

## Guidance for Mature applicants to the Cambridge Foundation Year

### Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide support to those applying as mature students to the Cambridge Foundation Year. Further information on this programme is available at [cam.ac.uk/foundationyear](http://cam.ac.uk/foundationyear).

If you'll be aged 21 or over by 1 October in the year in which you hope to come to Cambridge you'll be applying as a mature student. This relates to the age you will be when you start the Foundation Year at Cambridge, not the age you would be on starting any subsequent degree course at Cambridge following the Foundation Year.

Applications from all ages are welcome to the Cambridge Foundation Year. As with all other applicants, you will have to apply via UCAS and meet certain eligibility criteria to be considered. This document outlines some guidance specific to mature students applying to the Cambridge Foundation Year. [More information and support about life as a mature student at Cambridge is available on our website](#).

This course is a full-time programme and there are requirements for students to be resident in Cambridge during term time. You should bear this in mind when applying.

### Foundation Year Eligibility Criteria

To be considered for the programme, all applicants should meet **one or more criteria** from **at least two of the categories** detailed on our website (unless you are care-experienced) and will ordinarily be resident in the UK.

You will be asked to evidence your eligibility ([details available here](#)), however, we appreciate that for some applicants who have left school some time ago this may not be possible. If you have any queries, contact [foundation.year@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:foundation.year@admin.cam.ac.uk) for guidance.

#### *Category 1: Individual Characteristics*

There are no additional recommendations for mature applicants. The criteria apply even if it has been some time since, for example, you might have been a young carer while in education previously, even though you are now over 18.

#### *Category 2: Family Characteristics*

You will not qualify as being currently eligible for Free School Meals as you are over 19. However, if you did qualify for Free School Meals at any point in the past six years you would qualify under that criterion.

Under the household income criterion (£25,000 or less) and the eligibility for Universal Credit, there are slightly different rules depending on whether you are under 25 and live with your parent(s)/carer(s) and depend on them financially, are under 25 but independent, or over 25. Guidance on this is available in the eligibility guidance document linked to above.

### *Category 3: School/College Characteristics*

Some particular limitations may apply to mature applicants. This category is likely to be less applicable to applicants who left education some time ago as we rely on datasets that will not be relevant to your circumstances at that time.

If you have returned to education, they will apply to your current school/college and in some circumstances to your previous school/college.

You will qualify under the school/college inspection rating criteria only if you attend the school/college currently, or left within the past four years. This limitation is because records from long ago are not easily available for us to verify.

You will qualify under the school attainment measure for any school/college you currently attend, or we will consider the current scores available for all schools/colleges that you have attended in the past 10 years. This is because the measure is currently not applicable to post-16 institutions.

You will qualify under the school/college post-18 destinations criteria only if you attend the school/college currently, or left within the last four years. We will use the most recent data available. This limitation is because data from long ago is not easily available for us to verify.

## **Academic Entry Requirements**

The academic entry requirement of 120 UCAS Points is the same for all applicants. As a mature applicant, you may:

- Have already obtained the 120 UCAS Points through qualifications you have completed in the past
- Be working either full-time or part-time towards 120 UCAS Points through any of the suitable qualifications listed on our website
- Have obtained some qualifications that would count towards 120 UCAS Points in the past, but have recently returned to education and be working on other qualifications to meet the total required

If you left education some time ago, we would expect to see evidence of recent study to demonstrate your ability to cope with the demands of the course. We recommend some recent studying within the last two years (as of the application deadline). This does not have to be A Levels or an Access to HE course (or equivalent) if you have already completed Level 3 qualifications, but online or face-to-face classes with a lifelong learning department at your local university, the [University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education](#), or modules with the Open University would be ideal. MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) would not be sufficient evidence alone.

## **UCAS Reference**

As part of your UCAS application, you need to secure a reference. If you're attending a school/college, this is usually completed by your institution.

If you are studying for a one-year qualification like an Access to HE Diploma, your referee should mention the course and give as much information about assessment procedures and the grading system and reflect on your performance so far.

If you are a mature applicant who is not currently in education, this can be challenging. If you have left education relatively recently, consider approaching someone who taught you before you left to see if they would be willing to write you a reference. Or, if you are doing part-time study such as modules with lifelong learning departments, ask your tutor.

A professional reference is sometimes appropriate but often cannot give us all the information we need. If your only option is a professional reference, they must be able to comment on your application and potential.

Some mature Colleges at Cambridge request a second academic reference from some applicants when applying for a degree course, but for the Foundation Year we only require the UCAS reference.

## **Colleges**

In applying, you will be asked if you wish to indicate a preference College. You are welcome to specify any of the participating Colleges, but you might like to consider if one of the participating 'mature' Colleges might be a good fit for your needs. In these Colleges, [St Edmund's](#) and [Wolfson](#), you will be living alongside other students who aren't straight out of school. This can be a support for anyone returning to education, and the social life often takes account of partners and families. Watch [this short video](#) to find out more about life at mature Colleges in Cambridge.

If you don't indicate a preference College and instead make an 'Open' application, there is a strong chance that, if successful, your place will be at one of the mature Colleges.

## **Further support**

Further information and support on applying to Cambridge as a mature student is available here:

- Visit the University's website for information on [mature students at Cambridge](#). There is also [advice for student parents on childcare](#).
- [Advice is available from UCAS](#) on applying to university as a mature student.

We are on hand to answer any further queries and support applications to the Foundation Year. To best support you, please make enquiries in good time. You can reach us at [foundation.year@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:foundation.year@admin.cam.ac.uk)