



# Churchill College MCR Freshers' Guide 2021





Hello Freshers!

Welcome (or for some of you welcome back) to Cambridge! Congratulations on starting your new courses, and on becoming members of Churchill, the best college in Cambridge!

As postgraduate students at Churchill, you are members of the MCR (Middle Common Room) community. The MCR is a diverse, vibrant community run, in part, by the MCR Committee of student volunteers. The MCR Committee represent your views to college, organise social events throughout the year and support you during your time as a Churchill student. We hope your time here is as enjoyable as possible, and we encourage you to get involved with everything on offer.

As postgraduate students, your respective academic departments will be central to your life in Cambridge. Your membership of Churchill, the MCR and the wider community at Churchill is, however, just as important. It is a fantastic opportunity to meet brilliant people from across the world, studying a range of different subjects. Churchill prides itself in being a warm, open and welcoming place and that spirit is shown in the MCR community. We are a friendly bunch and we're very keen to get to know you all. To that end, the MCR Committee have organised a range of events aimed at incoming Freshers for the start of the year. The events range from BBQs to scavenger hunts, and movie nights to a bar crawl to visit neighbouring colleges. Information about these events will be communicated in the form of a term-card.

You have all probably been bombarded with information about Churchill, Cambridge and your departments already. Hopefully this hasn't been too overwhelming! Tutors, college parents, the college nurse, college counsellors and, of course, the MCR Committee are all on-hand to support you during your time here. This guide is designed as student-to-student advice and contains all the information we would have wanted to know when we turned up as Freshers. It includes information on where to buy groceries, a list of Cambridge terminology and advice on how to cycle around Cambridge safely amongst many other things!

I am sure that you will all have an enjoyable and thoroughly unforgettable time at Churchill. I would personally encourage you to make the most of the opportunity you have and get involved as much as possible.

On behalf on the MCR Committee who are all looking forward to meeting you all,

Samuel Turner  
MCR President

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## 1 Essential Information for your First Week

If you only have 10 minutes then this section contains the most important things to know and do in your first week in Cambridge.

### 1.1 Five things every graduate Fresher should know

#### 1.1.1 People to see when you arrive at Churchill

**The Porters:** Residing in the Porters' lodge at the front of college, you need to check in with them upon arrival to get your room key. 'Porters' is the Cambridge term for describing the people in charge of looking after security and issues like that. If you have shipped boxes to Churchill prior to your arrival, they will have them. If you ever have any questions about anything to do with Churchill and you're not sure who to ask, they are usually a good place to go.

**Rebecca Sawalmeh** ([postgrad@chu.cam.ac.uk](mailto:postgrad@chu.cam.ac.uk)): Rebecca is the Postgraduate Student Administrator and you have probably been in contact with her already. She can be found on the right-hand side of the main corridor in College and is an excellent source of knowledge about all things related to Churchill. She is here to help you so please do say hello and introduce yourself, either in person or via email.

#### 1.1.2 Where do I get...?

**A bike:** There are a number of bike shops in town, along Mill Road, Cherry Hinton Road, on Jesus Lane and on Hills Road (Action Bikes). Station cycles (Corn Exchange Street) is a favourite for second hand (sometimes brand new) bikes. Also check out Kingsway cycles, they have reasonably priced second-hand bikes. A decent bike should cost £100-150 with lights, mud guards, etc. A good second-hand bike should cost around £50-£70. Facebook groups, Amazon and Gumtree are also good options to buy bikes online. There is a bike repair service in college called Blazing Saddles as well as in the market in the centre of town. You must register your bike at the Porters' lodge.

**Groceries:** Sainsbury's is probably the most convenient, there are two stores about equidistant from College. The first is opposite Sidney Sussex and to get there walk straight down Bridge Street and keep going, you'll find it on your right. The second is in Eddington which is a larger store and is accessible via a bike route north of College. Other options include the big Tesco and Asda, located on Newmarket road, but this may be a bit far out for an initial venture. There is also an Aldi, Iceland and Co-op along Histon Road. Market square has several fresh fruit and vegetable stalls, selling local produce.

**Things for your room:** Near Grafton Centre, there is a store called Argos which sells pretty much anything you may need at very reasonable prices. They also do home deliveries, [www.argos.com](http://www.argos.com). Just down the street from this you can get some cheap clothes from Primark, which may be particularly useful if you're waiting for your things to arrive from home. For

higher quality items, the Grand Arcade, the Grafton Centre, John Lewis, or Marks & Spencer are some of the other options around Cambridge. Or if you're feeling adventurous, London is 50 minutes away by train.

### 1.1.3 Where to get information on the MCR

Useful information can be found at the MCR website: <http://mcr.chu.cam.ac.uk/>. In addition to the website, important information and updates will be communicated via email. There are two major MCR email lists ([chu-mcr-announce@cam.ac.uk](mailto:chu-mcr-announce@cam.ac.uk) and [chu-mcr-discussion@cam.ac.uk](mailto:chu-mcr-discussion@cam.ac.uk)). You should all have been subscribed to these lists. They are used regularly by the MCR Committee to provide updates, advertise MCR events and generally provide useful information. If you haven't received an email from these lists and are worried that you're not on them, please contact [mcr-president@chu.cam.ac.uk](mailto:mcr-president@chu.cam.ac.uk) or any other MCR committee member.

At the start of each term, a term card will be circulated by email, containing all the planned events for the upcoming term. Please note that the details of the events are liable to change and so subscribing to the MCR calendar (next point) is a good idea. The MCR Calendar can be found here <http://mcr.chu.cam.ac.uk/calendar/> and contains all the MCR events. You can subscribe to the calendar at this link as well. Spouses and partners of Freshers are welcome and encouraged to attend all MCR planned events.

If you have any questions, queries, or concerns, you can contact any MCR committee member. Their email addresses can be found here: <http://mcr.chu.cam.ac.uk/mcr-committee/>. This page also contains anonymous contact forms for you to use if you prefer.

### 1.1.4 How to get a bank account and a mobile phone (relevant for overseas students)

After choosing a bank (Barclay's, Lloyds Bank, NatWest, HSBC, etc.), you'll need a letter from college to confirm your address. You can get this from the postgraduate office. Then you'll need to go to the bank where you'll probably have to make an appointment to return another day to set up an account, so plan ahead. If you're lucky and go before the undergraduates turn up, you may be able to walk in and get an account that day.

For a contract mobile phone, you'll need evidence of an address and bank account. So, after you have your bank account, take a copy of your bank statement with your address on it to your chosen store and you should be able to get a phone. Alternatively, it may be easier to get a pay-as-you-go phone. The Carphone Warehouse, EE, Vodafone, Phones4U and a number of other such stores are all within easy reach of each other near Market Square. Giffgaff is a popular network, sending you a free SIM card allowing you to purchase 'goodybags' which give you monthly texts, minutes and internet on a non-contract basis.

### 1.1.5 How to register with a doctor

All students are entitled to free healthcare through the NHS on the same basis as UK nationals and you must register with a GP (General Practitioner – the name for primary care doctors in the UK) in Cambridge. The closest GP to Churchill is Huntingdon Road Surgery, about a 15-minute walk away. There are several more in town and you are able to register with another if you prefer.

There are two parts of the NHS that do charge fees. These are dentistry (which has some charges although much lower than the equivalent private treatment) and prescription medication. Prescriptions cost £9.35 each (regardless of the medicine). If you require several prescriptions, it may be worth looking at a 'prescription prepayment certificate'. A 3-month certificate costs £30.25 and a 12-month one £108.10. The certificate then entitles you to free prescriptions for its duration.

It is worth noting that the UK's emergency number is 999 from which you can request Police, Fire, Ambulance or Coastguard services. Another important phone number is 111. Dialing 111 will put you through to NHS 111, a 24/7 service for urgent but non-emergency medical issues. NHS 111 can give you advice and book you follow-up appointments if necessary. Please remember that 111 is for non-emergency issues, in an emergency dial 999.

## 1.2 Freshers' Checklist

There are lots of important things you need to do within a week or so of arriving at Churchill. The College website contains a checklist and a lot of important information which you will need to go through as soon as possible. This should have been sent to you by the postgraduate office and can be found here (<https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/study-us/postgraduates/virtual-freshers-pack-postgraduate-students/>).

If coming from overseas it is obviously important to make sure you have everything you need to enter the UK. The requirements will vary and an exhaustive list is far beyond this guide, but a few things that may/will be useful are:

- A valid passport.
- A visa if required.
- An offer letter from Churchill/Cambridge.
- Sufficient cash (or a bank card that doesn't charge fees to use in the UK) to support yourself until you're able to set up a UK bank account.
- Medical documentation to assist when registering for the NHS. This is particularly important if you have an allergy, long-term condition or injury which will be important for the NHS to have a record of.

### 1.3 Packing

Temperatures in Cambridge usually range from 0°C to 25°C. The weather is damp, but not as rainy as other parts of the UK. Instead, it can get rather windy during winter. Pack to this specification, although buying suitable clothes once here may work out cheaper if you have luggage limitations and may also be more appropriate to the weather conditions. There are a lot of formal occasions at Cambridge, and plenty of opportunities to dress up in black tie so bring a suit or an elegant dress along for formal night out. A full-length evening dress may be useful for attending galas or May Balls.

If you're planning to bring books, remember that you will have to carry them. The Cambridge libraries are well stocked for anything academic that you would require, so at best you would want to carry along casual reading. If you're bringing along electrical goods, remember to check its compatibility with the UK 240V 50Hz grid, and whether it will fit into a three pin UK socket. Items like laptops should be equipped with voltage adapters, so you don't need to worry – but it is worth the thought. As for UK plugs, cheap adapters can be purchased once you arrive in case your connections are not compatible. If you're planning to travel to mainland Europe at all, there are different plug adapters that you will need for European countries that are different from the UK. A universal adapter is another option, which may save some money in the long run if you're planning to travel extensively.

In case you find you want to carry more than your luggage allowance on your flight, or more than there is space for in the car, then you may want to consider delivery services like DHL, UPS, or ParcelForce. These can be expensive, however, so make sure to compare shipping costs with the fees you would incur by checking another bag for your flight. Don't forget though that people tend to accumulate things, and so you'll probably end up having to carry a lot more pack with you when your time at Cambridge has come to an end. If you're here on a year-long MPhil, carrying too much may just be a hassle. However, it's worth noting that you'll need to supply your own linen, or else purchase it in town. A duvet and pillow are provided by College, but you need to either bring or buy sheets and duvet covers. Extra blankets for winter can be obtained from the Housekeeping staff. A linen package can be purchased from College or at a shop such as John Lewis, Marks & Spencer, or TK Maxx.

## 2 Around College

### 2.1 Meet your MCR Committee



**Samuel Turner**  
President



**Rebecca Heath**  
General Secretary



**Michaela Taylor-Williams**  
Treasurer



**Elre Oldewage**  
Women's Welfare Officer



**Ivan Harkins**  
Men's Welfare Officer



**Jack Hughes**  
LGBTQ+ Officer



**Audray Harkins**  
Families' Representative



**Osarenkhoe Ogbeide**  
Equality and Diversity  
Officer



**Youzheng Ning**  
Equality and Diversity  
Officer



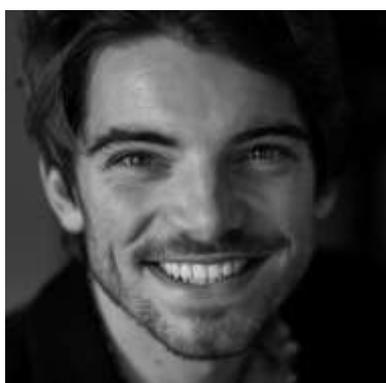
**Samin MoghimiAsl**  
Internal Social Secretary



**Richard Bowen**  
External Social Secretary



**Andrea Ferlini**  
Bar Secretary



**Conor Williams**  
Bar Treasurer



**Éva Bernadett Bényei**  
Academic Officer



**Talay Cheema**  
Environment Officer



**Bethany Catchpole**  
First Year Representative



**James Miller**  
Equipment Officer



**Vimisha Dharamdasani**  
Communications and  
Publicity Officer



**Angela Harper**  
Ale and Quail Officer



**Michael Hunter**  
Ale and Quail Officer

In addition, the roles of Computing Officer and Disability Access Officer are currently vacant.

Contact information for the committee can be found on the committee page of the MCR website (<http://mcr.chu.cam.ac.uk/mcr-committee/>).

The following roles are due for re-election at the start of Michaelmas Term and will be elected at our Termly General Meeting on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> October:

- Academic Officer
- Bar Secretary
- Computing Officer
- Green Officer
- Equipment Officer
- First Year Representative
- Communications and Publicity Officer

If you are interested in running for any of these roles, or the currently vacant Disability Access Officer, please feel free to contact the incumbent or the MCR President for more information.

## 2.2 Accommodation

As a first year, you are guaranteed accommodation at Churchill (unless you've been very late accepting your offer). With the exception of a few outer hostels, all Churchill accommodation is located on the main site and is ideally located for getting involved in college life! The Wolfson Flats have been designed particularly with families and couples in mind. After your first year, the college runs a ballot system to determine who gets rooms – more details will be available nearer the time. While living in college housing, it's a good idea to bookmark this site: <https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/student-hub/resources/maintenance-issue-logging/> which can be used to report issues with carpentry, plumbing, and other such repairs, as well as for necessary housekeeping supplies.

## 2.3 Library

Churchill has two libraries - with the Bevin library aimed more at arts and humanities students, and the Bracken library aimed at the scientists. Both may be accessed any time of the day using your university swipe card, and books are borrowed using a self-service system! Most books can be borrowed, and loans will automatically renew so you don't need to worry about overdue books or fines. If there is something in particular you would like and the library doesn't have it, you can always get in touch with the librarian Annie Gleeson ([librarian@chu.cam.ac.uk](mailto:librarian@chu.cam.ac.uk)), and she may be able to get it for you. The college libraries are primarily designed to cater to undergraduate courses but are by no means limited to this. As a postgraduate you are more likely to need the resources made available at your departmental library or the University library. Nevertheless, the libraries may still prove a useful hideaway when you need some peace and quiet or a place to focus – in the Maisonneuve room of the Bevin library there are a number of rather comfy sofas. In the same building, Churchill also houses the Churchill Archives Centre, with its own dedicated library. For the archivists and among you, this may be an interesting place to nose about.

## 2.4 Dining Hall

Every Cambridge College has a dining hall, but Churchill's is the largest. Going to 'Hall' is synonymous with the Cambridge experience – it is a place to discuss the latest scientific discoveries, debate the rise and fall of the markets or simply sit back with your friends and enjoy a meal. With the hectic schedules of most postgraduates, going to hall tends to fade into the background and many postgraduates like to cook at home. During Freshers' week, it is a fantastic way to get to know others. On a daily basis, there is lunch and dinner, with brunches on Saturdays and Sunday roasts at Sunday lunchtime. There is also a reasonable salad bar. A standard meal will cost around £4.00.

More importantly are the regular formal halls. Formal halls are a chance to get dressed up and have a three-course meal with your friends at a reasonable price. Throughout the year, there will be a number of special occasions that will bring the entire MCR together for a formal, such as Matriculation dinner and Postgraduate Students' dinner. In terms of dress code, most formals are simply lounge suit and tie or equivalent, depending on your preference. Only special events (e.g. feasts and balls) require the more formal 'Black tie' which means dinner jacket (tuxedo) or equivalent. In terms of dining etiquette, the most important things are to wait until the Master or Fellow says grace before sitting, to start with the cutlery on the outside, and to pass the Port to the left. You'll pick up other things along the way, and if you aren't sure what to do, don't worry.

Traditionally it is a Cambridge custom to wear gowns at all formal occasions. This is not the case at Churchill, where gowns are only worn for the extremely formal events. Nevertheless, gowns are an integral part of Cambridge culture, and you're bound to encounter them at some point. The nature of the gown represents your level in the academic hierarchy. As undergraduates, each college has a distinct variation on the standard Cambridge

undergraduate gown. As postgraduates, your gown is uniform across the University, but has marks to distinguish your last degree, as well as to identify those who had been Cambridge undergraduates. There are gowns in the MCR cupboard for you to sign out and borrow, in case you need one to go to another college's formal.

## 2.5 The Buttery

The Buttery is the name for the main bar on the ground floor below the dining hall. The buttery is open every day during term and on a more limited basis during the undergraduate vacations. In addition to drinks, it serves a variety of snacks, and is also a great place for a cheap and quick bite to eat if you're in the mood for pizzas, ready meals or sandwiches.

## 2.6 The MCR

As well as being the name of the graduate student body, "The MCR" is often used to refer to the MCR's common room. Officially called the Sandy Ashmore Room, it can be found near the dining hall if you turn left at the top of the main staircase and then enter the right-hand door of two at the end of the short corridor. You'll enter a smaller first room from which there's a second door which leads to the main social space. This second door will require you to use your student card to open. As members of the MCR, your card should give you access automatically. If it doesn't contact the Porter's in the first instance to get it sorted.

The main social space contains The Vicious Penguin. The Vicious Penguin is the name of the MCR's own student-run bar and is usually referred to simply as the MCR bar! Serving cheap drinks most evenings, it is a good excuse to relax in the MCR after a hard day's work. The bar has been closed since the start of the pandemic but is due to reopen this term. During Freshers' week, the bar will run a number of training sessions for those of you who may want to help run it.

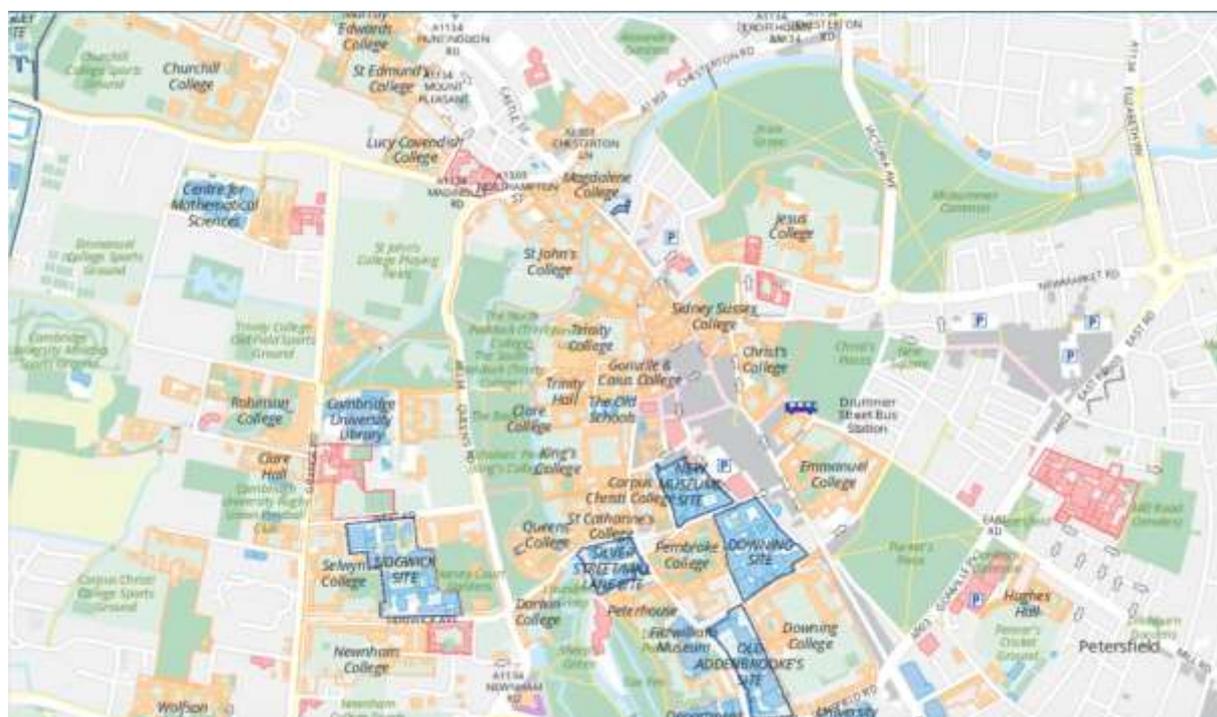
## 2.7 Sport

One of the joys of the Cambridge college system is that no matter how good you are at a sport, if you enjoy it and/or would like to give it a go, you can without any pressure of expectation. Churchill is particularly lucky to have some of the best sports facilities in all of Cambridge, all on-site. Although run mainly by the JCR (the student body for undergraduates), MCR members can and do get involved with most college sports. In general, the "first" level teams are reasonably serious, but beyond that everything goes. And if you want something really serious, you can always try out for university teams. Or you could take up rowing...as this is Cambridge, no matter what level you row at, you're likely to be pushed to the limit! As chance would have it, there are also a number of MCR specific teams. The MCR football team and cricket team are always on the lookout for people interested in getting involved. There will be a joint MCR/JCR sports and societies squash at the start of term which will give you an opportunity to sign up for anything that catches your fancy.

Lastly, Churchill also has a small gym for use by college members. You will need to attend an induction session in order to gain card access to the gym, and a series of these sessions will be organised during the first two or three weeks of the Michaelmas Term. An email will be sent out allowing for you to sign up for these sessions! If you miss the start of term you can arrange for a private induction by contacting the gym president or a trained inductor.

### 3 Where to find things in Cambridge

Cambridge is a relatively small city where most things are easily within reach by walking or cycling. Churchill is located on the outskirts of the city centre, about a 20-minute walk from Market square. The benefit of this is that we have beautiful open spaces and no worries about tourists disturbing our lives. The downside is the need to carry your heavy shopping bags home from Sainsbury's but for the most part you should be fine. During the week, there is the Universal bus that runs every 15 mins and every 20 mins on Saturdays (<http://www.environment.admin.cam.ac.uk/what-are-we-doing/travel/catch-bus>). It runs from the West Cambridge site, to a stop just outside Churchill on Maddingley Road and takes you to the Addenbrooke's Hospital Bus station via the University Library, Fitzwilliam museum and Cambridge Railway Station. It can be handy on a rainy day, and it only costs £1 if you display your university card to the driver when you get on. A very useful map of the university can be found at: [www.cam.ac.uk/map](http://www.cam.ac.uk/map) (screenshot below).



#### 3.1 Arriving in Cambridge

If you are arriving by train, the train station is located on the other side of the city centre from Churchill. At any time of day there is a taxi queue just outside the station, and you can get a lift to Churchill for around £9.

If you are arriving by coach, the main bus station in Cambridge is located on Drummer Street in the centre of town, but larger coaches, such as National Express, stop outside Parker's Piece, a few minutes' walk from Drummer Street. Consequently, particularly if you're arriving at an odd time of day or night, there may be no taxis around, and if you're arriving in Cambridge for the first time you probably don't want to lug your suitcases all the way across town to get to Churchill. Some numbers

that you will find useful for such an eventuality and probably thereafter during your time at Cambridge:

- Panther Taxis: +44 (0)1223 715 715
- Camcab: +44 (0)1223 704 704

Note: When calling from international phones, use the +44 UK country code and omit the 0. Otherwise, if calling from UK phones, keep the 0 and omit the +44.

If you arrive in Cambridge late at night, there is a vending machine near the Churchill Buttery, by the lift in the main concourse. The Buttery is open until 11 pm during term time and will have drinks, snacks and light meals available. Sainsburys on Sidney Street in the city centre opens until 11:30 pm on weekdays and Saturdays but shuts at 5 pm on Sundays. Just Eat and Deliveroo are great websites on which you can order from local takeaways. Domino's Pizza (01223 355155) do pizza deliveries until 5 am, Esso Service Station on Histon Road is also open 24/7 and sells sweets, crisps and everything you'd expect to be sold at a service station.

### 3.2 Nurseries and Schools

For those of you with little kids who need looking after when you're in the lab or at work, nurseries are a top priority. Providing information on all of the options is beyond the scope of this guide but the university has a Childcare Office (<https://www.childcare.admin.cam.ac.uk>) which should be able to provide you with all the information you need. If you would like to contact someone about this, Sarah Andrew is the Childcare Information Officer ([sarah.andrew@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.andrew@admin.cam.ac.uk)) and should be able to help on this front.

With regards to schools, Cambridge has many excellent state (funded by the government) and private (fee-paying) schools. It is possible that those of you with families will be arriving much earlier than 'Freshers' Week'. If this is you, then don't hesitate to contact the Families' rep ([mcr-families@chu.cam.ac.uk](mailto:mcr-families@chu.cam.ac.uk)) who will be around to help you and your family settle in to your new home and meet your neighbours. It is very likely that your new neighbours will have dealt with many of the same questions you are asking now and will be an excellent source of information and advice.

### 3.3 Shopping

There are many options for buying groceries around Cambridge. There are two Sainsbury's about equidistant from College. One of them is in town, opposite Sidney Sussex and is the main supermarket in the city centre. The second is in Eddington which is a larger store and is accessible via a bike route north of College. Marks & Spencer is located in Market Square and is another good place for food and other groceries, but may put undue strains on your budget with their higher prices. If you are looking for more exotic foods, spices, etc., you'll need to venture up to Mill Road.

If you're looking for a bigger selection there are several Tescos on the outskirts of Cambridge, the largest being on Newmarket Road. There is also a large ASDA just off Newmarket Road on Coldham's Lane. There is also a small Waitrose on Fitzroy Street near the Grafton Centre. Alternatively, you could order online, and typically for Tesco's and other stores there is a 1 or 2-hour delivery window, which can be very handy. Nearer to Churchill, on the other side of Murray Edwards is a little corner shop – Midan, Histon Road. This is good for little emergencies, and if you're into your Indian cooking, this is the place to stock up on spices. If you turn up Histon road a little bit of a walk will get you to Aldi, Iceland and a Co-op.

When you arrive in Cambridge, you're probably going to lack a number of essentials, such as dishes, utensils, etc., simply because you were prudent not to fill up your bags unnecessarily. There are two main shopping centres in town, the Grand Arcade and the Grafton Centre. Here you should be able to find anything and everything that you might need. If you're living in shared accommodation, it might be worth having a chat with your new housemates and seeing if you can share some items. It becomes quite clear that not everyone in a house needs their own frying pan when you're trying to fit everything into the cupboards!

If you're looking to decorate your room, the Guildhall holds a random poster sale at the start of every Michaelmas term (during Freshers' week usually) where you can find something to suit most tastes. Stationery and books WH Smith, just off Market square, or Ryman's, a few metres down the street from Sainsbury's are good places to shop, and the latter even offers a student discount when you present your student ID and sign up for a free student membership card. The Porters Lodge at Churchill College also stock some stationery. In terms of bookshops, Cambridge is simply littered with them. The true treasures are the little out of the way hidden ones where you can spend some time nosing around dust lined book shelves. A more likely stop for most of you however will be Heffers (Trinity Street) or Waterstones (Market Street). The Cambridge University Press has a bookshop just opposite Senate Passage (near Gonville and Caius College and the Senate House) where you, as a Cambridge student, can get a 20% discount on any purchases.

When it comes to pharmacies and opticians, there is a very large Boots on Sidney Street that sells most healthcare items in addition to pharmaceutical goods. Superdrug, also on Sidney street, is possibly a better option if you are on the lookout for specific medications. Clamp Opticians, on St. Andrew's Street, or Boots are good places to go in the event you need glasses or your eyes checked. There is also a Rowlands pharmacy on Histon Road near Aldi, Co-op, and Iceland.

As a quick note, for many of the stores mentioned in various sectors (grocery, pharmacy, etc.), you may find it worthwhile to sign up for a membership card, such as a Nectar Card for Sainsbury's, a Tesco Clubcard, or a Boots Card. These allow you to accrue points with each purchase, that you can then redeem in the form of in-store vouchers (or even convert your

points into vouchers at other venues, such as the Tesco Clubcard point conversion into restaurant vouchers). Most stores will allow you to sign up for a membership card in the store, and there may be options online as well.

### 3.4 Religious Institutions

The Chapel at Churchill College may be found at the top of the fields and is open for general prayer. Unlike some of the older colleges, the Chapel does not play a significant part in the life of Churchill College because it was founded as a secular institution. However, there is a Christian service every Sunday at 5.45pm.

Cambridge is also replete with churches of all sorts of denominations, although predominantly Church of England. A church frequented by most Anglican students, particularly by members of the Christian Union, is St. Andrew's the Great (on St. Andrew's Street). The University Church, Great St. Mary's, serves a more symbolic purpose. Although it does run regular Anglican services, its main use is for special University religious services. The Catholic Chaplaincy (Fisher House) is located off Market Square on Guildhall Street. The Cambridge Jewish Centre may be found off Bridge Street, along Thompsons Lane. There is also a new Central Cambridge Mosque on 309-313 Mill Rd.

### 3.5 Movies and Theatre

The Vue Cinema, in the Grafton Centre, and Cineworld, on Clifton Road in the Cambridge Leisure centre, show all the big releases. The latter is a little far out, but if you have a bike and want a relaxed evening out including a movie, there are a number of restaurants in the area, and a bowling alley and an arcade on the ground floor. The Arts Picturehouse, on St. Andrew's street, is an independent cinema that plays more artsy films and local talents – and has a great bar!

Cambridge has a thriving amateur theatre community, as well as being a place that attracts a number of professional stars. The ADC and the Cambridge Arts Theatre are wonderful places to spend an enjoyable evening, as is the Corn Exchange.

## 4 Other useful information

### 4.1 Student Welfare

The MCR is a community consisting of friendly members who support each other. Whether you need some advice, an ear to listen to your problems, or someone to give you a helping hand, feel free to get in touch with any of your fellow MCR members. The welfare officers in particular are here to help, and they can put you in touch with professional welfare services if necessary. All communication between you and the welfare officers is strictly confidential. The officers can supply you with free condoms, pregnancy tests, and personal attack alarms on request – they will be in contact at the start of the year to detail what they can do, but you are always free to get in touch directly as follows:

- Women's Welfare Officer: Elre Oldewage, [mcr-womenswelfare@chu.cam.ac.uk](mailto:mcr-womenswelfare@chu.cam.ac.uk)
- Men's Welfare Officer: Ivan Harkins, [mcr-menswelfare@chu.cam.ac.uk](mailto:mcr-menswelfare@chu.cam.ac.uk)
- LGBTQ+ Officer: Jack Hughes, [mcr-lgbt@chu.cam.ac.uk](mailto:mcr-lgbt@chu.cam.ac.uk)
- Families' Representatives: Audray Harkins, [mcr-families@chu.cam.ac.uk](mailto:mcr-families@chu.cam.ac.uk)

You can contact the welfare officers anonymously via links at the bottom of the MCR Committee page (<http://mcr.chu.cam.ac.uk/mcr-committee/>).

The Churchill College nurse ([nurse@chu.cam.ac.uk](mailto:nurse@chu.cam.ac.uk); 01223 336133) and Churchill counsellor ([counsellor@chu.cam.ac.uk](mailto:counsellor@chu.cam.ac.uk); 01223 313515) are other people you can contact for help on welfare issues.

The University Counselling Service (<http://mcr.chu.cam.ac.uk/mcr-committee/>) is also an excellent resource. They offer free professional counselling to all students, alongside a myriad of information, self-help guides and group workshops.

### 4.2 The Academic Year

While this isn't particularly relevant to most postgraduate students as most courses don't operate on the same cycle as undergraduates, it is handy to point out the structure of the Cambridge academic year. There are three 8-week terms known as Michaelmas, Lent, and Easter. The term dates may be found at: <https://www.cam.ac.uk/about-the-university/term-dates-and-calendars>. All undergraduate lectures, with a small number of exceptions, take place only during these periods, known as Full Term.

By university statutes you are required to remain within a certain radius from Great St. Mary's (the University Church) for the duration of Full Term, unless special dispensation has been made. This is known as 'keeping residence'.

The week after the last week of Full Term in Easter term is known as 'May Week', despite it being held in June. This is the week of frivolity and festivity when most Cambridge balls are

held to celebrate the end of the year. Churchill does not host its own May Ball but holds a smaller Spring Ball in February every other year.

#### 4.3 Post – Pigeon Holes

Your address while at Churchill is simply:

Your name, Churchill College, Cambridge, UK, CB3 0DS.

All post gets delivered to your little hole in the wall letter box known as your 'pigeon hole' – these are located either in the mail room, or in the Porters' lodge, depending on your surname. The pigeon hole name tags are also colour coded, with all postgraduates demarcated by white tags so that they are easier to spot. If your post is too big to fit into the pigeon hole, the porters will put a note in its place to ask you to pick it up. You can post normal mail at the Porters' Lodge instead of walking to a Post Office in town.

#### 4.4 Cycling in Cambridge

A new city always brings a whole new set of rules. For a place like Cambridge where cycling is second nature, it is surprisingly not very cycle friendly, with numerous tourists doing their very best to walk right into you as you cycle around town. To assist with the flow of students, residents and everyone else who decides to visit, Cambridge has a strict (ish, given that you always find ignorant people cycling the wrong way) one way and no cycling policy along certain streets in the historic city centre. Try and keep to this because if you're caught, and the officer isn't very kind, you can be fined a rather hefty sum. The same goes for lights which are required during hours of darkness and can also lead to fines if you're cycling without them.

For those of you coming from abroad, we drive on the left-hand side of the road here. Cycles are expected to follow the flow of traffic and the normal rules of the road, so please be careful not to end up cycling on the wrong side. Given the number of cyclists in town, it is somewhat unsurprising that there are also significant numbers of reported cycle theft. As a precautionary measure, and also to keep track of who has a bike in college, all students are required to register their bike with the porters when they first buy/arrive with a bike. If you have a more expensive one, it may be worth considering registering yourself with a service like Immobilise just in case - <http://www.immobilise.com/index.php>

In addition to registering your bike with the Churchill Porters, a useful note is that you can also request more information from the Porters about secure bike storage. Churchill has several secure bike sheds for students, one with a PIN access code and the other with lock and key access. The Porters can help supply the code and get you set up with the lock and key system, if you so wish. For some more helpful advice about cycling and other transportation-related concerns in Cambridge and throughout the UK, please see the Transportation FAQ section!

#### 4.5 Accommodation around Cambridge for Visiting Families

If you have any guests staying overnight in College, you should let the porters know how many guests you are having over as well as the date they anticipate leaving. If you are in a single occupancy College room (i.e. every College room apart from the Wolfson flats), children are not allowed to stay overnight. We understand this is quite difficult as accommodation around Cambridge is quite expensive, so we have compiled a list of some more affordable hotels/B&Bs in Cambridge:

- Arundel House Hotel
- Premier Inn Cambridge (A14, J32) Hotel
- Travelodge Newmarket Road Cambridge
- Stationroomz
- Holiday Inn Express Cambridge
- Hamilton Lodge
- Travelodge Cambridge Central Hotel

Also check out:

- University Rooms lists available rooms in the Colleges (generally available out of termtime) (<http://www.universityrooms.com/en/city/cambridge/home>)
- The University Accommodation Service which has a section on short visits (<http://www.accommodation.cam.ac.uk/VisitingCambridge/>)
- Airbnb (<https://www.airbnb.co.uk/s/Cambridge--United-Kingdom>)

#### 4.6 Trips and Travelling

After some time in Cambridge, sooner or later, you may find you need a break from “The Bubble”. If your mood levels have dropped significantly and amid all the work you realize that the only places you visit every single day do not go beyond your room, the library, college hall and MCR Bar (if you are lucky), then it is time to leave this place – even for just a few hours. Here are some inspiring places around Cambridge you can easily visit by foot or on your bike if you need a retreat (London is a chapter on its own).

##### **Ely**

10 mins by train (or ca. 1.5 hours on a bike) from Cambridge lies one of Britain’s most impressive cathedrals. Also check out Oliver Cromwell House and the river, where the University rowing crews train every day.

##### **Wimpole Estate**

Easily reached within an hour on your bike. Nice British countryside architecture with a huge park full of grazing sheep. Feed pigs and cows on their estate farm for a truly rural experience.

##### **Wandlebury Country Park**

Originally a large Iron Age Hillfort – today a natural reserve great for picnics, geocaching or just chilling. Just south of Addenbrooke's and can be easily cycled to. Don't miss the great view of Cambridge and the old Roman road.

### **Grantchester**

A stereotypical escape for the tired Cambridge student. Explore the meadows and enjoy some afternoon tea in the famous Orchard like Virginia Woolf or Bertrand Russell did before you. Takes one hour of slow strolling to reach.

### **Coton**

A small village just 30 min on foot from Churchill. Walk past West Cambridge and cross the motorway bridge to explore this small place with a nice church, pub and grazing llamas. Good for refreshing your brain.

### **Castle Rising, Sandringham & Hunstanton**

Makes a great weekend trip. Catch a train to King's Lynn and then go on with the Coasthopper bus to explore a 12th century castle, Her Majesty's Norfolk estate and gardens, and a nice seaside town called Hunstanton (lighthouse, seal safari, beach).

If you feel like leaving the country altogether this is a great place to be! London's airports (especially Stansted, Gatwick and Luton) offer a wide range of extremely cheap flights all over Europe, and beyond. You can get flights as cheap as £30! Check out some of these low-cost airlines:

[www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com)

[www.wizzair.com](http://www.wizzair.com)

[www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com)

[www.monarch.co.uk](http://www.monarch.co.uk)

Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam are just a few hours away by the Eurostar trains:

[www.eurostar.com](http://www.eurostar.com)

## 4.7 Transportation FAQ

**Q1: I'm flying into Heathrow airport and need to know how to get to Cambridge. What's the best way to do this?**

A1: There are a few ways to get to Cambridge, and how much luggage you have will likely determine the best approach. If you're travelling with several pieces of heavy luggage (which is likely if you're coming from far away), it's probably best to take a National Express Coach from Heathrow to Cambridge. You may save some money if you buy your ticket online in advance (see Useful Links), or else you can buy the ticket at the Central Bus Station, which is attached to Heathrow Airport. If you choose to buy your bus ticket on the same day as your

flight, it would be a good option to consider purchasing a Coachcard as well, which can then be applied to your ticket purchase and all future purchases. See Q3 and corresponding answer for more information on the Coachcard. A useful note is that Heathrow has free trolleys to use for your luggage, pick them up when you retrieve your luggage and they will certainly be useful for the long walk from your terminal to the Central Bus Station.

If you are not overloaded with heavy luggage, you may also consider taking the Piccadilly Line of the London Underground Tube all the way to King's Cross station in London, from which you'll need to take another train to Cambridge. Although this may work out to be quicker and possibly a bit cheaper than the coach, it may be inconvenient with a lot of luggage, and very difficult to do when you need to transfer from the tube to the King's Cross train station and its many stairs. It can be done, though, and worth considering with fewer bags.

Whether you arrive by train or by coach, you will need to take a taxi from either Parker's Piece (if arriving by coach) or the Cambridge Rail Station. As mentioned earlier, there is typically a taxi queue at the rail station, so you can find a driver willing to take you to Churchill College. As a note for international students, it is not customary to tip the taxi drivers, though they may be appreciative if you do.

**Q2: What is the best way to get around Cambridge?**

A2: As you might have guessed from the previous section on cycling, the majority of students in Cambridge view having a bike as being essential for getting around Cambridge quickly and easily. Having said that, lots of students don't have a bike and get by just fine by walking. The bus network can be helpful as well, particularly for longer journeys such as to Addenbrooke's hospital. More information on buses in Cambridge (including links to timetables) can be found here: <https://www.environment.admin.cam.ac.uk/travel/travel-bus>.

**Q3: There are a lot of "cards" out there for travel. What's the difference between the types of "cards"?**

A3: There are four types of cards that it's helpful to be aware of: railcards, coachcards, Oyster cards and travelcards:

- Railcards (such as the young person's 16-25 railcard: <http://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/>) provide a 33% discount on rail tickets in the UK. Even if you are older than age 25, you can still qualify for a 16-25 railcard as a full-time student although you will need to provide proof of your student status when applying. You can either purchase the railcard (£30 for one year, £70 for three years) online or from a station ticket office. For international students, people have previously reported issues with the online form as it didn't accept international passports as proof of ID and it may be that you have to take a trip to Cambridge station. The website contains much more

information but, if you do apply in person, make sure you've filled in the form already and bring a passport style photo with you.

- Coachcards are essentially the National Express (one of the large coach companies) equivalent of the railcard. As full-time students you're eligible for the Young Persons Coachcard regardless of your age. More information can be found here (<https://www.nationalexpress.com/en/offers/coachcards/young-person>). The coachcard costs £12.50 for one year or £30 for three and gives you 33% off all fares.
- Oyster cards and travelcards are both relevant for using the underground (referred to as "The Tube"), buses and some trains in London. A travelcard provides unlimited travel for a day or a week while an Oyster card is a pre-payment card that you swipe when entering and leaving a station (or getting on a bus). The Oyster card includes a daily cap which is usually lower than the cost of a daily travelcard (but not the weekly one). While this gets complicated quickly, most people don't worry about this anymore. Instead of getting an Oyster card, you can use a standard contactless bank card (or Apple or Google Pay) in exactly the same way as an Oyster card. Provided you use the same card for all journeys, the same daily cap as for the Oyster card will apply. If you want more information on this, check out this independent guide ([https://www.londontoolkit.com/briefing/travelcard\\_oyster.htm](https://www.londontoolkit.com/briefing/travelcard_oyster.htm)).

#### 4.8 Cambridgisms

- **Bedder:** This term varies from one college to the next but essentially refers to the people responsible for cleaning rooms and college staircases/houses (the places where students live).
- **Blue:** The Cambridge colour is light blue. 'Blue' is the term to describe sports undertaken at university level, and people who have taken part in a 'Varsity' match (a game against Oxford) for events deemed to be at 'blue' level are awarded the title of a 'blue'.
- **Boatie:** The most famous and arguably important sport in Cambridge is rowing. A person partaking in the sport is known colloquially as a boatie.
- **Bop:** A dance party, usually featuring drinks, loud music, & fancy dress (costumes).
- **Bumps:** Bumps are the most important rowing races that occur within the University. These take place at the end of every Lent and Easter term between college teams. The name of the event derives from the fact that goal of the race to bump the boat ahead of you in the starting line-up.
- **Cuppers:** Every year, the college teams compete against each other in a range of sporting events. Each competition at this level is known as 'Cuppers'.
- **Dean:** In general Cambridge terminology, the Dean may either be the person responsible for College discipline or the person responsible for the college Chapel. At Churchill the Dean is the academic responsible for enforcing discipline within the college.

- **Director of Studies (DoS):** This is the college academic responsible for the overall academic welfare of a student. This exists in an undergraduate capacity, but is mostly irrelevant for postgraduates, unless you want to get involved with undergraduate supervisions, in which case these are the people to talk to.
- **Fancy dress:** Means to wear a costume according to a theme (as opposed to dressing up for a formal event)
- **Fellow:** A senior member of a College, elected to a particular position of authority and responsibility in relation to the academic work and government of the College.
- **JCR (Junior Combination Room):** The JCR refers to the undergraduate student common room and undergraduate student body at a college.
- **Matriculation:** This is the ceremony during which all new students enrol in college by signing a register confirming that they will conform with University regulations.
- **Mathmo:** The colloquial term used to describe a maths student.
- **MCR (Middle Combination Room):** The postgraduate student body (and common room) of a college. You are members of the Churchill MCR.
- **Mentor:** A College Mentor is an academic at college in a vaguely similar field to your own, who will be assigned to you as a contact during your time as a Postgraduate at Churchill. They do not serve any academic purposes but give you an opportunity to mix with the College fellowship and expand your academic horizons.
- **NatSci:** Historically there was never any distinction between the study of worldly phenomenon, largely classed as the Natural Sciences. The modern system of classification gives us a diversity of subjects such as Physics, Chemistry, Materials Science, Biology, etc. At Cambridge, however, as an undergraduate you embark on the Natural Sciences Tripos, from where you may then specialize in the field of your choice. People working/studying in any of these fields are consequently referred to as NatScis. Computer scientists are similarly referred to as CompScis.
- **P'lodge:** Shortened nickname for the Porters' Lodge, which is the place where the Porters operate from in a College.
- **Porters:** The people responsible for College security and related issues.
- **Proctors:** Two officials who are elected annually by the Senate house upon nomination by the Colleges. They are representatives of the Senate house in most formal and disciplinary matter across the University.
- **Regent House:** This is the governing and legislative body of the University comprised of all the academic and administrative officers of the University and Colleges. The physical entity is the Senate house at the Centre of Cambridge.
- **Scarlet days:** Days of special importance to the University, or nationally, during which Doctors are required to wear their scarlet gowns in public.
- **SCR (Senior Combination Room):** The room, and body of members, for the Fellows of a College.

- **Supervision:** A small group (usually 1-3 people) teaching environment undertaken as part of undergraduate courses to help consolidate the normal lecture course.
- **Supervisor:** In an undergraduate sense, the person responsible for teaching undergraduates either individually or on a small group basis. In a postgraduate sense, the person in charge of guiding your research.
- **Swap:** Formal hall swaps are arranged with the MCRs of other colleges such that students can dine with people from other colleges. They are a good way to meet new people, try new food and dance the night away at a party afterwards.
- **Tripes:** The Cambridge Tripes system refers to the undergraduate system of study wherein you begin on a very general course of study, before becoming more and more specialised as you narrow down on what you want to do with your life. This structure consists of a Part 1 (usually 2 years, but possibly 1) followed by a more specialised Part 2 (normally 1 year, but sometimes 2). This total of three years equals the Tripes. In reality, for a number of subjects the undergrad degree continues a further year, concluding with Masters level knowledge of the subject most usually referred to as Part 3 (except if you're an engineer where it is Part 2B). The more colourful etymology suggests that it stems from the fact that students once had to take oral exams sitting on a three legged stool, and legend has it that for each Part passed the students were awarded a leg of the stool until they received the full stool at graduation.
- **Tutor:** A college officer responsible for the welfare and guidance of students. With respect to MCR members at Churchill, they are referred to as Postgraduate Tutors. You will be assigned a Tutor by College and they are a good first port of call if you want someone to talk to about any issues.
- **Vice-Chancellor:** The Vice-Chancellor is the principal academic and administrative officer of the University. Our current Vice-Chancellor is Prof. Stephen Toope.

#### 4.9 Useful Links

##### University Links:

- The university website: [www.cam.ac.uk](http://www.cam.ac.uk)
- Graduate Union website: [www.cambridgesu.co.uk](http://www.cambridgesu.co.uk)

##### Churchill Links

- The college website: [www.chu.cam.ac.uk](http://www.chu.cam.ac.uk)
- MCR website: [mcr.chu.cam.ac.uk](http://mcr.chu.cam.ac.uk)
- University sports and societies website: [www.societies.cam.ac.uk](http://www.societies.cam.ac.uk)
- Formal Hall booking link: [www.chu.cam.ac.uk/internal/catering/hallbooking/](http://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/internal/catering/hallbooking/)
- Maintenance and housekeeping requests: <https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/student-hub/resources/maintenance-issue-logging/>

##### Transportation Links

- Cycling in Cambridge: <http://www.camcycle.org.uk/resources/citycentre/>
- National Rail services – info about train times, fares, etc: [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)
- National Express coaches: [www.nationalexpress.com/](http://www.nationalexpress.com/)

- Transport for London site – info about the underground, buses, etc:  
<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/>
- The Trainline rail site (<http://www.thetrainline.com/>)

Note that the Trainline is just another train searching site but allows slightly more flexibility when selecting tickets.

Also note for using the Journey Planner tools with the National Express, National Rail, and First Capital Connect sites: Remember to check “I have a Coachcard” if you have one. (And similarly for searching for tickets on the National Rail or Trainline pages, indicate that you have a 16-25 railcard) You will also need to carry your Coachcard and railcard with you at all times when you’re using that mode of transportation (bus or train, respectively); otherwise, you will be fined!

In closing, welcome to Churchill College! We’re friendly people who want to get to know you, so do all you can during Freshers’ Week and stop by the MCR whenever you need a break. The committee is always willing to answer questions and help you navigate this new place, so say “Hi” and introduce yourself. The experiences you’ll have here will be unforgettable and we are looking forward to meeting you!