Postgraduate
New Students and Offer Holders Frequently Asked Questions

This document provides general responses to some queries that applicants and offer-holders have raised about arrangements for study in 2020-21 in light of the pandemic. The global and local situation for government and health regulations can change rapidly, so please supplement this document by checking recent updates on University, College, and national government websites.

A. General

Am I required to be physically in Cambridge next year?
Yes. All full-time students are required to come to Cambridge for the new academic year. This begins for most courses on the 6th October 2020, but the Hughes Hall admission office will have advised you of the date you should be ready to attend in Cambridge (your Registration Date). Some aspects of teaching will be online, but the University expects many important academic activities to continue in their usual format, with adjustments for health regulations. In exceptional circumstances, however, it may not be possible or appropriate for a student to come to Cambridge for all or part of the academic year, and the University will consider on an individual basis the best way to respond to such situations. There is more information on the ‘Advice on Exceptional Circumstances’ information page: https://www.cam.ac.uk/coronavirus/students/guidance-for-all-students/advice-on-exceptional-circumstances

Will formal halls and other College events carry on?
The College is planning to offer a wide range of activities and will work hard to build up community life, even with social distancing. We are keen to ensure that the social, cultural and intellectual life of the College should continue to flourish as much as possible, in line with any government regulations or adjustments for the health and safety of students, staff and fellows. We are looking at appropriate ways to organise dining and other events which will preserve the spirit of these activities while keeping to health precautions.

Will the College be open to provide access to its facilities next year?
Yes. Facilities will be open where possible, but with appropriate adjustments; for example, there are likely to be special arrangements for the use of the library, study areas and social spaces.

If the pandemic has affected the outcome of exams which are a condition for joining my course at Cambridge, will the University give me any special consideration?
The University recognises that there has been significant disruption globally to the current study of many students, and that assessment and examination processes may have changed. All academic grades, scores and classifications awarded to university graduates will therefore be recognised in the normal way, even if the assessment methods have changed. Please upload the final results of your degree to the self-service portal in the normal way as instructed in the offer conditions booklet. There is more information here: https://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/coronavirus

The University has extended the deadline for the submission of transcripts; if you believe you will meet any entry criteria but that documentation will be delayed you should complete the Offer
B. Travel and quarantine

Can you help with visa arrangements?
The College cannot intervene in visa arrangements. We advise that you contact your local issuing office, and the University’s International Student Office has a visa advice service:
https://www.internationalstudents.cam.ac.uk/immigration/visa-advice

Will the College offer accommodation for students who are required to quarantine on arrival in the UK?
We can offer all full-time students allocated a Hughes Hall room who are required to quarantine under current regulations with facilities to do so if this is requested in good time. Due to the additional demands of quarantine you may be required to arrive on an earlier date and may be accommodated in a different room during your quarantine period. We can also offer quarantine facilities to Hughes Hall students who will not be living in College accommodation subject to availability – again you should expect an earlier arrival date. In all cases you should request this when you accept the room offer or as soon as the UK government adds the country you are travelling from to the list of countries requiring self-isolation on arrival. See www.gov.uk/uk-border-control. Please bear in mind that demand is likely to increase as the cycle progresses, so planning for earlier arrival is likely to make it easier to put self-isolation/quarantine provision in place.

Can the College help me find quarantine accommodation from other sources?
We have made an arrangement with the Moller Institute in Cambridge which is offering rooms for students who need to self-isolate.
https://www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/student-centre/practical/preparation-arrival/
https://www.mollerinstitute.com/conference-centre/accommodation/

C. Health measures

How will the University and Colleges manage risks from the virus?
The University and Colleges are working hard to ensure that the risks associated with the coronavirus are managed in line with Public Health England guidance. All University and College buildings will be risk assessed and managed on an ongoing basis, following government guidelines and advice. The University has announced a number of measures being implemented: Managing how we all enter and leave buildings to allow for social distancing, reducing numbers of people allowed into a building or area, appropriate cleaning regimes, altered timings of events, and any other measures considered appropriate to mitigate risk of exposure to Covid-19. The University will promote health and infection control measures across the whole University, and communicate and implement changes to any of these measures resulting from local lockdown requirements as required. This is referred to in a recent announcement from the University:
https://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/news/academic-year-2020-21

There is also information about support for students with increased susceptibility to infectious diseases, or with disabilities impacted by COVID-related social distancing measures:
https://www.cam.ac.uk/coronavirus/students/guidance-for-all-students/support-for-students-with-increased-susceptibility-to-infectious-diseases-or-with-disabilities

There is information about arrangements the College currently has in place on the College’s coronavirus information page: https://www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/coronavirus/
D. Finance

Is there additional financial support for applicants/students affected by the pandemic?

While the Colleges and the University have taken steps to provide additional financial support for current students experiencing unforeseen financial hardship due to the coronavirus, there is presently no additional financial support for postgraduate applicants. All new students will need to be able to finance themselves for the entire course, including supporting any dependants. The University funding search portal contains information about a wide range of financial support:

https://www.student-funding.cam.ac.uk/

Please note that students should not expect to support themselves by working part-time, as the University has restrictions on working during studies:

https://www.internationalstudents.cam.ac.uk/studying/working-and-studying

E. Teaching and learning

How will my course be taught?

The University is implementing an adapted teaching programme to adjust appropriately for the new health requirements. This includes delivering teaching by a blend of in-person and online teaching, and adapting timetables, teaching methods, course content and teaching locations. The balance of the blend will depend on the stringency of social distancing and other regulations in force at the time. Where possible, teaching by seminars, practicals and supervisions will be delivered in person, and it may be possible for lectures to smaller groups to be given on this basis. All lectures will be recorded and made available online. If large-scale lecturing in person becomes permissible, the university will reintroduce it as soon as possible. The University has said that the objective is to restore the full teaching programme as soon as possible, and they will do so sooner than currently anticipated if they are able to do so. Guidance is provided in a recent announcement from the University’s Senior Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education.

https://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/news/academic-year-2020-21

F. Accommodation

Will the College be open to provide accommodation next year?

Yes. The accommodation allocation process has opened for new and continuing students. New students should complete an Accommodation Preference Form (they will be advised on how to access this shortly after they accept their offer of College membership) and when they become eligible for College accommodation they will be contacted by the accommodation team and offered a room subject to availability. It is likely that there will be a more limited range of choice in College accommodation due to adjustments for the health regulations. There is information about College accommodation on the College website:

https://www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/study-with-us/new-students-signpost/
https://www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/student-centre/practical/preparation-arrival/

When will I be notified whether or not I will be offered College accommodation?

We are currently compiling accommodation preferences and we will begin offering accommodation to new full-time students in August. Every application is different, but in general terms once the process of offering rooms has opened and once an applicant has completed all their financial conditions they will be notified of the outcome of their accommodation application within 14 days.
When will the College run out of accommodation for students?
The College usually has sufficient accommodation to offer a room to all applicants who request one. While we expect demand will be more uneven this year, we will offer guidance and advice to any students who are confirmed later in the process and do not secure a College room. The University Accommodation Service also keeps a register of suitable accommodation and can provide further guidance about accommodation in the wider University and from private providers. https://www.accommodation.cam.ac.uk/

Would I still have to pay if I am not able to travel to the UK but have registered for a College room?
The College has a standard policy for assessing situations in which students do not take up College accommodation or leave early due to unforeseen and exceptional circumstances. This will be the reference point should the need arise for incoming students.

21 July 2020