

These notes are intended for applicants from China who are considering applying to the University of Cambridge in 2016 for 2017 entry (or deferred entry in 2018) as an undergraduate student. This information supplements that given in the University's *Undergraduate Prospectus*, published annually in March, and the *International Students Information Guide*. The Prospectus and other useful information is available on our website: www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk

If you would like a personal paper copy of the Prospectus, you can order and pay for a printed copy online at: www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/find-out-more/order-prospectus. Please note there is a charge of £9.50 to mail a copy of the Prospectus outside of the UK or EU.

If you have questions not answered by the Prospectus, the website, or by these notes, you can write to the Admissions Tutor of a College (addresses are in the Prospectus) or email the China Application Centre: prc@cao.cam.ac.uk

Information on entry for *postgraduate* courses may be obtained from the Graduate Admissions Office (Telephone: +44 1223 760606; Email: Graduate.Admissions@admin.cam.ac.uk) or online at: www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk

How to apply

An application to the University consists of **both** an online UCAS application and a Cambridge Online Preliminary Application (COPA). The COPA can be accessed at: www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/applying/copa from **early July 2016**.

The online UCAS application form can be accessed at: www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/register. It is very important that applicants take care to apply in the correct cycle, and so they should click "UCAS Apply 2017" for applications for 2017 entry (or 2018 deferred entry) to the University of Cambridge.

All applicants to Cambridge must also complete the Supplementary Application Questionnaire (SAQ) by **22 October 2016**. Applicants will receive an email with instructions on how to access the SAQ shortly after submitting their UCAS application. More details can be found here: www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/applying/saq

If you wish to be considered for interview in Shanghai, you should note the two possible alternative procedures outlined below:

- A) If your completed UCAS application and COPA have **both** been received in Cambridge by **20 September 2016**, and you have indicated in your COPA that you wish to be interviewed in Shanghai, we can consider you for inclusion in the overseas interview programme.

Not everyone who applies will get an interview: decisions on who will be interviewed will be taken by the Cambridge Colleges, and applicants being called for interview will be notified a week or so in advance. Interviews are expected to be held in Shanghai mainly on **27-28 October 2016**, and alternative dates are not possible.

Some applicants may be intending to come to England to visit universities in December or January and – if so – might prefer to be interviewed at that time in Cambridge. In this case, they should make this clear when submitting their application, though there can be no guarantee that such an

arrangement will be possible. *In any event, no applicant who has been interviewed outside the UK will also be interviewed in Cambridge in December/January.*

- B) An alternative application route that applies *only* to applicants from PR China for entry to study any undergraduate degree subject offered at Cambridge is through a scheme organised for Cambridge by the Ameson Foundation in China (www.aceis-china.com). Under this scheme, prospective applicants will be required to take written tests in Mathematics and English at centres in China no later than **31 August 2016**, entries for which will be required by **mid-July 2016** (www.astexam.org). The results of these tests, and other examinations taken, will be used to pre-select applicants for interviews in Shanghai by Cambridge interviewers on **27-28 October 2016**. Further details of the scheme may be obtained online at www.aceis-china.com or from: The Ameson Foundation China Office, 4th Floor, Jiangsu Educational and Scientific Research Building, 77 West Beijing Road, Nanjing 210013, China.

Entrance requirements

The Senior High School Examination (Huikao) alone is not considered suitable preparation for a competitive application to Cambridge. Any offer based on the University Entrance Examination (Gaokao) would be made on an individual basis but applicants generally need to achieve results within the top 1% - 2% of the gathered field.

Typical offers for applicants taking GCE Advanced Levels would be based on three or four A grades, or equivalent grades in other examinations such as IB Higher Levels.

Applicants are also required to submit a copy in English of their previous school grade certificates.

English language requirements

If your first language is not English, please note that you may be required to achieve, before ultimate entry, a satisfactory standard in the IELTS *International English Language Test* (usually taken through the British Council), normally achieving a minimum overall score of 7.5, usually with 7.0 or above in each element of that test.

A reasonable standard in spoken English is also required at the time of interview, for example an overall IELTS score of 6.0 for sciences or 6.5 for arts and social sciences would normally be regarded as a reasonable score at the point of application, together with knowledge of the technical vocabulary in English for the relevant subject area. The only alternative test/scores currently approved for this pre-interview purpose (only) are a mark of at least 100 overall in the TOEFL test (internet based), or a comparable mark in the Ameson AST English test. Please note that IGCSE English on its own is not regarded as sufficient even with an optional oral extension.

Subject choice

For all subjects it is absolutely essential that applicants should have read the *Undergraduate Prospectus* and be well acquainted with the structure and contents of the course for which they are applying. If an applicant indicates at interview that they are unfamiliar with the nature of the course, this will make a very poor impression. You can be considered for any course offered by the University as listed in the *Undergraduate Prospectus*. Some specific points to note are:

Architecture – this is not considered as a purely technical subject in Cambridge and applicants usually have to bring a substantial portfolio of artwork with them to be discussed at interview. In previous years very few applicants for Architecture interviewed overseas have been successful in gaining places: serious applicants for this subject are advised, if at all possible, to be prepared to travel to Cambridge for interview.

Economics – competition is currently very severe for places to read Economics and good ability at Mathematics is of equal importance to an interest in, and basic knowledge of, Economics.

Law – currently there is a lot of competition for places to read Law at Cambridge and *motivation* for the course plus a relish for the intellectual challenges involved in legal study and work are important in addition to strong examination grades. Where possible applicants should try to see the Law in action, for instance by a short period of work experience or shadowing a lawyer, or even better by watching a few court cases.

Medicine – because of Government restrictions there is currently a maximum admission of twenty-two places a year for overseas medical students in Cambridge as a whole. Anyone admitted as a preclinical medical student is assured of a clinical course place, subject only to satisfactory progress and health requirements. The full cost of an entire six-year medical course of training is rather high and this year these costs are estimated to come to £57,750 per year – this figure includes overseas tuition fees for 2017-18 plus averaged College fees and estimated term-time living expenses. You should allow for possible increases in subsequent years.

College choice

The University of Cambridge is made up of a number of Colleges. 29 of these admit undergraduate students. There is no answer to the common question: '*What is the best College choice for a student coming from China or applying for a particular subject?*' In general all Colleges accept applicants for all subjects (the few exceptions are detailed in the University's *Undergraduate Prospectus* and on our website). Before you choose a College to specify on your application you should consult the College entries in the *Undergraduate Prospectus* and on the University website. It is unwise to select a College solely because of the availability of a named scholarship award at that College.

Please note that it is essential your choice of Cambridge College on your UCAS application and COPA match. If there is a discrepancy, your choice of College on your UCAS application will take precedence.

If you have no preference for a particular College, you can choose to make an 'open' application (selecting the open application option in both your UCAS application and COPA), where your application is allocated by a computer program to a College. Please note that affiliated applicants (those applying to study for a second Bachelors degree) must apply to a named College - there is no open application route for affiliated applicants. Affiliated applicants must clearly indicate their College choice on both their UCAS application and COPA.

It is not possible under any circumstances to change your choice of Cambridge College/open application once you have submitted your UCAS application and COPA.

If, for any reason, a College is not able to offer a place to an applicant who is judged otherwise up to the normal standard required for Cambridge entry, the application will be passed on to be considered by other Colleges with vacancies in the relevant subject area.

Year of entry

Applicants applying this year (in 2016) may be seeking places on courses beginning in October 2017, or deferred entry places on courses beginning in October 2018, in which case they will be expected to discuss at interview their plans for the intervening period and their reasons for seeking deferred entry.

Finance

There are around 900 students from China currently studying in Cambridge of whom about one-third are undergraduates. Around 20% of international students at Cambridge are funded on various Scholarship schemes; the remainder are supported by other sponsors, parents, and loans.

The *Cambridge Commonwealth European and International Trust* (www.cambridgetrusts.org) has schemes of bursaries that may provide limited support for students who are able to meet the major

part of their costs from other sources. It is appreciated that at the time of application those looking for scholarships are unlikely to be sure of the funding situation.

The annual cost of studying at Cambridge as an international undergraduate is made up of overseas University tuition fees plus living expenses and College fees, and will range between £32,028 to £57,750 for 2017-18 (depending on subject, and excluding travel and summer vacation living costs). You should allow for increases in subsequent years.

Interviews

Competition for places at Cambridge is very strong, especially in the most popular subjects, and interviews, whether held in Cambridge or overseas, are an important part of our selection procedures. Teams of Cambridge Admissions Tutors carry out interviews in certain countries overseas but it is not possible for them to visit all countries. This year, amongst other countries, it is intended that interviews and written tests will be held in Shanghai on **27-28 October 2016**. Applicants wishing to be considered for interview in Shanghai should ensure their UCAS and COPA form are submitted by **20 September 2016**. Applications received after this deadline will only be considered for interview in Cambridge.

Interviews will also be held in Hong Kong at the end of November **but these are only for those currently resident or at school/university in Hong Kong**.

Interviews in Shanghai will be about 20-30 minutes in duration and are not primarily about money or financial arrangements, but are designed to assess the academic potential of applicants in their chosen subject area.

Most applicants are required to take a written admission assessment, either pre-interview or at-interview. For 2017 entry, the pre-interview written assessments will be taken on **2 November 2016** worldwide. Please note that for some overseas interview locations, these assessments may take place after your interview. In this situation, your written assessment will still be considered by your Cambridge College along with your overseas interview report.

At-interview assessments will be administered in your Cambridge College if you are invited to the UK for interview. For candidates interviewed overseas, at-interview assessments will usually take place in the same week as interviews in that country. Details of at-interview admissions assessments are normally supplied to shortlisted applicants together with details of their interview.

More information about written admission assessments, including specific information for overseas applicants, can be found here: www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/applying/admissions-assessments

Not everyone who applies will get an interview: decisions on who will be interviewed will be taken by the Cambridge Colleges, and applicants being called for interview will be notified at least one or two weeks in advance. The **only dates** possible for interviews and assessments are those given above, and the University does not in general conduct any interviews by means of video or telephone links, so it is important to avoid clashes with travel or other plans on these dates. *No applicant who has been interviewed outside the UK will also be interviewed in Cambridge in December/January.*

Decisions

Cambridge Colleges will normally write to all their applicants in January to advise them of the outcome of their application. The decision may be an offer or a rejection; an offer is likely to be dependent upon satisfying specified conditions, including showing that financial support is available for the course and achieving specified grades in the qualifications that you are currently taking. Competition for places is severe: experience shows that a typical successful applicant will be well-motivated and achieving academic results in the top 1-2% of their year. In recent years about 20% of our applicants interviewed overseas have received a Cambridge offer.

Application fees

There is an application fee of UK £30 that needs to be submitted with the COPA and a further fee of UK £140 for all those who are interviewed outside Cambridge (to be paid prior to the interview), towards the costs of the overseas interview scheme. These fees can be paid online by credit or debit card and further information on the procedure will be provided at the appropriate time. There is no fee charged by the University for written admissions assessments, though some testing centres may charge an administration fee.

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