Inside:
Healthcare data: shaping our response to the pandemic

Bringing new perspectives to History of Art
It’s all in the mind: the Undergrad’ Certificate in Cognitive Psychology
A new pathway to medicine for mature students in East Anglia

Behind the scenes at the Institute of Continuing Education and Madingley Hall
The Institute of Continuing Education, or ICE, is part of the University of Cambridge, one of the world’s leading research institutes, where our purpose is to provide accessible, flexible and meaningful education to adults throughout their lives.

Irrespective of whether you’re taking your first steps in higher education or progressing to mid-career postgraduate study, ICE’s aim is to form supportive communities of learning where expert teachers and adult students work together as peers to achieve personal and collective educational goals.

Study at ICE is characterised by friendly groups of committed students engaging with important learning against the backdrop of the resources of one of the world’s best universities. We promote evidence-based exploration, critical enquiry and free speech in welcoming and respectful classrooms. Our discussions extend over virtual or in-person tea breaks, cake, garden strolls, informal lunches in Madingley Hall’s dining room and globally across Zoom, WhatsApp and our virtual learning environment. ICE is a place where professional networks are formed, friendships are made and learning is cherished.

If you have a story that you think others might be interested to hear about in the next edition of Inside ICE, we’d love to hear from you. Please get in touch via insideice@ice.cam.ac.uk
Welcome to Inside ICE

This issue captures the ethos and purpose of the Institute. The new HE Certificate in Pre-Medical Studies highlights our role in widening access to the professions, with applications now open for the inaugural 2022 cohort. Given the shortage of doctors, it is imperative we develop new routes for mid-life adults, drawn from all backgrounds and walks of life, to take their first steps towards a career in medicine. We also explore how our Master of Studies in Healthcare Data has supported qualified doctors and established healthcare professionals to understand and manage the pandemic. From providing new gateways to the professions to helping seasoned professionals respond to emerging challenges, the Institute’s role is to meet adult learners on their terms and support them with exciting and relevant courses.

In the non-vocational arena, I am delighted to report the launch of our new MSt in History of Art and Visual Culture, which is open for applications for the founding 2022 cohort. This innovative postgraduate course builds on a portfolio of excellent undergraduate programmes in art history. These pathways, from novice to expert, are a crucial part of our offer at the Institute. As a student said to me recently, one of the most challenging things to do as an adult is to elect to become a beginner but, they noted, if you are brave enough to do so, you start on a path to becoming an expert. In another conversation with an ICE Master’s alum, they referred to the ‘beautiful paradox’ of being an adult learner, acknowledging the more you learn and experience the more you realise you don’t know. Whether you seek to become an expert, or simply broaden your horizons, it’s our aim to provide an accessible and welcoming offer for any adult student, as beginners or advanced scholars, in a variety of disciplines.

Over 60 undergraduate and postgraduate courses, resulting in a Cambridge qualification, are now open for enrolments for the 2022–23 academic year. If you prefer, we have a myriad of short courses available – spanning the arts, sciences and professions – accessible via ICE’s online platform and edX. Further, I am delighted that our in-person residential weekends are now back with a bang at Madingley and our in-person 2022 summer programme, set in the heart of the city of Cambridge, will open for registration in January.

So, whether it is on a Zoom tutorial, in-person in a classroom, or at Madingley’s Garden Café or Terrace Bar, we hope to see you soon – and wish you all well for 2022.

Dr James Gazzard,
Director of Continuing Education,
University of Cambridge
Institute of Continuing Education

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In the context of continuing education, we approach the purpose of a personal statement in a slightly different way to most universities” says Dr Gazzard. “Personal statements help us understand adult students and the learning communities that they will form, as we aspire to shape diverse and inspiring peer groups.

“For our open-entry courses such as undergraduate certificates, we want to understand prospective students’ perspectives, motivations and goals” explains Dr Gazzard. “It has comparatively little to do with prior educational achievements and far more with the ambition of meeting all our students on their terms and appreciating how we can support the learning of each individual and student group.

With our postgraduate courses including Master of Studies (MSts), some of which may be oversubscribed, we seek to understand each candidate as a whole person.

Making your application to ICE: Let’s get personal

Most universities and institutions ask candidates to write a personal statement as part of their application to a course. If you’re considering applying for an ICE award-bearing qualification, this may feel like a daunting task. Inside ICE speaks to Dr James Gazzard, Director of Continuing Education, and Dr Alex Carter, Academic Director for Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Studies, to find out about ICE’s approach and for tips on how to make your statement truly personal.

by Aine Doris-Whitehead

Personal development aims or career aspirations, set within the context of busy lives, are crucial. They are informative and valuable at the interview stage as you enter into a dialogue and decide whether ICE is right for you.

While details of transcripts and prior learning are helpful, many of our MSts have ‘non-standard’ routes where prospective students with commensurate professional or life experience can set out their credentials.

Dr Alex Carter shares his thoughts.

“We’re interested in understanding what it is about this specific programme that inspires someone or maps to their individual goals in some way”, explains Alex. So the personal statement should be specific about the what and the why of this course as opposed to any other.”
At ICE, we are also looking for an open mind, and readiness to learn.

That means providing answers that are sincere and authentic and that do not ring “pre-prepared,” says Alex.

“I really want to stress that there are no right or wrong answers, nor are we looking for the ‘perfect student.’ What we are looking for are people who are sincerely motivated to learn. And it’s always refreshing for course leads to read statements from people who’ve really thought about why they want to take your course from a more holistic perspective – the personal, as well as professional reasons, for studying the subject.”

Before sitting down to write your personal statement, Alex recommends asking yourself some critical questions, among them: why this course and not another? What prompted your desire to study? Why ICE? Why now?

“The statements that stand out most are those that lay bare what it is that perplexes you, what prompted you to study at this time in your life, who inspires you and perhaps the kinds of material – the books, the art or music – that engages you. And then how does all of this relates to specific course that you’re applying to do?”

Writing your personal statement can be revealing, says Alex. As you ask yourself questions and articulate your answers, you might actually surprise yourself – or learn something new about your goals, your values, or what you truly want from life. That’s all to the good, he adds. Intellectual honesty is what we are hoping to see.

“Statements that are formulaic are just not that interesting. Nor are statements that portray a candidate as some kind of wunderkind, who has all the answers. We are looking for intellectual honesty that has the ring of truth, and that’s something that can’t be simulated.”

Something else to watch out for is going off point or becoming repetitive. Keep it succinct, says Alex, but not necessarily brief.

“And try to be self-critical without being negative. Ask yourself this: are you talking about your interest in, and suitability for the course throughout the statement. If you’re not, my advice would be to edit irrelevant content out. And when you’re done, ask someone to proof read it for typos. While the odd spelling mistake won’t rule you out, careless writing can make you stand out for all the wrong reasons.”

“The personal statement carries a lot of weight, so address it accordingly. Take your time. And ensure it is concrete, particular and truthful. Remember, you’re not writing your autobiography. You’re telling us why you are suitable for this course.”

Learn more

Find out more about our courses and apply now at www.ice.cam.ac.uk/qualifications
Ian and Annabel: ICE students mastering creative writing

The Centre for Creative Writing at ICE welcomes hundreds of budding and established writers to its courses every year – from bite-sized genre introductions to comprehensive postgraduate study.

In this edition of Inside ICE, we hear from two part-time Master’s students, Ian Ridley and Annabel Steadman, about how they’ve finessed a flair for fiction. Spoiler alert: we predict successful endings.

Ian Ridley – MSt in Crime and Thriller Writing student

Ian Ridley is an award-winning sports journalist and non-fiction author who began pursuing a passion for crime writing during a time of grief. His exploration of love and loss, *The Breath of Sadness: On love, grief and cricket*, came out in early 2021.

The first time around, I was a terrible student. At 18, clearing took me to the University of London, and I was a kid in a giant sweetshop. I spent three years watching football and bands, eventually scraping a poor degree. Now, in my 60s, taking the Crime and Thriller Writing Master’s is an opportunity to prove I’m a better student.

My career as a sports journalist gave me the chance to enjoy success writing non-fiction books, but part of me felt I’d done that now and wanted to try fiction. My wife (trailblazing sports journalist Vikki Orvice) died in February 2019, and I was a bit lost, to be honest. Studying at ICE has been part of helping me refocus.

I’d already published one novel (*The Outer Circle*) through a crowdfunding platform, and I’d started a second that I wanted to improve. The pandemic disrupted the first year’s teaching, meaning we mixed residential and online learning. But led by (bestselling Crime author) Sophie Hannah, there are so many good lecturers guiding us through the Master’s. As students, we’ve formed our own WhatsApp group to chat and share work; I’ve made some wonderful friends here.

Even as a writer, the thought of composing essays again terrified me. But I was determined to show I could do it. It had been such a long time, so I had to work hard to incorporate all the teaching, but I was astonished to get such good marks. It was really satisfying.

Last winter, I finished drafting my second novel. Now, during the final year of the Master’s, I’m working with my tutor, Jon Appleton, to develop and hone it. Having learned so much about plotting and structure, I’ve also realised how my first novel could be better, so I plan to re-visit that and establish it as the first in a series of Jan Mason detective stories that I hope to publish. I just love dreaming up characters and worlds and then throwing a grenade in to see what happens.
Annabel Steadman – MSt in Creative Writing awardee

In 2020, Annabel secured what’s believed to be the biggest advance in history for a debut children’s author, signing a publishing deal with Simon & Schuster for her fantasy series. *Skandar and the Unicorn Thief* will be released on 28 April – Sony Pictures have already acquired the film rights.

“I was constantly writing stories when I was little, but I left that behind when I became a lawyer. Applying for the Creative Writing MSt at ICE was the first time I’d written a non-legal document in years. Yet I always had the urge to write gnawing away at me.

The Master’s is brilliant because it’s so varied. It immerses you in lots of writing styles – from poetry to non-fiction and screenwriting – and helps you find out what kind of writer you are. For example, I had the idea for *Skandar* a long time ago and didn’t really write children’s stuff for my MSt, but the course definitely helped me find that voice.

Studying alongside my classmates was great, especially reading our work. It’s so interesting hearing someone read their writing because their emphasis can be totally different to yours. And it’s amazing practice to read aloud – particularly now I’m preparing to do readings for my book launch!

I wrote the first draft of *Skandar* during the course summer break. I then experienced the awful low of rejection for an adult’s novel I’d written, so I didn’t show Skandar to anyone for about a year. Pressing ‘Send’ on the email to Sam Copeland (author and agent) was hard. I knew the story was either crackers or great, and if Sam had said it didn’t work, I probably would have dropped it. Fortunately, he loved it.

My publishers have bought three books so far. I’ve finished the second one, and I’m planning the third. With lockdowns, I’ve spent so much time in a bubble that it still doesn’t feel real. That’s probably helped me stay focused.

With the first book coming out in April, I’m equally nervous and excited. I’d love to have kids passing it around the playground or talking in-depth about the mythology. As I grew up borrowing books from the library, seeing *Skandar* in that clear plastic cover on a library shelf would be a thrill too. I like to imagine my 12-year-old self would pick it up to read.

Learn more

To find out more about the range of Creative Writing courses at ICE, visit: [www.ice.cam.ac.uk/creative-writing](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/creative-writing)
How COVID-19 made healthcare data everyday language

“This pandemic is the first disease on a global scale to be monitored through the structured use of healthcare data and informatics,” believes Ronan, and it’s impossible to disagree. Over the past two years, there’s been an ever-growing avalanche of data available to us, and we’ve become used to studying, interpreting and discussing it. Whatever news source we consume, COVID-19 data is continuously presented, updated and debated. Everyone has become an expert in the virus reproduction rate, or, as we’ve come to refer to it so easily, R.

When the MSt in Healthcare Data: Informatics, Innovation and Commercialization at ICE welcomed its first students in 2019, the course team always knew it was a vital topic for our times. But little more than two years later, its relevance is now evident to us all. Inside ICE talks to Course Director Dr Ronan O’Leary about how healthcare data has helped the world understand and control the COVID-19 pandemic.

Healthcare data: shaping our response to the pandemic

“Prior to this pandemic, R was very difficult to comprehend because you had to calculate it retrospectively,” notes Ronan. “Now, we’re able to calculate R in real-time because we’re doing daily testing with molecular biology and can integrate those results with population-level data. We can then combine that with hospital and critical care admissions data and so on, and that’s never been done before. Subsequently, that information makes the front page of every newspaper. Maths and data are now part of how we reach conclusions about what we want to do as a society, and I think that’s a positive thing.”

Positive, Ronan believes, because we’re having meaningful public debates in which we can model, for example, what type of lockdown would be effective at reducing critical care admissions or what the impact of vaccinating specific age groups might be. “We’ve now got probably the richest dataset of any disease in history. It’s all stored electronically, and lots of it is in the public domain,” he says. “That gives us a valuable resource with which to inform policy not
just on the next viral respiratory pandemic but on cancer, childhood diseases and much more besides.

Presenting data to better inform debate

As well as interrogating the available data, students on the ICE course develop skills in areas where, as a society, we perhaps haven’t always used data so judiciously. “We’re keen for the course to cover data communication, visualisation and policy engagement in more detail,” says Ronan. “During the pandemic, we’ve sometimes seen a gap between the quality of modelling or statistical analyses and the ability of people and institutions to take that data and use it to guide public debate effectively. That’s partly on people like me to communicate more effectively and help real-world audiences make better sense of data and determine their responses to it.”

However, Ronan is aware that when the Master’s was first designed, that wasn’t where the primary gaze of its data visualisation content was directed: “We’d built that module around how to convince fundholders or hospital managers about where to invest. But the pandemic has taught us that we need to consider how we present data objectively for policy purposes and to the public.

“We want the people who go through our course to be able to not only understand the problems they model but also to articulate the policy implications clearly to a wide audience. We’re trying to train and develop a workforce that can help shape future decision-making.

Acknowledging the work of others

While Course Director of the Healthcare Data and Informatics programme at ICE is one of his roles, Ronan also leads Neurosciences and Trauma Critical Care for Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust – a position to which he has, understandably, been entirely devoted for the past 18 months. He is, however, keen to pay tribute to the staff who ensured the course continued during his absence: “The only reason the course exists is because of all the people at the University who, despite being on lockdown and everything else, kept it going. Whilst various people like me were busy, they made sure the course was able to continue. I’m extremely grateful for all the effort they put in, both in terms of teaching students and working behind the scenes.”

Learn more

To find out more about Healthcare Data and Informatics courses at ICE, visit: www.ice.cam.ac.uk/medicine-health

Data Science Programme

A 10-week online course providing students with an introductory data science toolkit, in collaboration with Flatiron School. Find out more at www.ice.cam.ac.uk/data-science
ICE already offers popular History of Art courses at undergraduate level, but in 2022, the Institute presents its first part-time Master of Studies in History of Art and Visual Culture.

ICE’s new MSt is no ordinary survey, though. Instead, it takes a fresh look at a classic subject by organising learning around pressing, contemporary themes. Academic Director, Dr Lydia Hamlett, tells us more.

**Bringing new perspectives to History of Art**

“Intermediality is a key topic for art historians right now,” observes Lydia. “It’s a lens through which we can challenge traditional hierarchies. For example, while in the past, we might have focused solely on a painting as ‘the masterpiece’, now we’re thinking critically about it in the totality of its original context, questioning which media we privilege, which we tend to overlook and how they complement and explicate each other.”

Modern themes for an enduring subject

In term two, Art and Ecology confronts the ongoing crisis facing our global ecosystems by investigating the relationship between nature and culture, examining the visual history of non-human life and rethinking art’s history through insightful new work into toxic pollution and black and indigenous ecologies.

In the first term, Thinking across Media encourages students to consider the many visual influences on an artist and how different media may have interacted when they produced their work.

“Traditionally, History of Art courses are arranged by subject area, often with a strict chronology. We’ve shaken that up by structuring the teaching thematically. The theme dictates the content of each term,” says Lydia, as she reveals the exciting twist to ICE’s new Master’s. “It means we cover a broad range of art and approaches, from early examples to the modern era, within the same teaching block.”
Finally, Visual Cultures of Activism looks at how art became increasingly activist during the 20th century, digging into the global surrealist movement and other strands from around the world, including Mexican Muralism, neo-indigenous art and the use of ‘craft’ to empower women.

For each unit, Lydia is working alongside another academic expert to curate and teach the content. As such, Dr Christina Faraday, Dr Lucy Whelan and Dr Lorna Dillon co-direct terms one to three, respectively.

“Alongside lectures and seminars, we’ll be holding sessions in the museums and libraries of the University,” says Lydia. “The visits link to the course’s themes so that students gain relevant first-hand insight into real objects and collections in Cambridge. Our goal is to introduce students to the latest research and get them to think critically for themselves rather than present established narratives that go unquestioned.”

A chance to dive into a personal passion

In the second year, students complete a dissertation on a specific area of their choice with a personal supervisor supporting their work. With the peer-learning community such an important part of every programme at ICE, the entire cohort comes together three times a year to share findings, present work and exchange feedback.

Throughout the course, students benefit from full College membership at the University of Cambridge, joining one of Wolfson, St Edmund’s, Murray Edwards or Lucy Cavendish Colleges. The inaugural MSt is now open for applications, and, as Lydia explains, it acts as both an end goal and stepping stone: “We want to offer students who’ve learned at undergraduate level a chance to progress to the next level, to gain a postgraduate qualification for their professional work or even to prepare for PhD study. It’s a great way to learn and develop research skills and hone in on a specialist topic of interest.

“The course is going to cover themes not always considered by other History of Art courses. We’re examining the cutting-edge of our subject, anchored in the skills, rigour and discipline you’d expect of a University of Cambridge Master’s.”

Learn more

To find out more about the new MSt in History of Art and Visual Culture at ICE, visit: www.ice.cam.ac.uk/mst-hoa
Meet the ICE tutors

Have you ever wondered what makes your course tutors tick? Inside ICE meets some of the Institute’s academics to find out more about them: from what they love about their subject to their current research projects.

Dr Joanne Limburg

**Field:** Creative Writing  
**Course:** MSt in Creative Writing

Why should people study your subject?
Even if you have never thought of writing professionally, there’s something so satisfying about being able to express yourself in written language. The practice you gain in playing close attention to language will improve your general writing skills, whatever your field. And it’s creative writing; it’s serious play, you’re making something. Who doesn’t enjoy making stuff?

What do you love about your subject?
I get to make something. I get to be part of a conversation that’s been going on since language began. I find out what I really think and feel. And it’s equally satisfying to facilitate that process in other people.

How is your subject relevant to our current world?
People will always need to engage with language, whether as speakers or listeners, readers or writers. Writing creatively enables us to better formulate our thoughts about ourselves and the world in it.

Dr Aleksandra Koutny-Jones

**Field:** History of Art  
**Course:** Undergraduate Diploma in History of Art

Why should people study your subject?
History of Art boasts an immediacy which few subjects can offer; students can instantly share their responses to objects and artworks before exploring them in greater depth. It provides the tools to engage more actively with the heritage around us, whether that is in a local museum or on a long-awaited international trip. And History of Art is a cumulative discipline: the more art you study, the more confident you will become at interpreting new artworks and building connections between them.

What do you love about your subject?
History of Art is the ultimate interdisciplinary subject. Visual imagery has the potential to bring together disciplines as wide-ranging as science, literature, theology, music and classics. It brings together people, too – you are never stuck for something to talk about if you are standing in front of a work of art! What is more, every exhibition you see, art history article you read or course you take broadens your expertise and prepares you to tackle new topics.

What do you like to do outside of work?
I write as well as read fiction, and have just completed a Master’s degree in Creative Writing. I also enjoy travelling and have a couple of trips to Central Europe planned for next year, if all goes according to plan!
Dr Nick Bradley

Field: Creative Writing
Course: MSt in Creative Writing

Why should people study your subject?
Writing is one of the most useful transferrable skills in life. How we are able to express our thoughts and feelings on the page is an important survival skill in and of itself. Being able to put down ideas clearly and succinctly has provided comfort and respite for our species for thousands of years. Using words well and understanding their effects is something that can be taken to any job or walk of life. The act of storytelling is a beautiful thing, and studying how to improve its various techniques is a rewarding and wonderful endeavour.

What do you love about your subject?
I love the fact that reading literature allows people to connect with minds who have long since vanished from this earth. Their writing lives on, in the words on the page. Their thoughts are still alive, waiting to be read and brought to life once again. This is something I aspire to as a writer – to be able to create a piece of writing that will live on again in readers’ imaginations. I love this thought, and it makes me feel more connected to humanity.

What research projects are you currently working on?
Aside from teaching on the MSt, I have plans for a book, and am involved with arts and culture organisations in Germany that invite artists to create work about AI, culture, and society. I will also most likely start some new work soon that is reflexive and evaluative—it will involve studying practices of how we learn about and teach AI.

Maya Indira-Ganesh

Field: Digital Media and Cultural Studies of Technology
Course: MSt in AI Ethics and Society

Why should people study your subject?
‘AI’ comes wrapped up in a combination of Science Fiction fantasies, marketing hype, and technical jargon, to the extent that it becomes hard to examine its social, cultural, and political implications. And not just the implications of its harms and limits, but also its opportunities. There is a fascinating set of research domains historically associated with this applied field, and many new kinds social and cultural challenges facing existing institutions and the law. I believe we need technologists who bring a deep understanding of their own fields so they can critically assess what the applications of AI will mean for social, cultural, and public life. It is not all just about the technicalities of data science.

What do you love about your subject?
AI is intriguing because, despite all the hype, it is also about already-existing socio-technical infrastructures and institutions, and about literary and imaginative futures, about work and society and culture. So, it is fertile for study from many different angles, and presents many new challenges for us to think about. I love that there are many under-researched areas and under-applied technologies that we don’t know the answers to yet, but can work out with future students.

What research projects are you currently working on?
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Learn more
To find out more about our tutors, visit: www.ice.cam.ac.uk/tutors-a-z
A new pathway to medicine for mature students in East Anglia

Inside ICE hears from Course Director Dr Max Bodmer about the ICE Certificate in Higher Education in Pre-Medical Studies that’s aiming to bring fresh blood into the medical profession.

Pre-Medical Studies is an introductory course for those preparing for degrees in Medicine, but the new offering from ICE comes with a twist – it’s aimed at people who may not have the academic skills to study medicine but wish to do so. Instead, students are likely to be over 21 with a minimum of six GCSEs or equivalent at grade B or above and be based in the East of England. They’re unlikely to hold the usual CV for medical school applicants, having taken different career paths – as carers or armed forces personnel, for example.

Opening Medicine to a broader slice of society

“We’re designing the course with adult learners in mind, particularly those returning to education after a significant break,” begins Max. “Students will have some GCSE or equivalent qualifications but may not have the academic skills to study medicine. They will need to demonstrate the qualities and commitment required to be a doctor. We expect to hear from people who’ve started different careers or who already work in the NHS as healthcare assistants, care workers, lab technicians and so on. Potentially, they may have been inspired by what they’ve seen or experienced during the pandemic.

“It’s a pathway specifically intended for learners returning to education to get into the medical profession. So we’ll cover the core biology, chemistry and physics that students have missed in a more targeted way than a generic A-level,
Anglia Ruskin University’s School of Medicine at Chelmsford. While completing Pre-Medical Studies isn’t a guaranteed progression route to those schools, it’s a qualification that will be accepted by those universities as part of a UCAS application without re-doing A-levels."

Dr Sue Madden, Admissions Director at Norwich Medical School, says that by accepting the new qualification, UEA is helping to provide valuable career opportunities for the area: "The Pre-Medical Studies course at ICE is an important bridge for mature students wishing to study and work in medicine while remaining in the region. That’s incredibly important to the development of the local workforce."

A strength of this course is that it has been designed in collaboration with the region’s medical schools, ensuring academic rigour and an accurate insight into the demands of undergraduate medicine. Students also get support during the UCAS application process, which we know can be challenging for those outside the traditional school system."

Max agrees that a key advantage for students is a regional focus without being tied to a single location: "If you don’t have the traditional entry requirements but live in King’s Lynn or Basildon, for example, you could potentially continue studying in Norwich or Chelmsford. For the first time, there’s a possible route to practising medicine on your doorstep."

The course gets underway in September 2022, and Max is keen to stress that the team is ready to talk to prospective applicants: "We encourage anyone who’s interested in applying to have a conversation with us. Everyone has unique circumstances, and we’re here to give clear guidance, so we welcome people getting in touch."

Our new course is one of only two of its kind in the UK open to people without A-levels or equivalent,” notes Max. “Pre-medical courses also generally only permit entry to the institution they’re delivered in, whereas we’re working in partnership with the University of Cambridge School of Clinical Medicine, Norwich Medical School at the University of East Anglia (UEA) and Anglia Ruskin University’s School of Medicine at Chelmsford. While completing Pre-Medical Studies isn’t a guaranteed progression route to those schools, it’s a qualification that will be accepted by those universities as part of a UCAS application without re-doing A-levels."

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Applications are now open, and we have a series of open events planned for the coming months. To find out more about the new Pre-Medical Studies course and sign up for these events, visit: www.ice.cam.ac.uk/pre-med
It’s all in the mind:

How the Undergraduate Certificate in Cognitive Psychology can change the way you see your life

How does the human mind work? How does thinking happen exactly and what is the relationship between the mind, the brain and the body?

Whether it’s unpacking the complexities of normal, day-to-day cognitive functions, or seeking to understand – and address – different psychopathological disorders or mental illness, human beings have long been fascinated by the anatomy of thinking.

There’s never been a more exciting time to explore the mysteries of the human mind. Advances in technology innovation are revealing more and more about the mind body system and experimental behavioural research is a dynamic and rapidly-growing field.

The Undergraduate Certificate in Cognitive Psychology offers students a compelling and highly accessible introduction to the fundamentals of psychology – and the exciting world of behavioural research and experimentation. It’s little wonder that the course attracts students from every walk of life, says Academic Director, Dr Giulia Mangiaracina.
Psychology addresses so many questions that are integral to human life: why we think the way we do; how memory, emotion, language and attention work and how we can stimulate the brain to improve them. It’s a thrilling field to study, to learn about and to work in. And the diversity of our students really reflects that. Participants hail from around the world and a breadth of backgrounds. They join the course for different reasons, says Giulia. Some students are looking for an essential academic grounding in psychology before going on to further study. Others have a long-standing fascination that they wish to explore for personal or professional reasons.

“Sometimes our students become so fascinated that they decide to go further with their studies,” Giulia says. “We have other students who join us from healthcare or teaching and who are looking to enrich their professional understanding. And others are looking to change their life or career in some way. What they all have in common is a commitment to the learning that really speaks to their fascination with the subject.”

The part-time format of the course makes it highly flexible for everyone, whatever their motivation, she adds, because it can be combined with other commitments. Moreover, entry requirements do not stipulate existing knowledge or experience, as the content covers the fundamentals of modern psychology right through to the latest developments in neuropsychology and brain imaging. This is a comprehensive and dynamic learning experience, Giulia stresses.

“Over the course of 9 months, we cover the historical development of psychology to the experimental method in understanding the mind and behaviour. Across the three units, our students go from the background to the conceptual understanding of research and statistical methodology, and in the last term of the course, they have the chance to run their own experiments, collecting, analysing and presenting data.”

The course is taught exclusively online. Live interaction with tutors and peers is enabled by synchronous classroom sessions,” says Giulia. And the learning is augmented by videos, podcasts, forums, quizzes and the VLE, organised by students where they can connect to share questions, opinion and thoughts. The result is a learning experience that is simultaneously open and accessible to students from all over the world.

“This year we had students from the UK and the rest of Europe, North America, Asia and Africa and we all profit enormously from the diversity of perspectives, views and opinions. It’s both challenging and hugely rewarding to experience how different minds respond to the issues that we raise.”

In addition to the knowledge and understanding they glean, students also emerge from the course with enhanced creative thinking and communications skills, adds Giulia. As a course requirement, they present the data they collect from their own experiments, which accelerates the ability to articulate theories, and to deliver and receive critical feedback.

Continued overleaf >>
We support our students in building these really important skills. They gain the ability and the confidence to develop, share and defend their own new ideas and opinions across a range of fascinating topics. Whatever they choose to do beyond the course, they come away having mastered something – they learn to understand concepts and make them their own.

This course is an inclusive learning experience. And Giulia would encourage anyone with a genuine interest in psychology to go ahead and apply.

“We don’t stipulate that you have qualifications or prior experience in this field, we only require proficiency in English. In terms of writing and presenting skills, we will give you all the support you need to develop confidence and capability.”

This is a learning environment that combines all the academic quality of Cambridge and a hugely inclusive and welcoming space to learn and to explore new ideas, she says.

“You’ll develop new skills, and you’ll come away seeing your own life differently. So if you feel the passion for psychology, go for it!”

Learn more

To find out more about the Undergraduate Certificate in Cognitive Psychology at ICE, visit: www.ice.cam.ac.uk/cognitive-psychology

Student spotlight

Alma is a teacher based in Germany. She tutors secondary students in STEM subjects. An interest in psychology coupled with a desire to build more effective learning relationships with her pupils brought her to this course. The experience has resulted in huge rewards in different areas of her career, she says.

“Psychology is hugely bound up with teaching – especially when you’re teaching adolescents with developing minds. But the standard teaching qualifications don’t really go into psychology in depth, and when you are practicing it can be quite hard to find professional development opportunities. This course was unique. It connected all the dots between the research and classroom practices and techniques.

“The course has also impacted the work I do in coaching and mentoring students back in my old high school. I’m very motivated to give back in this sense, and I’ve acquired new tools to help young people reframe and address issues. So it’s helping me to change lives for the better.”

Alma is at the early part of her career and her plans for the future are starting to take interesting shape. “Whatever path I follow, it’s very clear to me that psychology will be a huge part of it.”
Celebrating 30 years of fundraising for the National Garden Scheme

In summer 2021, the gates of Madingley Hall gardens opened to the public once again as part of the National Garden Scheme, marking the partnership’s 30th consecutive year of raising vital funds for charity.

As with everything in a garden, the idea for the collaboration began as a seed to be nurtured. The inspiration came from then ICE Deputy Director and Warden of Madingley Hall, Susan Rawlings, and her young Head Gardener, Richard Gant, who planned their first National Garden Scheme opening for June 1992. Richard, still Madingley Hall’s Head Gardener today, remembers thinking the gardens had plenty to contribute to society: “Part of the University’s mission is to play its part in the local community. We felt this was a way of allowing more people to enjoy the gardens while doing something positive.”

The National Garden Scheme gives visitors access to more than 3,600 private gardens in England and Wales. Since its inception in 1927, it has donated over £60 million to nursing and health charities, including Marie Curie and Macmillan Cancer Support.

From that first step in 1992, Richard and his team have never looked back. The annual event has now welcomed at least 8,500 visitors to enjoy the gardens and raised more than £40,000 for a combination of the Scheme’s charities and the restoration fund for St Mary Magdalene Church, which sits just within the Halls’ gates.

A collective, community effort

“It’s now a regular focal point for our Garden teams to work towards every year, and an opportunity to showcase and appreciate their hard work,” says Richard. “At the 2021 event, thanks to the cold April and wet June, the gardens looked like a lush English country garden. It was very satisfying to have so many visitors back after restricting numbers in 2020.

“It’s a pleasure working with the local village to put the event on every year. Volunteers from the church help with stewarding and provide teas and homemade cakes, while Institute colleagues also kindly donate their Sunday afternoons to make everything run smoothly. We enjoy that sense of community.”

In September, the National Garden Scheme presented a commemorative plaque to the Institute, which will be displayed at the entrance to the walled garden, and in recognition of his personal contribution over 30 years, Richard was given an engraved fork and trowel.

Not that Richard has any plans to hang up his new tools and end the partnership – the date for the 31st NGS opening of Madingley Hall gardens has already been set for 19 June, 2022.

Learn more

To find out more about Madingley Hall and gardens, visit: www.madingleyhall.co.uk/

To find out more about the National Garden Scheme, visit: https://ngs.org.uk/
As part of its commitment to lifelong learning, the Institute of Continuing Education offers a diverse range of weekend-long residential courses in the grand setting of Madingley Hall and Gardens. Running throughout the academic year, the popular courses are designed for all audiences to engage passions old and new and are led by some of the university’s finest academics.

But what’s it like to be a short-course student? Two learners studying *Feminism and Fantasy* by Virginia Woolf, with lead tutor Dr Claire Nicholson, kept a diary of their weekend for Inside ICE.

## Exploring short courses: a weekend of Woolf at Madingley Hall

### Anne, retired hospital doctor

“I’ve always loved reading, but my girls’ grammar school discouraged science students from studying English literature beyond age 13. In retirement, I joined reading groups and realised that a good tutor makes a huge difference to my experience. I enjoyed my previous ICE residential courses enormously. I chose this one because I admire Woolf’s essays but struggle with her fiction. I was intrigued to see whether the course could expand my appreciation of *Orlando*.”

**Friday**

The evening introductory session (after an excellent dinner) gives us a chance to get to know one another in a relaxed context. Dr Nicholson is an experienced and lively tutor with real command of her subject, and the group is small and friendly. There’s an interesting selection of relevant books from Dr Nicholson’s library, which I enjoy browsing over the next two days.

**Saturday**

We have four classroom sessions interspersed with coffee and meal breaks (great flapjacks!) and some free time in the afternoon to walk in the gardens or watch a film of *Orlando*. I opt for the latter and enjoy discussing the merits of film and text. Dinner is delicious!

**Sunday**

We watch the remainder of the film – scheduled this way at the group’s request – and have two further seminars in which we discuss Woolf’s feminism, the historical context in which she was writing and the ongoing influence of her feminist texts.

The varied ages and backgrounds of course participants is enriching – everyone comes with a slightly different agenda. I’ve loved being back at beautiful Madingley Hall. To be in a group with fellow enthusiasts, led by an expert, is the most enjoyable learning environment imaginable. And the breakfasts are marvellous!”
Connor, English Literature student

“What initially appealed to me about this course was that it assumed no previous knowledge but offered the opportunity to learn more if desired. And the compact schedule allowed me to complete it during my university’s reading week.

Friday
I’m struck by Madingley Hall’s lavish gardens and architecture – plenty of indoor and outdoor space, making for a comfortable and relaxed setting. The dinner gives students time to discover each other’s motivations, which makes me appreciate the diverse range of backgrounds. Hearing their different perspectives provides insight I may have otherwise missed. The evening lecture provides a good foundation of historical context.

Saturday
Lively discussions, engaging talks and detailed readings produce wide-ranging views of the texts. We listen to radio recordings of Woolf and watch a film adaptation, enabling me to discover the text’s modern-day resonance. Dr Nicholson is extremely knowledgeable and guides students through the material. The three meals provide the perfect opportunity to consolidate knowledge in a more informal environment.

Sunday
The final day maintains the intensity of learning and allows for considered and open discussions. The resources brought to the study space also mean that, during breaks, students can further research any areas of interest. The final meal lives up to the high standards of the rest and is a fitting conclusion to a highly informative and interactive course, which reinforces my passion for Woolf’s works and leaves me wanting to research more.

ICE’s in-person, residential course provided high-quality content in an inspiring setting. The busy schedule meant that the weekend was highly productive, and exploring Madingley Hall’s grounds during free time made me appreciate the experience all the more.

Learn more
To find out more about residential weekend courses at ICE, visit: www.ice.cam.ac.uk/weekend
More pathways to learning, as ICE increases courses on edX

For almost 150 years, ICE’s purpose has been to provide wide-ranging, open-entry and affordable education that drives societal change and promotes opportunity and fairness. Now, the Institute is expanding access to its learning even further as it strengthens its partnership with the online learning platform edX.

In our connected world, more people than ever have the chance to benefit from learning and discovery – almost five billion people across the globe now have access to the internet. As such, education providers can use a variety of innovative methods to offer learning worldwide. There’s no longer a one-size-fits-all approach.

ICE has been hosting popular online courses alongside its extensive in-person portfolio for 12 years. Students of these courses benefit from a close sense of community between learners and academics. While it’s a proven, successful approach that remains at the Institute’s heart, enabling the broadest possible access to lifelong learning is integral to ICE’s mission.

A first for the University

That’s why, in 2020, ICE launched the University of Cambridge’s first course on edX, a platform that reaches over 50 million learners in every corner of the planet. The Writing for Performance and the Entertainment Industries MicroMasters is a largely self-paced, part-time course that can be studied entirely for free through edX, although learners opting for the paid programme get additional benefits, such as live webinars and access to the final capstone course which includes an essay, an opportunity for peer feedback on writing and an end-of-course test. If accepted onto the MSt in Writing for Performance, the MicroMasters certificate is the equivalent of 30 credits towards the course. Having completed the standard application process, several of the first MicroMasters students are now enrolled on this year’s MSt.
The numbers for ICE’s first foray into edX are dizzying – almost 44,000 learners, aged between 16 and 100, from 150 countries accessed the course. Despite the large cohort, the sense of community among learners persists, with a small group of students currently producing a short film.

Study the principles of finance at your leisure

Alongside the Writing for Performance MicroMasters, now in its second year, is a second ICE offering – a self-paced course called Foundations of Finance. This can then lead to a further two courses which make up a Professional Certificate in Applied Corporate Finance. All of ICE’s courses on edX are pitched at an equivalent level to first-year undergraduate study, and the finance courses are already proving a success, with the first Foundations course attracting almost 5,000 students in its opening months.

Doug Williamson, the tutor leading both Foundations of Finance and Applied Corporate Finance, thinks the courses are well suited to engaging a wide audience through the edX platform: “We try to keep the material as interactive as possible while still allowing students to take part at their convenience. As well as listening to content, there are opportunities for learners to test themselves and contribute to discussions.

“We concentrate on including the essential ‘need-to-know’ information in the pre-recorded material. That releases time to gain the perspectives of a diverse range of people from over 100 countries on topics better suited to discussion. I find that really exciting.”

Leading an ICE course on edX is also a learning experience for Doug, who is a keen student of teaching methods, constantly looking for ways to improve: “I feel that I’m working for a centre of international teaching excellence. I love that we have tutor symposiums at ICE where tutors share ideas and best practice, for example. I learn vast amounts from them.”

More courses coming soon

Given the success of its first courses, it’s no surprise that ICE intends to continue expanding its edX portfolio, with news about additional courses on the platform expected soon. The Institute also has many online courses starting throughout the year on its established in-house virtual learning environment, so the choice for learners across the world has never been greater.
New year, new directions?

What’s your learning resolution for 2022? We asked ICE students to tell us what promises they’ll make for their future learning. Here’s what they said:

J.E., MSt in Creative Writing
Editor and forty-something Korean American career-changer in Brighton.

Perfection’s not the goal. As a former English teacher, I know very well that fulfilment isn’t predicated upon high marks. Life’s too short to play it safe all the time. Pursuing a Master’s in Creative Writing has long been overdue, and I won’t waste this education on what I think I ought to write — I’m hurling my words at what I need to write, taking risks to build up every muscle I’ve got.

Gabriele, Undergraduate Diploma in Coaching
UK Managing Director of a global chemical company.

To engage in high-level thinking and become braver in using my own voice from a basis of authority. Working with a coaching supervisor motivates me to intensify my personal reflective practice which drives me to develop into an authentic coaching dialogue partner. After 30+ years in managerial and executive positions it’s now time for me to sort out my mental wardrobe.

Jazmin, Postgraduate Certificate in Research and Innovation Leadership
Medical Coordinator, Academic Advisor, squash player, bike rider and keen walker.

To learn how to effectively design research projects. I also want to learn how to communicate effectively with peers and institutions. I believe that this course will strengthen my skills to design my projects, provide a global vision and construct my own research network. I expect to implement this knowledge in my research and teaching.

Catherine, Undergraduate Certificate in Cognitive Psychology
Pianist and piano teacher, married, with a daughter at university. Involved with performing and teaching music throughout life.

To search for more confidence in my learning: confidence to be wrong, to just ‘go for it’ and to learn through mistakes without judging myself negatively for having made them. It is never too late to learn, and I am embarking on a path to train to become a music therapist, uniting my interest in psychology and my musical skills. An increase in confidence would help me realise my intentions.

Katherine, MSt in Creative Writing
Consultant Anaesthetist in a Major Trauma Centre, enjoys music and hill walking.

My plan for the coming year is to allow myself to be happy in it! The course is rich, and the opportunities are legion; I intend to make the most of them and contribute as much as I can. The very process of learning something new and different has already been very fruitful; I intend to allow that to touch the other areas of my life in the next year.

Arianna, Postgraduate Certificate in Research and Innovation Leadership Apprenticeship
Postdoctoral Research Associate, scientist.

Two of my most anticipated modules are taking place in 2022. From these I aim to improve my management skills and get further insight into managing research projects and leading successful teams. So, if I were to set a resolution for my learning, I would put management at the top of the list (with all its possible declinations: projects, people, anxiety in a never-ending pandemic!).

Sana, MSt in Creative Writing
Writer, educator, mum of 2 boys and compulsive coffee drinker.

My hope is to go forth bravely into the realms of poetry and screenplay. My debut novel just came out, but I would like to take more risks with my writing by exploring intertextuality, form and blurred lines across genres. I’d also like to read much more, so I’m on the lookout for a time-turner to add more hours to my day!