

These notes are intended for applicants from Hong Kong 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 University's *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 Hong Kong Application Centre: hongkong@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.

Applicants wishing to be considered for interview in Hong Kong should indicate this on their COPA, and must submit their completed UCAS application by **15 October 2016** and their completed COPA by **19 October 2016**. Those application dates are firmly restricted to those *who are domiciled, permanently resident or attending schools, or other higher educational institutions within the Special Administrative Region (SAR) of Hong Kong*.

All other overseas applicants seeking interviews in Hong Kong, including Hong Kong residents attending schools outside the SAR, *must apply by the earlier UCAS and COPA application deadlines of 20 September 2016*.

If you are a HK resident at school in the United Kingdom, the deadline for your UCAS application is **15 October 2016**, in line with all other pupils attending UK Schools. Like them, you may be called for interview in Cambridge in the first three weeks of December. As you are applying from within the UK you do not need to submit a COPA.

All other Hong Kong residents, including those attending schools outside the SAR and the UK, *must apply by the earlier UCAS and COPA application deadlines of 20 September 2016*.

If you are applying for a *Prince Philip Scholarship*, you should follow the scholarship application process set out on the Friends of Cambridge University in Hong Kong website (www.cambridge.org.hk/blog/blogs/scholarship.php), and apply for a place at Cambridge in the usual way.

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 form shortly after submitting their UCAS application. More details can be found here: www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/applying/saq

Entrance requirements

We will consider applications from candidates who have studied or are studying towards the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE). Candidates will typically be asked to obtain at least grades 5*, 5*, 5 in three specified elective subjects related to their chosen course at the University of Cambridge. Applicants should normally expect to be set demanding conditions in the other compulsory subjects in the Diploma core, particularly in Mathematics and English.

Alternatively, we will consider applications from candidates who have studied or are studying towards either the International Baccalaureate (IB), A Levels, an equivalent qualification, or hold a Bachelors degree. Offers drawn from more than one examination (hybrid offers) will not normally be made.

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.

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 interviewed overseas for Architecture have been successful in gaining places: serious applicants 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, by work experience or shadowing a lawyer, or 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. Applicants should be aware that Medicine is a six year course at Cambridge and the full cost of an entire six-year medical course of training is rather high (last year these costs came to £52,400 per year – this figure includes overseas tuition fees for 2016-2017 plus averaged College fees and estimated term-time living expenses. Figures for 2017-18 will be made available in July 2016. You should allow for possible increases in subsequent years). Please check here for more information and updated figures: www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses/medicine

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 Hong Kong 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 will not be possible, under any circumstances, to change your choice of Cambridge College/open application once you have submitted your UCAS application and COPA.

If 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 the interview their plans for the intervening period and their reasons for seeking deferred entry.

Finance

There are over 100 students from Hong Kong currently studying in Cambridge of whom over 50% 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.

Hong Kong residents at schools/universities either within or outside the Special Administrative Region who have normally resided in Hong Kong for a continuous period of at least 7 years might consider applying for a *Prince Philip Scholarship*, tenable at all Colleges:

www.cambridge.org.hk/blog/blogs/scholarship.php

Jardine Scholarships (www.jardine-foundation.org/), tenable at four specified Colleges, are open to residents of many East Asian nations including Hong Kong.

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. A team of Cambridge Tutors carry out interviews in Hong Kong **primarily for those resident and at school/university in Hong Kong**, in late November and early December. Those applicants resident, or attending schools/universities in mainland China, including Shenzhen, may be interviewed in Shanghai in late October/early November, under a separate scheme. **N.B. They must apply by the earlier application deadline of 20 September 2016.**

The interviews in Hong Kong will be 30 minutes in duration. They are not primarily concerned with 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.

Hong Kong applicants wishing to be interviewed in Hong Kong should make this clear when submitting their COPA. 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 in Hong Kong will be notified in advance.

If an applicant is selected for a *Prince Philip Scholarship* interview in Hong Kong, the interview for the Scholarship will combine with an admissions interview for a College place. Candidates who do not succeed in obtaining a provisional Prince Philip Scholarship may nevertheless still be successful in obtaining a conditional offer for a college place in Cambridge. Nothing is lost by applying for the Scholarship. A small minority of such applicants may, however, elect to travel to Cambridge for their College admissions interview after a Scholarship interview in Hong Kong.

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.

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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