

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 per £5,000 each year. This educational deficit totalled £2.6 million in 2016-17.

UNDERGRADUATES

Tuition fees and student loans

No UK or EU student has to pay their University tuition fee up front. Students from the UK and EU 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 a minimum salary of £21,000 in England and Wales, or £17,775 in Scotland and Northern Ireland. In England graduates would pay back 9% of any income over £21,000 each year. Interest is paid from the first payment until the loan is paid back.

The cost of tuition fees for Overseas students range from £16,608 to £40,200 depending on 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 £8,700.

Maintenance Grants and Loans from the Government

Students from Wales and Northern Ireland are able to apply for a grant to help with living costs; whereas students from England and Scotland cannot. Instead, students from England are able to apply for a maintenance loan of up to £8,430 (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 £21,000.

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 UK and EU students with a household income of £42,620 or less are likely to be eligible for a bursary of up to £3,500, potentially for the duration of their course. Independent students and care leavers may be eligible for an enhanced award of up to £5,600.

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. The household income figure calculated by the student finance body is used as the basis on which to determine the level of Cambridge Bursary awarded. The Bursary is paid into a student's bank account each term once the College's Tutorial Office have verified that the student has matriculated and is still resident.

For the time being, for European students if it is their first degree and their household income is less than £42,620 they are eligible for a Bursary. EU students must apply for a Bursary through Student Finance England.

Household income	Eligible for an annual bursary of up to
<£25,000	£3,500
£25,001 - £30,000	£3,400
£30,001 - £35,000	£2,380
£35,001 - £40,000	£1,360
£40,001 - £42,620	£300

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 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, household income of £42,620

Annual income	
<i>Tuition Fee loan</i>	£9,000
<i>Cambridge Bursary</i>	£300
<i>Government maintenance loan</i>	<u>£6,297</u>
TOTAL	£15,597
Annual expenses	
<i>Living costs</i>	£8,960
<i>Tuition Fee</i>	<u>£9,000</u>
TOTAL	£17,960
Shortfall	£2,363
Annual accumulated debt (maintenance loan + tuition fee loan)	£15,297
Total debt over three-year course	£45,891
Total debt over four-year course	£61,188

GRADUATES

Government funding for graduate courses has dramatically reduced and the financial obstacles facing those who wish to study for a graduate degree have never been higher. The cost of graduate 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:

	UK/EU student	Overseas student
University Composition Fee per annum (combines University and College fee)	£8,094	£27,945
Living costs per annum	£13,740	£13,740
Total cost per annum	£21,834	£41,685
Total cost for three years	£65,502	£125,055

The University Composition Fee is collected by the College for graduates via their bill and covers the teaching, supervision, student support and facilities they have access to in the University and College. The University requires evidence that all applicants are able to cover their fees and maintenance costs before they begin their course. Masters students are now able to apply for loans of up to £10,000 if they are from England. These loans are not means tested, they are paid directly to the student and have to be repaid.

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