

STUDENT SUPPORT EXPLAINED

The situation students face today

Student funding has changed dramatically. Until 1998 and the introduction of fees, many students received a Cambridge education for free. The central government covered the cost of tuition fees and local authorities provided grants for living costs.

October 2012 saw the first students pay tuition fees of £9,000 and students starting from October 2017 are paying fees of £9,250 each year. Therefore many students have to take out loans to cover the cost of their education. It is not unusual for undergraduates to leave University with debts of around £50,000.

The increased fees do not mean more income for the College – the fees merely replace the government funding that has been cut. The University and the College still subsidise the cost of educating every student: the College will typically subsidise the cost of the cost of educating each undergraduate by £5,000 each year. This educational deficit totalled £3.8 million in 2017-18.

UNDERGRADUATES

Tuition fees and student loans

No UK student has to pay their University tuition fee up front. Students from the UK can take out a government student loan from Student Finance for the full amount of their tuition fee and defer payment until they are earning over a minimum salary of £27,295 in England and Wales, £25,000 in Scotland, and £19,895 in Northern Ireland. Graduates pay back 9% of any income over the repayment threshold each year. Interest starts being added to students' loans as soon as they receive their first payment.

The cost of tuition fees for overseas students ranges from £23,340 to £60,942 depending on the subject. International students are required to pay the University tuition fee up front.

College fees are paid by the government unless the student is from overseas or undertaking their second degree; in these circumstances the student would have to pay a fee of £10,200.

Maintenance Grants and Loans from the Government

Students from Wales and Northern Ireland are able to apply for a mixture of a loan and a grant to help with living costs, whereas students from England and Scotland can only apply for maintenance loans. Students from England are able to apply for a maintenance loan of up to £9,706 (the maximum amount of a maintenance loan is different for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales). To be eligible for a maintenance loan the student must be a full-time UK student and less than 60 years old. As with tuition fee loans, the maintenance loan is dependent on household income and repayable after graduation; students from England would repay 9% of earnings over £27,295.

The Cambridge Bursary

All Colleges contribute to the Cambridge Bursary Scheme which can help support students in need across the University with their living costs. Full time undergraduate students with Home Fees status and a residual household income of £62,215 or less are likely to be eligible for a bursary of up to £3,500, potentially for the duration of their course.

Students who are classed as independent by their regional funding body may be eligible for an enhanced award of up to £5,600.

Students in receipt of a Cambridge Bursary who have also been eligible for free school meals will receive the Education Premium, which is an additional non-repayable bursary of £1,000 per year.

The Cambridge Bursary is not a loan and does not need to be repaid. In order to be eligible for the Cambridge Bursary all UK students must apply for financial assistance through the relevant student finance body (Student Finance England, Student Awards Agency for Scotland, Student Finance Wales or Student Finance Northern Ireland), depending on where they live, and undergo a household income assessment. This assessment can happen at any point during the academic year.

There is no separate application for the Cambridge Bursary; they are awarded automatically by the Student Loans Company based on the household income figure provided by the relevant student finance body. The Bursary is paid into a student's bank account each term by the Student Loans Company once the College's Tutorial Office have verified that the student has matriculated and is still resident.

Continuing EU students who started their course before 31 December 2020 will continue to be eligible for a Cambridge Bursary for the duration of their course. EU students beginning a course after 31 December 2020 may be eligible for a Cambridge Bursary if they have settled or pre-settled status in the UK and are eligible for support from Student Finance England (or regional equivalent).

Awards are adjusted for individual residual household income levels, but indicative awards are:

Household income	Enhanced Cambridge Bursary
£25,000 or under	£3,500
£30,000	£3,043
£35,000	£2,586
£40,000	£2,129
£45,000	£1,672
£50,000	£1,215
£55,000	£759
£60,000	£302
£62,215	£100

The University contributes to half the cost of the Bursary that is awarded to a student and the College contributes the other half. Recipients receive a letter from the College's Tutorial Office explaining that they have been awarded a Bursary.

Further information is available online: www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/cambridgebursary

College Bursary

Trinity Hall undergraduates facing unexpected financial hardship are able to apply for a College Bursary each term. Each application has a supporting comment from their Tutor. A small committee of Fellows (including the Senior Tutor and Development Director), together with the JCR Welfare or Class Act Officer if the student requests it, makes the decision on how much should be awarded to whom.

An example of the situation an undergraduate could face:

UK resident (from England), full time, starting a course in October 2022, household income of £45,000

Annual income	
<i>Tuition Fee loan</i>	£9,250
<i>Cambridge Bursary</i>	£1,672
<i>Government maintenance loan</i>	<u>£6,929</u>
TOTAL	£17,851
Annual expenses	
<i>Living costs</i>	£10,170
<i>Tuition Fee</i>	<u>£9,250</u>
TOTAL	£19,420
Shortfall	£1,569
Annual accumulated debt (maintenance loan + tuition fee loan)	£16,179
Total debt over three-year course (not including interest)	£48,537
Total debt over four-year course (not including interest)	£64,716

POSTGRADUATES

Government funding for postgraduate courses has dramatically reduced and the financial obstacles facing those who wish to study for a postgraduate degree have never been higher. The cost of postgraduate courses varies depending on the exact course and the residency status of the student. Full details can be found on www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/finance/fees

Example for a full-time PhD student in the sciences, starting in October 2022, with no dependents:

	UK/EU student	Overseas student
University Composition Fee per annum (combines University and College fee)	£9,111	£33,972
Living costs per annum	£15,250	£15,600
Total cost per annum	£24,361	£49,572
Total cost for three years	£73,083	£148,716

The University Composition Fee is collected by the College for postgraduates via their bill and covers the teaching, supervision, student support and facilities they have access to in the University and College. The University requires all applicants to complete a financial undertaking form confirming that they are able to cover their fees and maintenance costs before they begin their course.

Depending on their nationality and residency status, postgraduate students are able to apply for Government loans of up to £11,570 for a Master's course or £27,265 for a Doctoral course, to assist with their course fees and maintenance. These loans are not means tested, they are paid directly to the student and have to be repaid. However the loans only cover around 48% of the cost of a Master's course and 37% for a Doctoral course, leaving postgraduate students with a large deficit to cover from other funding sources.

Income from studentships is therefore key for postgraduate students to meet their expenses. Studentships are awarded to postgraduates based upon academic merit.