NIH Cambridge Health Science Research Scholars Application and Matriculation Guidelines
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Introduction

Congratulations on being accepted into the NIH Ox/Cam Scholars programme, this is an achievement of which you should be very proud.

By now you should have been given the following documents by the NIH in order to confirm your place and are thinking about which University to choose. Please contact the NIH OxCam office (contacts listed below) if you have not received any of the following documents:

- Written confirmation of award acceptance
- Welcome letter including details about dates, housing, and map for visit weeks
- A request for information necessary for Intramural Research Training Award (IRTA) processing, new class resources pages and a Bio
- Class dean assignment, contact in the UK and UK travel information
- PDF of your University Funding letter

This is a four-year PhD programme with two years normally spent at the NIH labs in the USA and two years spent in either Cambridge or Oxford. We endeavour to ensure this is a flexible programme and this document will give you guidance about how the University application process works.

Why Choose Cambridge? [http://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/](http://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/)

Affiliates of University of Cambridge have won more Nobel Prizes than those of any other institution. Cambridge has had 90 Nobel prize winners since 1904, including 8 since 2005. In 2013 Michael Levitt, Gonville and Caius / Peterhouse Colleges, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry, for the development of multiscale models for complex chemical systems. Affiliates have won in every category, with 29 Nobel prizes in Physics, 26 in Medicine, 21 in Chemistry, nine in Economics, two in Literature and two in Peace. Trinity College has 32 Nobel Prize winners, the most of any college at Cambridge. Dorothy Hodgkin is the first woman from Cambridge to win a Nobel Prize, for her work on the structure of compounds used in fighting anaemia. Frederick Sanger, from St John’s and fellow of King’s, is one of only four individuals to win a Nobel Prize twice. He won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1958 and 1980. [http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/research-at-cambridge/nobel-prize-winners](http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/research-at-cambridge/nobel-prize-winners)

Cambridge Biomedical Campus

The University of Cambridge is the UK’s leading research university and came 1st in the 2011 QS World University Rankings. The University’s School of Clinical Medicine was rated top in the UK in the Government’s 2008 Research Assessment Exercise. In partnership with associated hospitals the University is one of only five UK ‘Academic Health Science Centres’. This prized status is awarded by an international panel in recognition of the University of Cambridge as an internationally leading university medical centre, with groups that are globally competitive in translating excellence in biomedical science into more effective healthcare.

The Cambridge Biomedical Campus, located on the southern edge of Cambridge, contains (i) the University School of Clinical Medicine with its 12 Departments and associated Institutes, (ii) Addenbrooke’s Hospital, a major University Teaching Hospital with 1100 beds and regional services, to the whole of the East of England, and (iii) a directly funded Research Institute – the MRC Laboratory for Molecular Biology (LMB). In addition to the LMB there are 5 MRC Units in Cambridge, of which 4 are located on the campus as well as the MRC Mitochondrial Biology Unit. The University’s main Biological Science campus is on the Downing site in the centre of Cambridge and houses the School of the Biological Sciences, which has particular strengths in developmental, cellular and molecular research, in integrative and comparative physiology and systems biology, and in neuroscience.
Research within the School of the Biological Sciences pursues a number of cross-cutting themes which intersect with the research themes in the School of Clinical Medicine in cardiovascular biology, neurosciences, cancer, infection, and immunology. There are two Institutes within the School of Biological Sciences with outstanding strengths in key areas of biomedical research: the Wellcome CR-UK Gurdon Institute (directed by Professor Jim Smith, FRS), noted for its major strengths in developmental biology, and the Wellcome MRC Institute for Stem Cell Biology (directed by Professor Austin Smith, FRS), which pursues research in basic stem cell biology, and is closely linked with translational stem cell medicine on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. To the south of Cambridge are the Babraham Institute (funded by the BBSRC) and the Hinxton Genome Campus with the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute and the European Bioinformatics Institute.

The co-location in Cambridge of a major regional University Hospital, University Medical School and Research Institutes on a single campus, together with these surrounding strengths in Biological Science in a 5 mile radius and a major cardiothoracic hospital nearby, is unusual within the UK and offers an exceptional, if not unique, environment for the highest quality collaborative biomedical research, and its translation.

Contact Information

**Cambridge**
- Cambridge Programme Director: Dr Menna Clatworthy  
  mrc38@medschl.cam.ac.uk
- Cambridge, OxCam Programme Coordinator: Elizabeth McIntyre,  
  ejm45@medschl.cam.ac.uk

**NIH**
- OxCam Programme Scientific Director: Dr Alan Sher  
  ASHER@niaid.nih.gov
- MD/PhD Programme Scientific Director: Dr Craig Blackstone  
  BlackstC@ninds.nih.gov
- OxCam Academic Dean: Dr Jim Sellers,  
  sellersj@nhlbi.nih.gov
- NIH Managing Director: Ms Katie Soucy Tel: 301.761.6199,  
  skathryn@niaid.nih.gov
- OxCam Program Assistant: Ms Angela Hitomi Harris Tel: 301.761.5673,  
  Angela.harris@nih.gov

**Programme Websites**
- [http://oxcam.gpp.nih.gov](http://oxcam.gpp.nih.gov) (OXCAM);  
- [http://cato.medschl.cam.ac.uk/](http://cato.medschl.cam.ac.uk/) (GCAT);  
- [http://oxcam.gpp.nih.gov/about/partnership.asp](http://oxcam.gpp.nih.gov/about/partnership.asp) (MD/PhD)
**Section 1: When and how to apply**

The Application portal is fully automated and opens on September 1\textsuperscript{st} of the year before entry and closes on the 30\textsuperscript{th} June of the year of entry.

**Alternative Funding Opportunities:** There are opportunities for funding that many prospective OxCam scholars can apply for during October to December such as Gates, Cambridge Overseas Trust, Marshalls and college awards. We recommend all prospective applicants to the NIH OxCam scholars programme take this opportunity to apply. Awards from Gates, COT or Marshalls and others are accommodated within the NIH OxCam programme. The application is different in that you will apply to the Cambridge department of your choice – not the NIH OxCam programme code- and your application progresses from there.

CATO is pleased to announce that there are two NIH-Cambridge Overseas Trust scholarships available to successful NIH OxCam Scholars. To apply for this scholarship you must make your application to Cambridge in the September/October and tick Section ‘B’ to apply for alternative funding. [https://www.cambridgetrust.org/partners/nih-ox-cam-programme](https://www.cambridgetrust.org/partners/nih-ox-cam-programme)

The benefits of applying at the earlier time is that your application to the University is progressed quite far by the time of the NIH OxCam award and other award announcements.

For those that have not applied and have waited until the NIH OxCam award announcements in Feb/Mar, it is important you commence your application to the University as soon as you accept your award.

If you are on the MD PhD track you are encouraged to apply the year before you take up your award, even if you plan to commence your PhD course at the NIH.

To apply to Cambridge: [http://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/](http://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/)

You must apply online **no later** than the 15th June. The automated system (CAMSIS) **closes** after this date - **there are no exceptions**.

Go to [http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/gsprospectus/applying/](http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/gsprospectus/applying/)

Follow the instructions on how to apply. If you already know the supervisor you wish to work with here in Cambridge please put this person’s name and programme code into your application. **There are NIH specific codes that you must use.** Please see attached table:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Code</th>
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<td>BLBINH224</td>
<td>Probationary in Biological Science @ MRC LMB</td>
<td>NUMBNH224</td>
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<tr>
<td>Probationary in Biological Science at MRC MBU</td>
<td>NUDNNH224</td>
<td>Probationary in Biological Science @ Sanger Institute</td>
<td>NUSCNH224</td>
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<td>CPGS in Chemistry</td>
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<td>Probationary in Engineering</td>
<td>EGEGNH224</td>
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<tr>
<td>Probationary in Biological Science @ Babraham</td>
<td>NUANNH224</td>
<td>Probationary in Obstetrics &amp; Gynaecology</td>
<td>MDOGNH224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>MDPUNH224</td>
<td>Probationary in Clinical Biochemistry @ CIMR</td>
<td>MDCBMRNH24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>MDMRNH224</td>
<td>Probationary in Medicine</td>
<td>MDMDNH224</td>
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</table>

**GENERAL COURSE CODE: MDNH224**

If you have not yet chosen your supervisor (don’t worry), you simply need to apply to Cambridge under the generic code for Dr Menna Clatworthy (Department of Medicine) and use the course code **MDNH224**. When you have chosen and been accepted by a Cambridge supervisor and department inform CATO and we will update your camsis record to reflect your new home department.

Choosing a college:
All students become members of one of the 31 colleges in the University with the opportunity to meet staff and students from other disciplines, participate in a wide variety of cultural, sporting and social activities and arrange accommodation and meals.

Many of you will not be familiar with the unique college systems at Cambridge and Oxford and making a decision can be very daunting. The best advice we (Cambridge) can give you is the following:

- Talk with existing Scholars
- Look at the website of various the Colleges
- Contact the middle or senior common room societies – these are the graduate societies that each college has and they can discuss with you the kind of activities they get involved in
- Visit this website http://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/colleges/choosing-college

Think about the following things when choosing a college:

- Do I want a large formal College?
- Do I want a small home-like environment?
- Do I want a sporty College?
- Do I want to be in town or slightly out of town?

Colleges are where you will live, and they play a large role in your pastoral care and social activities. Choosing a College is very personal, so think about it carefully. Please bear in mind that the later you apply the more difficult it is to get into some of the larger more famous Colleges, but this does not mean any of the others are less desirable. All Colleges have their own attractions and it is almost inevitable that people develop affectionate attachments for their College whichever it happens to end up being.

Colleges receive a full copy of your application and usually meet weekly to assess applicants. Your first and second choices may not be successful. If this happens your papers will be sent out into a general pool for consideration, please take this into account when you choose a popular College, like Kings or Trinity, as these will fill up quickly.

Application documents
Please upload all the requested original documents onto CAMSIS. It is very important that you understand that we will not accept the paperwork you submitted to the NIH and will require originals of all the documents requested including new references. Please remember to include your funding letter (supplied by the NIH Student Offices) with your application so you will not be asked by the university to prove your personal finances.

Your application can take upwards of a month or more to complete. The faster we receive your supporting papers, the sooner you will be processed and you can then move onto the ATAS and visa process. NB: It is important to check your CamSIS self-service account often, as changes and requests may appear here without email notification.

**Section 2: ATAS and VISA**

ATAS: All non-European Economic Area candidates for PhD-level research degrees or Masters courses in certain science and technology subjects require an ATAS certificate - (Academic Technology Approval Scheme). This is a system used in the UK to defend against biological weaponry. The International Student Team will advise you once your research project is defined.

All NIH Ox/Cam Scholars will require ATAS clearance as part of their condition of acceptance to the University.

Please note that you cannot apply for ATAS or your visa until your supervisor and research project are defined and submitted to your application on CAMSIS.

The International Students office http://www.ist.admin.cam.ac.uk/ advises that students apply for ATAS clearance as part of their application to Cambridge - students are required to upload a copy of the certificate. The certificate is valid for 6 months.
ATAS is free to apply for [http://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/international-students/immigration/atas](http://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/international-students/immigration/atas)

### Steps to ATAS Clearance:

- **ATAS clearance from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office** is required prior to making a visa application. Without this clearance, your visa will be denied. To obtain clearance you must make an online application available on the FCO website [http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/what-we-do/services-we-deliver/atas/](http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/what-we-do/services-we-deliver/atas/)

- To complete this part of the online application, you will require certain details from the University.
  - Your supervisor will provide you with a research statement/description and upload it to yourcamsis account. You must ask your supervisor to do this. Contact the International Office if they or you are unclear. It must not be written in the first person. Maximum 1800 character limit.
  - The University will send you an offer letter which will have a JACS code and your research statement/description as defined by you and your supervisor in it. This will be made available via email—please ensure you regularly check the email address you list on your University application.

- When you have these two things you may register with the ATAS website and in the following few days you will receive permission to apply.

- When you apply it is vital that you fill in the research section with EXACTLY the same wording as it appears on your offer letter.

- The FCO (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) suggests they consider applications within 20 working days. However, if you are required to provide additional information, the process may take considerably longer.

- When you receive the ATAS certificate, you must upload it to your CAMSIS account.

### The process so far:

1. Apply to the University
2. Choose a Mentor
3. Discuss and agree your research project with the University Department you will be working with.
4. Get a research description and apply for your ATAS Certificate and upload onto CAMSIS (if applicable at that time).

### Process to obtain Tier 4 Visa:

**Applying for a Tier 4 student visa**

The following information provides an overview of applying for a Tier 4 student visa in the US:

- Applications for visas can only be made within 3 months of your arrival date in the UK— not before.
- Obtain ATAS clearance from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office using the research statement provided by the Graduate Admissions Office: [www.gov.uk/academic-technology-approval-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/academic-technology-approval-scheme)
- Once all offer conditions are fulfilled, the University will issue a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) to support your visa application. This is sent by email.
- Complete the online visa application form, pay the NHS surcharge and visa application fee and book your biometric appointment: [https://visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/](https://visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/)
- Attend your biometric appointment at the Application Support Centre (ASC) you selected when you applied online. You will need to take your passport and a copy of
your biometric confirmation receipt. You can find your nearest ASC at http://alturl.com/wriep

- Once you have attended your biometric appointment, you have two weeks to post the following documents to UK Visas and Immigration at the British Consulate in New York:
  - Passport
  - Two passport photographs
  - ATAS certificate
  - Biometric confirmation receipt which will have been stamped at your appointment.

- US nationals qualify for differentiation arrangements under Tier 4. This means that you do not need to include evidence of qualifications or finances with your visa application although you are expected to hold this documentation in the required format and could be asked for them during the application process.
- You will be issued an entry permit to the UK in your passport. You should arrive in the UK before the permit expires. You will need to collect your visa, in the form of a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP), within 10 days of arriving in the UK.

**Further information:**
The International Student Team provides student visa advice to applicants and students and has a responsibility for ensuring institutional Tier 4 compliance. The team can provide assistance with any queries relating to your Tier 4 visa application.
University website: www.internationalstudents.cam.ac.uk/applying/uk-immigration/tier-4-entry-clearance
Tier 4 Policy Guidance www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-as-tier-4-student

International Student Team email: internationalstudents@admin.cam.ac.uk

**Doctorate Extension Scheme:**
The Doctorate Extension Scheme is a visa offered to Tier 4 students finishing their PhD that allows them to stay in the UK for one year to find work, so quite useful for some people in OxCam who have decided to stay a little longer. The visa application must go through before the hardbound thesis is submitted. The financial sponsor statement is required even if you no longer receive financial sponsorship, if you have previously in the past 12 months, you must have a letter stating that your sponsor consents to your remaining in the UK. Some sponsorship programs require government service, etc. in the country of sponsorship as a condition of the funding. Obtain this letter from your NIH particular institution.

The UK Border Agency is your primary source of information on all matters concerning immigration http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/studying/adult-students/

**Notes:**

- **Anyone who enters with CAS is subject to these duties and must also:**
  - Provide a copy of their passport, visa/ID card to their College
  - Provide up-to-date contact details
  - Make ten contacts with their College

- **Students have restrictions on CAS, e.g.:**
o Cannot work more than 20 hours pw during term time.
  o Cannot be self-employed

- **Students may not:**
  o Just turn up without correct visa (those coming as tourists will be sent back home)
  o Come using a visa not issued/sponsored by us
  o Overstay (penalties range from automatic ban for 12 months - 10 years)
  o Ignore conditions of sponsorship

- **Important:**
  o Follow all that is required by the UKBA (e.g. passport photo size, documents requested and in format requested)
  o Most of visa rejections occur because student failed to make a complete application

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**Section 3: Spouses/Dependants working**

Your family members will be able to work if you are either:

- a government-sponsored student taking a course that is over six months long, or
- taking a postgraduate course that is at least 12 months long and you are studying at an institution that meets the UK Border Agency's definition of a higher education institution.

If your family members are able to join you or stay with you in the UK even though you do not fall into one of the categories described above, they will be able to work only if you are applying for leave for 12 months or more and your course is at degree level.

Family members who are allowed to work can take any type of employment, except as a doctor or dentist in training if their passport or biometric residence permit states that they are subject to this prohibition, and they can be self-employed.


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**Section 4: Visit week and the Colloquium**

Visit week and the colloquium are a great opportunity for you to make final decisions about your supervisor and which University you wish to attend. However as they always occur in late June, it is good to try to visit the UK or skype with your potential Cambridge supervisors earlier, if feasible. Remember you have much paperwork to fill in before you can start in the UK, so if you are determined to be here in the first term decisions may need to be made sooner.

For visit week you will be provided with a bed and breakfast place to stay in Cambridge (usually in a college).

For visit week (and the colloquium in Cambridge or Oxford), you will need to apply for a ‘Student visitor’ visa which is valid for up to 6 months (application form VAF1D, available at: [http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/vafs/](http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/vafs/)).
You may request a letter from CATO (via email or post) that will specify details of the visit week, such as accommodation, funding etc. and support your visa application. CATO will need your full name, postal address and date of birth in order to complete your letter.

Section 5: MD PhD candidates

All the information above also applies to you except that you should be looking to start your application process in September/October of the year BEFORE you enter Cambridge.

- Apply to the University
- Apply for your ATAS clearance
- Apply for your VISA

Opportunities at the University of Cambridge for NIH Ox/Cam MD/PhD Students

Whilst you are based in Cambridge you will have the opportunity to gain some clinical teaching experience through small group bedside teaching sessions (Clinical Supervisions) - if you would like to and are willing to make the commitment to do so and your PhD Supervisor is supportive in releasing you to attend.

Key contacts:

Dr Mark Lillicrap (Clinical Sub Dean for Curriculum)
Email: msl29@medschl.cam.ac.uk

Mrs Lesley Flood (MB/PhD Administrator)
Email: lf300@cam.ac.uk
http://www.medschl.cam.ac.uk/education/courses/mbphd/

Clinical Supervisor bedside teaching sessions

Duration: 1 hour per week (usually in the evening)
Location: Addenbrooke’s Hospital, Biomedical Campus
Set up: Small group teaching (5-6 students)

The Clinical Supervision teaching programme supplements the University’s clinical teaching programme in Cambridge and is led by Dr Mark Lillicrap. Clinical Supervisors are trainee doctors, working in Cambridge, who provide weekly (1 hour) bedside teaching sessions to clinical medical students, in small college-based supervision groups, throughout the three years of the clinical course (six years of the MB/PhD programme). The sessions focus on clinical assessment (history and examination skills), diagnostic reasoning and management planning. They are generally arranged in an evening and the timing is flexible to fit with the needs of the group and the Clinical Supervisor.

Process

In order to be assigned to an appropriate Clinical Supervision group you need to go through the following stages:-

a) Before arriving in the UK

Obtain the appropriate Occupational forms from Lesley Flood. Part of the documentation has to be completed by your doctor and the immunisation record has to also be completed by your doctor, practice nurse or current Occupational Health provider.
Provide a criminal records background check conducted by a registered agency or alternatively request that your US Medical School provides a letter confirming that they are satisfied with the background checks conducted on you.

b) On arrival in Cambridge

You need to have matriculated and been accepted at a Cambridge college before you can submit the medical forms to the University of Cambridge Occupational Health Service. They will then invite you to a health check appointment and inform the Clinical School when you have been health cleared.

Email Lesley to confirm your arrival in Cambridge so that an appointment with Dr Mark Lillicrap can be arranged to discuss your clinical skill level in order to assign you to an appropriate clinical supervision group.

When you meet with Dr Mark Lillicrap you should also sign the Medical Student Register to confirm that you agree to abide by the Medical Student Code of Conduct. Following your meeting you should also arrange to obtain a Cambridge University Hospitals Personal ID/Access Card badge through Lesley.

After your meeting with Dr Mark Lillicrap you will be assigned to a clinical supervision group and the Clinical Supervisor will be informed to include you on email correspondence regarding supervision dates and times.

Attendance requirements

During your time in Cambridge the expectation is that you will attend a minimum of 50% of the clinical supervisions that are held. This is important because, to get the most of the experience, you need to get to know both the Clinical Supervisor and the other members of the group.

Additional clinical teaching opportunities

There some lecture based clinical-pathologic conferences (CPCs) that are run throughout the clinical course teaching programme that you would be welcome to attend. Details of these can be obtained through Lesley.

Section 6: ‘Leave To Work Away’ (LTWA) and residency

This is very important and has serious implications on your visa status if you fail to report your absences from Cambridge.

All absences from Cambridge including research at your NIH lab needs to be recorded and permission sought. This is referred to as ‘Leave to Work Away’.

Application for LTWA is completed through your camsis self-service. You can apply for ‘leave to work away’ for up to three terms at a time. Through this process your supervisor, college, department and degree committee are made aware of and consider your application. Any application for LTWA should be commenced after having discussion with both your Cambridge and NIH supervisor agreements and in line with your research plan. You may only apply for LTWA once you have commenced your course in the first year- from 1 October of your first year.

The terms of residence in both institutions (Cambridge/NIH) is 6 terms – as agreed between Cambridge and NIH. Any change to this arrangement will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and must be with full agreement of the programme directors, supervisors, department, college and degree committee. Forms for applying for less than 6 terms (or more than 6 terms) in Cambridge can be obtained from CATO. Application does not guarantee approval.
As part of your Tier 4 sponsorship you must register your attendance/residency with your college every term or as often as they advise. You are either registered at college or LTWA. You must contact your college termly by email during your period of LTWA to ensure your Tier 4 visa status remains unaffected. Your expected return date from LTWA will be advised to you on your LTWA approval email.

**New Students - LTWA**

Students just starting their PhD and who plan to start at the NIH (ie not in Cambridge for the first term of the PhD) will need to apply for LTWA through camsis self-service.

The registration for new students does not start until after 18 August at which point Student Registry will term activate new students and send an invitation to register. Once registered the @cam email address and (limited) access to camsis self-service will be activated.

As you will be a new student your record (and your principal supervisor) is not active until the first day of term (1st October 20.) As such, you will be unable to apply for LTWA until this date as this is when your camsis self-service record is fully active.

http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/graduate-study/your-student-status/work-away-cambridge

**Section 7: Submitting your Thesis and arranging your Viva**

The following links are useful. Please look at them in full.

http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/students/studentregistry/exams/submission/phd/preparing.html

Notaf (probationary) viva:
http://www.gradschl.lifesci.cam.ac.uk/Current%20Students/Lifecycles/PhD

**Section 8: Arriving in Cambridge**

**Induction / Orientation**

Inductions are managed by your host department and the Graduate School of Life Sciences (GSLS), or School of Technology or School of Physical Sciences. Your college will also have a matriculation event to welcome you to Cambridge. Information on department inductions is available directly from your department of research.

The GSLS induction information is available here:
http://www.gradschl.lifesci.cam.ac.uk/GSLSRD/events/annual/induction

Pre-arrival advice and tips from the International Office:
http://www.internationalstudents.cam.ac.uk/arriving

**Matriculation Advice from a NIH OxCam Scholar**

Matriculation marks the formal admission of a student to membership of the University, and a College may not normally allow an unmatriculated student to be a resident member of the College (‘in statu pupillari’) after the Division (that is, the mid-point) of his or her first term of residence.

Every candidate for matriculation must subscribe to the following declaration by signing the Matriculation Registration Form:
I promise to observe the Statutes and Ordinances of the University as far as they concern me, and to pay due respect and obedience to the Chancellor and other officers of the University.

A person is deemed to be matriculated from the beginning of the term in which a completed Matriculation Registration Form and satisfactory evidence of his or her qualification to matriculate is known by the College. http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/new-students/arrival

If you are not matriculating in your first term at Cambridge (ie you’re staying at the NIH for your first term(s), then you will need to get a hardcopy of the matriculation form from your college.

As you sift through piles of supporting documents and recommendation letters, I know it can be easy to forget how excited you were when you first thought about engaging scientific research at one of the world’s foremost universities; however, the time to pack your two suitcases for a trip across the pond will come soon enough. When it does come time to pass through the full-body scanners of London Heathrow, consult the following for one student’s advice on settling into life at Cambridge.

Before you arrive:

It will be important to secure living arrangements before you arrive. Just as it was crucial to submit your Cambridge application early, it will be helpful to secure a room early (lest you prefer living farther from the city centre). Shortly after you finalise your College selection, you should receive information about College accommodation. If your College cannot provide housing for your stay, it will be important to utilise alternatives (e.g. current NIH-OxCam scholars in Cambridge, College forums, Graduate Union forums, etc.). Beyond housing, there are other important things to take care of, but these are typically harder to complete over the internet (especially in a fraud-free manner) – I would recommend taking care of these in Cambridge.

Upon arrival (official business):

You already have your accommodation sorted out. One down. While in Cambridge, your life will be conveniently compartmentalised into two areas. Officially, your departmental life entails everything regarding your scientific, academic and professional development, while your college life supports everything else (e.g. housing, formal dinners, bops = dances), sport, etc.). (Despite the natural separation, I don’t have to tell you that labs can be important social outlets and you can imagine the educational interactions that arise when some of the world’s best and brightest end up at the same pub.) What this really means though, is that you will have two inductions (British for orientation) to take care of. If you arrive at the beginning of term, your first week – dubbed Fresher’s Week – will be dominated by official College events and usually, departmental induction. Most supervisors are sympathetic to this fact and in general, many students begin lab work the following week. Nonetheless, don’t forget to maintain open communication with your supervisor to make sure that you attend official department inductions, safety inductions, etc. After Fresher’s week (if you’re still standing), it is time to get acclimated to lab. This process will be unique to each lab and in general, parallels preparations that we are used to in the States.

Upon arrival (unofficial business):

There are many other ‘life’ particulars to take care of when you arrive. To prevent these from preoccupying your thoughts and invading precious lab time, I would recommend getting to these either before or during Fresher’s week.
- **Bank Account:** You will need to transfer your big 'ole NIH pay cheque to the UK somehow. Some prefer to use Bank of America or Charles Schwab, which offer free ATM withdrawals, but in my experience, even these folks end up getting a UK bank account. To do so, you will need an official letter from your college, an official address and your passport. Once set up, you will have to wait (about a week) for your debit card and PIN to arrive by post.

- **Cell Phone:** This is why bank account was listed first. If you want to get a monthly plan, you will need a UK bank account (and debit/PIN in hand) to set up the direct debit. In the meantime (or whole time for some), you can get a pay-as-you-go phone as long as you have cash. (Don’t worry, you can transfer the number to a monthly plan if you decide later.) I would recommend getting this taken care of sooner rather than later so you do not miss the "Oh, we’re all new – let’s exchange phone numbers" train that departs shortly after Fresher’s week.

- **Bicycle:** You will quickly see (and know from visit week) that bicycles are the main route of transport for Cantabrigians. Keep your eyes on college/graduate student forms, email lists and gumtree.com (the UK craigslist) for the rush of second-hand bicycles that become available at the beginning of term.

There will probably be other necessities that require your attention, but these are the big three in my opinion (and the order in which I did them). Do not forget to visit the Fresher’s fair if you arrive at the beginning of term – this is an excellent time to discover clubs and societies that you may want to join (especially the cool ones like ultimate Frisbee, volleyball and rowing). If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask fellow NIH-OxCammers. *Bennett Waxse Year of 2010*

**Section 9: NIH Cambridge Buddy System**

The NIH-Cambridge buddy system is student-led and in place to help new scholars become accustomed to Cambridge. First years are paired together with older scholars before arriving in Cambridge so they can get to know each other and get acquainted with how Cambridge works. Tasks like opening a bank account, figuring out how to find out about events, and navigating the city may seem daunting at first but become easy with the support of the NIH-Cambridge Scholars community. Each mentor treats their mentees to dinner in Michaelmas term with generous support from the OxCam program, so they can form relationships that will last throughout the program and beyond!

Contact – Keval Patel [keval@umich.edu](mailto:keval@umich.edu); David Bulger [davidabulger@gmail.com](mailto:davidabulger@gmail.com); Terry Wu [terrywu927@gmail.com](mailto:terrywu927@gmail.com)

**Section 10: Graduate students' credit system for transferable skills**

Credits are awarded for participation in transferable skills training. These credits are a guideline for you to gauge how much training you should attend per year. Credits are not given formally and you should keep track of your own accumulation of credits according to how much transferable skills training you have undertaken.

Credits are associated with formal training courses as well as your own activities that contribute toward your transferable skills development. Most half day training courses are worth one credit while whole day courses are worth two. Credits may also be gained for your own activities in transferable skills development.

In line with the UK Research Council recommendation that all Masters and PhD students receive 10 days per year training, the Graduate School of Life Sciences recommends that
you accumulate 20 credits each year. Common sense should be applied in your approach to credits and transferable skills training.

- Make sure that your credits are from a range of training topics and styles
- Attend courses because of your own interest or a recommendation, not just because you want to collect credits.

The table gives more detailed guidance. You record your training in your logbook.

Weblink: http://www.biomed.cam.ac.uk/gradschool/skills/credits.html

Section 11: Going back to the USA

Advice from an OxCam Scholar

The transition is different depending on which part of the country the person is from, how close their friends and relatives are to DC, and whether they established any presence/social groups at NIH or in DC during their previous stay at the NIH campus.

I would advise you to start looking for housing as soon as you know you intend to return and to join the NIH post-bacc listserv http://groups.yahoo.com/group/clubpcr/. The post-bacc community is larger and more active than the grad student community, and they use the listserv to post offers and requests for housing, furniture, events, volunteering opportunities, etc.

Once you determine where you’re living and whether you’ll be driving or Metro/busing to work you can go get your parking pass (http://parking.nih.gov/parking_permits.htm) for campus or join the Transhare Program (http://dtts.ors.od.nih.gov/transhare.htm) which pays for your Metro and Bus card every month. The current parking situation is that, depending on your building, it takes 5-10 minutes to park and the same to get back to your building as long as you arrive before 10:30 AM. There is a free valet/double-parking service in the garages so it is possible to find parking somewhere if you arrive before noon. In general, Metroing is the preferred method of transport but you can’t have both a Transhare pass and a parking pass so if you ever want to be able to drive onto campus, or control your commute time (bad weather, track problems, or if you can’t stand the cold like me…) you’ll want to go with the parking pass. Austin Swafford Year of 2009

Subsidised housing: The NIH also has on- and off-campus subsidised housing, subject to availability. Please contact the NIH OxCam offices in Bethesda for more information.

Section 12: University Code of Practice

A revised version of the Code of Practice for Graduate Research Degrees for students beginning their research degrees in October 2015 has been posted on the web at:

http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/new-students/manage-your-student-information/graduate-students/code

Useful Links

- Term dates: http://www.cam.ac.uk/univ/termdates.html
- CATO: http://cato.medschl.cam.ac.uk
- CATO OxCam website: http://cato.medschl.cam.ac.uk/graduate-programmes/phd-programmes/the-national-institute-of-health-nih-oxcam/
- OxCAM: http://oxcam.gpp.nih.gov
- MD/PhD: http://oxcam.gpp.nih.gov/about/partnership.asp
Section 13: Other useful information

For students who require loan renewal certification or authorisation, send forms to: Jane Armitage (Student Registry): jane.armitage@admin.cam.ac.uk