the College. They also organise a wide range of entertainment, from ‘bops’ (disco’s) in the College cellars to the annual ‘June Event’. They produce a lively publication, Pembroke Street, on a regular basis, and this gives budding journalists and critics (not to mention cartoonists, crossword compilers etc.) a chance to practise their skills.

Pembroke is a wonderful, open, friendly environment in which to live and study. As soon as you wake up in the morning and look at all the beautiful buildings or hear the chapel bells your mood is lifted. All the students and staff here are approachable and friendly. It doesn’t take very long to settle in and feel part of Pembroke.

Personally, I am very happy at Pembroke and feel that it provides a great academic and social environment.
Victoria, 1st year, Law
Pembroke has enjoyed the talents of many notable musicians, in particular David Munrow and Christopher Hogwood, and former Young Musician of the Year, Emma Johnson, as well as many ex-members of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. Following a substantial bequest to support Music in the College, Pembroke also has a Director of Music. The College Music Society committee is made up mostly of undergraduates, and organises many orchestral, chamber, choral and other concerts.

Every fortnight there is an informal music evening at which College musicians (of all standards) are encouraged to play. Musical facilities within the College include two Steinway grand pianos and the Chapel organ, which was rebuilt as a classically styled instrument in 1980, incorporating the original pipework and cases of 1708. There are sound-proofed rooms for musical events and practice. The Admissions Tutor or the Organ Scholars will be glad to answer any questions you may have about music at Pembroke. The College participates in the Instrumental Awards Scheme.

The Chapel Choir is made up entirely of volunteers from the student body and sings once a week at Evensong on Sundays – with practice beforehand and on one other evening for an hour – and at a Choral Communion once each term. There are auditions at the beginning of the year.

The Choir is given dinner in Hall on Sundays after the service and a Choir Dinner in the Easter Term. Other recitals are given from time to time. Our choristers find this commitment is fun and not too heavy. The Choir has recently issued a popular Christmas CD. Regular summer tours are organised to different countries.

A detailed leaflet on the College’s musical life, including material on musical facilities, instrumental awards, organ scholarships, and subsidies for music lessons, is available on request.

Pembroke music

The Pembroke Poetry Society magazine *The Pem* appears termly and publishes poems written by Pembroke undergraduates and Fellows. You do not need to be reading English to belong to the Poetry Society, which continues the long tradition of Pembroke poets, who include Edmund Spenser, Thomas Gray, Christopher Smart and Ted Hughes.

One of the things that makes life at Pembroke special is that there is a genuine feeling of community within and across the years. First years all live in College, and most second and third years choose to live in College-owned houses with their closest friends, and I think this creates a very pleasant family-like atmosphere. You get the chance to meet everyone in your year, and it’s still easy to meet people from other years too, because there are so many College societies! Sport, drama, music... it is so easy to get involved!

Annasilvia, 3rd year, Social Anthropology
How do I apply?
There are two ways of applying for an undergraduate place:

**Post A-level/other equivalent qualification, or Pre A-level/other equivalent qualification.**
Candidates apply in the autumn for a place the following October or for a deferred place. Any offer will be conditional on achieving certain specified A-level (or comparable) results in the following summer. In the event you do not quite achieve the required grades, you may still be offered a place, but only if there are places to spare. All applicants must apply to Cambridge through UCAS.

**Interviews**
We interview the vast majority of those who apply and interviews are normally held around the first two weeks of December. Candidates usually have at least two interviews. If you apply to Pembroke and we are unable to offer you a place after the interviews, we may pass your file to the Inter-Collegiate Pool where all Colleges looking for people in that particular subject have a chance to examine it. Applicants picked out of the Pool may receive further interviews at another College in January. There is also an Inter-Collegiate Pool in August for those applicants who do not achieve the required grades and are not taken by the College that originally made them an offer. There are no interviews at this stage.

**When will I hear the result of my application?**
Usually applicants receive a decision from us early in January, unless their application has been passed to the Inter-Collegiate Pool, in which case they hear later in January.

**Deferred entry**
Pembroke welcomes applications for deferred entry; a well-spent year away from formal study can be beneficial both academically and generally. We particularly encourage deferral for those who are very young. Apart from wishing to ensure that plans for the ‘gap’ year are coherent and appropriate, we operate no strict policy in this matter for most subjects. In Engineering, we are very happy to see deferred entry applications. This can enable applicants to gain a year of industrial or other appropriate experience, possibly with a sponsoring company; the number of deferred applications and offers is thus higher for Engineering than other subjects. Deferred entry is rare for Mathematics, as the mathematical skills can get ‘rusty’ during a year away.
What are we looking for?

In assessing you, we will try to find out as much as possible about you, from your examination record, your school reference and examination predictions, your personal statement, the interviews, submitted school work (in some subjects) and any written test we set.

Details of any subject specific requirements for admission are given in the subject leaflets – available from the Admissions Office, or on the website.

Interviews may be one-to-one or with a pair of interviewers, and will involve both specialists in your subject and the Admissions Tutor or another non-specialist tutor. Detailed guidance about what to expect at interview is sent to all who are invited to interview.

At interview, questions focus largely on the subjects you have studied at school and wish to study at Cambridge. We realise that confidence in an interview is not necessarily correlated with aptitude for a course. We do our best to assess not only your ability, but also your commitment and enthusiasm for your chosen subject. These will be manifest in hard work for A-level (or equivalent) and in the extent to which you have taken advantage of any relevant extra-curricular opportunities or work experience, more general reading, etc. (though we appreciate that such opportunities vary between candidates).

We look for the ability to think through problems and issues when there are not books giving 'the right answer'.

For information about how to prepare for your interviews, you might like to read the leaflet, A Guide to Cambridge Interviews, which can be found on the web. There is also a CD available. We are always very happy to give further advice.

Overseas applicants

We welcome applications from overseas candidates, who contribute greatly to the life of the College. There are no fixed quotas for the number of overseas students who can be admitted, except in Medicine and Veterinary Medicine and application follows the normal procedure. Interviews in Pembroke take place at the same time as those for UK applicants. Special arrangements are made for interviewing applicants from Singapore and Malaysia and in some cases India, Hong Kong and the People’s Republic of China, in their own country. Sometimes we will set a short written test for those who cannot be interviewed. The College has one fully funded scholarship for students from Africa and some limited funding is available through the Cambridge Trusts. Details of this funding is sent to all overseas applicants who receive an offer from the College, and application to the Cambridge Trusts can only be made after receiving an offer.

Affiliated students

Graduates with a full Honours degree may apply for an undergraduate course at Cambridge as an affiliated student. Affiliated students normally enter the second year of the Tripos course and can complete the BA degree in two years. It is essential that you have the academic background to allow you to go straight into the second year of a demanding course.

There is no ‘quota’ at Pembroke for affiliated students. Entry is highly competitive, and would normally require a First Class or high 2:1 Honours degree or the equivalent.
FINANCIAL AND OTHER SUPPORT

Financial assistance

It is Pembroke College’s policy to ensure that, as far as possible, no student who has been offered a place will be unable to take up that place because of financial hardship. The College is well aware that students at all universities are finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet, and that most will take out loans to supplement their income. An additional leaflet *The cost of studying at Pembroke is included with this brochure.* If you are worried at all about the financial aspects of coming to university, please consult the Admissions Tutor at an early stage.

Scholarships and prizes are awarded to undergraduates who perform particularly well in their Tripos examinations. The College offers support for undergraduates wishing to travel in the vacations for particular projects or for general educational purposes. It also runs Easter and summer schools for visitors from the United States and Japan, and this is a popular source of paid vacation employment for undergraduates who wish to stay in Cambridge for a few extra weeks, acting as student tutors and organising social events and day trips.

Other support

Applicants with disabilities or health problems should contact the Admissions Tutor at an early stage to discuss, in confidence, what additional support they may need. A leaflet giving information about the University Disability Resource Centre is available from the Admissions Office.

Pembroke has given me and many other international students fantastic academic and social opportunities to become fully embedded into university life in the UK, and has allowed us to enjoy it at its fullest.

Marcos, 2nd year, Politics, Psychology and Sociology

The financial aspect was something I really did worry about before coming here; trying to work out what to pay and when, budgeting for the term and dealing with Student Finance all felt a little overwhelming at first but all the staff have been so unbelievably supportive and helpful and I know if I’ve got any worries or problems I can go straight to them and they’ll give me all the advice and reassurance I need!

Studying here provides the best training from tutors, supervisors, lecturers and so on, whilst also allowing you to really push and develop yourself and you get such a sense of achievement.

Charlie, 1st year, English
Well, yes, there is life after Pembroke! It may be difficult, when applying to university, to think so far ahead, and the College recognises that many students are very undecided as to their future career, even after two or three years of undergraduate study. A full range of careers advice is available: the main University Careers Service is conveniently close to Pembroke.

Within the College, Tutors, Directors of Studies and other Fellows have much experience in this area and over 800 of our former students are prepared to offer career advice, guidance and, if appropriate, placements (including vacation placements) to new Pembroke graduates. Many students embark on postgraduate study.

Pembroke has developed particularly strong links with several US universities (notably Brown, Yale, Harvard, Chicago, Caltech and the University of California) with opportunities for graduate study.

We hope that you have enjoyed reading about Pembroke, and that you have begun to see how welcoming and supportive a place it is. If you would like to visit the College, we would be delighted to see you at one of our open days, details of which can be found on our website. Prospective applicants are also very welcome to walk around the College grounds, and, with notice, we can often make appointments for you to meet a Director of Studies or the Admissions Tutor. Should you have questions about any aspect of studying at Cambridge, or about the financial support available here, or our admissions process, don’t hesitate to get in touch. We are always pleased to hear from prospective applicants.