Postgraduate Certificate & Diploma Application Guide

2024 - 25 Admissions Cycle

For entry onto programmes in Michaelmas term 2024 - Easter 2025

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Introduction

A Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma programme) is an academically rigorous, part-time programme usually undertaken over one year (two years' if it's a Diploma programme). It contains a significant taught element and a research project with associated dissertation.

Taught elements are normally broken down into discrete in person residential modules, which all students must attend. Research projects may be work-related, if appropriate. The programmes are designed to be flexible in order to support students with a variety of circumstances, including international students. Note that some programmes require you to have relevant industry experience.

Cambridge Postgraduate programmes are tough: we offer a lot and we expect a lot. But if you have the commitment, the ability and the motivation, you can expect great rewards.

The application process

Applying to start a Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma involves five key stages.

- 1. Choosing your course
- 2. Preparing your application
- 3. Submitting your application
- 4. Receiving a conditional offer
- 5. Confirmation of admission

This document is designed to help you understand each stage. It is worth noting that the application process can take a number of months depending on when you start. If you have other considerations and timeframes are of concern please contact pgadmissions@ice.cam.ac.uk.

Who's involved

The Postgraduate Certificate & Diploma programmes at Cambridge are 'owned' by a faculty or department relevant to the particular programme. There are, however, a number of other bodies with whom you should be familiar.

Institute of Continuing Education (ICE) Admissions

The admissions team at the University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education, known as ICE Admissions, will be your first official contact after you have chosen a course and made an application. ICE Admissions handles the application process for most University's Postgraduate Certificate & Diploma programmes, liaising with all parties on your behalf.

Department/Faculty

The Department/Faculty responsible for your chosen course will consider your application in line with the entry requirements. The Course Administrator within the Department/Faculty will be able to provide you with specific guidance regarding the course content and delivery.

Postgraduate Admissions Office (PAO)

PAO is responsible for the complaints and appeals procedure and reviewing regulations relating to postgraduate students.

1. Choosing a course

The course directory (https://www.postgraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses) provides an overview of each of the Postgraduate Certificate & Diploma programmes offered by the University of Cambridge.

If you require more specific information about a course's content or suitability, then you should contact the programme Administrator for the relevant course.

The Cambridge academic year typically runs from October to June and comprises three terms, known as Michaelmas, Lent and Easter. Please note that there is no standard start date for Postgraduate Certificate &

Diploma programmes. The start date for your particular programme can be found in the relevant part of the course directory.

2. Preparing your application

The *course directory* contains details of the **entry requirements** for each programme, and the **supporting documents** that you will need to provide when you apply.

Although many of the requirements for Postgraduate Certificate & Diploma programmes are similar, each programme is different. It is important that you understand the particular requirements for your course so that you can prepare your application in the most effective way.

If you are being considered for a place, you will be required to undergo an interview. Interviews can take many different formats; for example, face-to-face, video conference or telephone. The Department/Faculty responsible for your chosen course will contact you directly to make suitable arrangements.

If you are an overseas applicant, or if English is not your first language, please pay particular attention to the **language requirements** and **visa** sections below. Failure to fulfil the associated requirements could jeopardise your place on the course.

Language requirements

If your first language is not English, then you must meet the *University's English language requirements*. Please note that some programmes require a higher level of proficiency than others. See the *entry requirements* for your specific course for details.

If you are an overseas applicant, note that, if you are offered a conditional place on the course, the University of Cambridge cannot provide a visa support letter until you have met all of the conditions of the offer. These conditions may include passing a recognised English language test and achieving the minimum scores required for the particular course. You should therefore ensure that you leave yourself enough time to apply for a visa after you receive the results of your English language test and after any other conditions are fulfilled. Under these circumstances, we recommend that you do not wait until you hear the outcome of your application before arranging to take an English language test. Most language tests are valid for two years, the Admissions team will be able to assist you will the validity of any test results you hold.

The University's Postgraduate Admissions Office website has a language calculator which you can refer to for an **informal** guide as to whether you will be required to provide further evidence of your current English language proficiency. If your application is accepted by the Department, ICE Admissions will then determine whether a language test is necessary as part of the conditions of your offer. The calculator can be accessed:

https://www.postgraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/international/competence-english

Please note that you will be responsible for all costs associated with meeting the English language requirement, regardless of the outcome of your application.

Immigration route

The appropriate UK study immigration route for non-EEA nationals to attend programme sessions is the **short term study route** – please see the website for further information. https://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/info/visas-international-students

You should contact your prospective Department/Faculty to obtain a short-term study visa letter which you will need to include in your visa application or present at the border each time you visit, depending on your nationality. You cannot apply for this visa until your place is confirmed and therefore, we recommend applying for your course as soon as you can.

If you already hold immigration permission for the UK and believe that this will allow you to enter for programme sessions, you must send a copy of this to your course administrator and await confirmation that this will be acceptable. Please note, the standard visitor visa is not appropriate for study. Students who arrive in Cambridge without the correct immigration permission for study will not be able to start the course.

You should note that Postgraduate Certificate & Diploma students are not eligible for Tier 4 visas as Tier 4 is for full-time study and there is no study visa that will allow you to remain in the UK for the full duration of the programme.

Non-standard applicants

You are a **non-standard applicant** if you do not meet the academic entry requirements of the programme – normally at least a 2.i honours degree from a UK University, or an equivalent standard from an overseas institution – but have other experiences or circumstances that could be considered as a substitute. We welcome non-standard applicants with relevant professional experience. If you think this applies to you, please contact us by using the 'Ask a question' button on the relevant course webpage.

Fees

As a PG Certificate or PG Diploma student, you will pay a course fee . The value of this is stated in the *course directory* and is dependent on your *fee status*.

Your fee status is classified as either *UK* or *overseas*. For further information please see Appendix 1. ICE Admissions will determine your fee status once a decision to accept an application is received from the department.

Additional costs

In addition to the course fee, outlined above, you may need to meet additional costs. The University has highlighted this in the advance information given about the programme and set this out in your offer letter.

You will be expected to have appropriate finances to support all your costs for the duration of your programme. As well as those costs referenced in the paragraph above, your additional costs may include (but are not limited to):

- accommodation (either provided through your department or privately, and involving combined or separate costs for rent, utility services such as gas, electricity and access to phone and internet systems, and payments for other services such as kitchens, laundries, gym etc.);
- food
- personal expenses while you are on your programme (e.g. clothes, leisure activities, travel, membership of clubs and societies etc.); and
- travel to and from Cambridge.
- personal resources for study (computer, books, stationery, calculator etc.) which remain your property

The University does not accepts responsibility for any personal debt you may incur.

References

You will need to provide the details of **two referees** who can provide references written in English. These can be either academic and/or professional references. Once you provide the details of your referees, the system will automatically contact your referees **prior to submission of your application**. It is therefore important that you discuss your application with your referees before providing their details in the application form.

Your choice of referee should be someone who is best able to comment on your academic ability or explain why your work experiences would suit academic study. Your referees will not be required to give character references.

You will be asked to provide a **professional** email address for your referees when you apply. **We cannot accept references provided directly by applicants, or provided via a referee's personal email address.**

Please check that you have the correct email addresses and that your referees are happy and able to provide a reference for you before you submit your application form and payment. You can access and manage your referees' details via the **applicant portal**, details of which will be provided in your offer email. You can amend your referees' details up to the point at which a reference is submitted.

ICE Admissions may need to take extra steps to verify such references when we make an offer. This might include asking for the reference to be sent again, on official headed paper, if authenticity cannot be confirmed by other means.

References are submitted by the referee via an **electronic reference system**. We will contact your referees to give them access to this system after you have submitted your application.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your references are submitted. You should contact your referees directly to ensure they provide the reference by the application closing deadline.

After a reference has been successfully submitted by a referee, you will receive a confirmation email, and the reference status will be updated in your applicant portal.

We are not able to:

- accept references sent by email either from the applicant or via a third party.
- use references from any previous application that you have made.

Submitting a reference on paper

If you do not have an email address for your referee, or if the referee is unable to use the electronic reference system, please contact pgadmissions@ice.cam.ac.uk for further guidance.

Funding

You are strongly advised to research funding opportunities in advance of submitting your application.

If you are offered a conditional place, you will be required to complete a **financial undertaking form**. The purpose of this form is to confirm that you understand the financial obligations of your programme.

It is not the intention of the form to prove your personal ability to pay the fees, unless you are receiving funding from a third party such as a scholarship or bursary award (of which evidence will be required).

You should not expect to be able to obtain funding once you have started your course.

Some of the funding options available are as follows:

Self-funded. You will pay all fees yourself.

Employer-funded. In some instances, your employer may be willing to offer financial support for your personal and professional development. A supporting letter from your employer will be required, confirming their intention to offer financial support and outlining the amount that they will be providing.

University of Cambridge student funding. A database of student funding opportunities, administered by various parts of the University of Cambridge, can be found at www.student-funding.cam.ac.uk. Note that most of the opportunities listed are available only to students on full-time courses.

Postgraduate loan. You can find details of the UK Government's postgraduate loan scheme on the GOV.UK website at www.gov.uk/postgraduate-loan In summarylf you are a UK student you may be eligible to apply for a Postgraduate Master's Loan to help with the course fees and living costs while you study. For courses starting after August 2023, you can receive up to £12,167 and the amount you'll get is not based on your income or that of your family's. The loan is paid directly to you and since your course will last for more than 1 year, the loan will be divided equally across each year of your course. You only need to apply once for the Postgraduate Master's loan, even if your course is no longer than 1 year. Whether you qualify for a Postgraduate Master's Loan depends on certain criteria. Please visit the GOV.UK website for more information (https://www.gov.uk/masters-loan)

Other loans.

If you are a US citizen, some applicants have found success applying for a SmartOption Student Loan @ via Sallie Mae Funding. Please see further information on this loan option here: https://www.salliemae.com.

If you are currently serving in, or have previously served in the British Armed Forces, you may be eligible to apply for the Ministry of Defence Enhanced Learning Credits Scheme, or ELCAS for short. This promotes lifelong learning and provides financial support in each of a maximum of three separate financial years, and enables higher level learning of a nationally recognised postgraduatecourse. To learn more about this ELCAS scheme, please visit their website https://www.enhancedlearningcredits.com/

If you are a UK student on a course that could enable you to apply for a student loan, and you have a disability/mental health condition or specific learning disability, you may be able to apply for a Disabled Student's Allowance (DSA). This is designed to help you to buy or rent equipment to aid you in your studies or pay for the services of support workers to assist you. Please know that any previous study will not affect your eligibility for a Disabled Student's Allowance, even if you received financial support. There is no age limit on receiving this allowance. You can find further information on eligibility and the types of support available in the Disabled Student's Allowances (DSA's guide) on the GOV.UK website.

GOV.UK student finance page. You can find details of funding and financial support administered by external bodies, including professional and career development loans, on the GOV.UK website: https://www.gov.uk/career-development-loans

Prospects website. The Prospects website at www.prospects.ac.uk is also a useful source of information on different types of graduate funding. Some programme departments offer bursaries to applicants. See individual course sites for details

3. Submitting your application

Applications to Postgraduate Certificate & Diploma courses are normally made online, via the course directory at

https://www.postgraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses

If you are applying for more than one course, you will need to complete separate applications. Please ensure that you complete your application/s before the application deadline as specified in the *course directory*.

Alternative methods of application can be provided on request. To discuss your requirements please contact pgadmissions@ice.cam.ac.uk.

Application fees:

An application fee of £50 is normally charged for online applications (unless you are from a country which is eligible for fee waiver). The application fee payment is subject to a 14-day cancellation period, during which you will receive a full refund. For more information, see the $\underline{\text{terms \& conditions of the application fee}}$.

Please note that if you wish to apply on paper rather than online, an application fee of £100 will be payable for paper applications unless a paper application is provided as part of a reasonable adjustment relating to disability or long-standing medical condition.

You will need to pay the fee via the online applicant portal when submitting your application. Please contact pgadmissions@ice.cam.ac.uk for details of how to pay the paper application fee.

Applications are accepted until 11.59pm (British time) on the day of closing.

If you are experiencing difficulties with completing an application, please contact us to discuss alternative options via **email at** pgadmissions@ice.cam.ac.uk

The application process

Our Postgraduate Certificate & Diploma application process uses two online systems:

Pre-offer: applicant portal

You should complete your Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma application via the applicant portal. The link can be found in your offer communication.

Here you will be able to upload your supporting documents, complete and submit your application and pay the application fee (where applicable).

Please note that whilst it is possible to submit your application without all of your supporting documents, this may not give us enough information to assess your application. You should contactpgadmission@ice.cam.ac.uk prior to submitting your application if you are unable to provide all the required supporting documents.

Post-offer: Postgraduate Applicant Self-Service (PGSS)

Once your application has been approved and you have received an offer of admission, you will be invited by email to access your Postgraduate Applicant Self-Service Account. This email will contain an **applicant ID (USN)** and **password**.

It is important that you check your Self-Service Account regularly as it is the primary way in which we will communicate with you about your application. We will update your Self-Service Account as and when information becomes available.

The Self-Service Account is accessible 24 hours a day and allows you to:

- track the progress of your application.
- upload any new or remaining supporting documents that are required.
- tell us about changes to your contact details.
- view your offer conditions.
- accept or decline your offer.
- Print a certificate of confirmation once all conditions have been met and your place confirmed.

You will have provided details of your referees in your application form. These will be contacted automatically on your behalf, and you will not need to become involved unless we have difficulties in securing your references.

We recommend taking time to review the University's 'Guide to Using Postgraduate Applicant Self-Service', which can be found at https://www.postgraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/applying/applicant-portal-and-self-service-account

It is your responsibility to make sure that any remaining supporting documents are uploaded via your Self-Service Account under the category stated in your offer conditions. In most cases, we can accept scanned copies, however, we reserve the right to ask for original/certified copies at any stage.

Any uploaded document should be in an unencrypted PDF format, and no larger than 2 MB.

Your Self-Service Account displays a due date for the supporting documents you need to provide. If your supporting documentation arrives late there may be a delay in you meeting your offer conditions and you may not be confirmed on the programme.

We aim to process all materials received via your Self-Service Account **within 10 working days**, but during peak periods (May–July) this may take a little longer.

We will assess the supporting documents provided and if the evidence is sufficient to meet your offer conditions, the conditions will be marked as completed on your checklist as shown in your Self-Service Account.

If the documents you have provided are not sufficient to meet your offer conditions, we will alert you to this and let you know what you need to do to meet the conditions. If further information is required, the admissions team will communicate either via your self-service account or directly via email.

If your supporting documentation is not in English, you will be asked to provide an official translation by a registered translator.

If supporting documents (e.g. transcripts) are referred to your relevant Department/Faculty, or if you are a non-standard applicant, then they will need to be considered at a scheduled monthly committee meeting, which will require additional processing time.

We are unable to acknowledge receipt of your supporting documents via telephone or email, but your Self-Service Account will be updated as soon as we have processed the materials received.

4. Receiving a conditional offer

When a formal conditional offer has been made, we will notify you by email, and via your Self-Service Account, where you will be able to view your offer conditions and/or comments.

You will need to upload any outstanding or additional supporting documentation via your Self-Service Account as evidence of meeting each condition.

In some cases, conditional offers can be made prior to all the supporting documentation being uploaded. This is dependent on a number of factors and the particular programme you are applying for.

Terms of admission for Postgraduate Certificate & Diploma programmes

Before accepting or declining our conditional offer of admission, please ensure that you read the terms of admissions document which will be attached to your conditional offer email. This document provides important information about the terms and conditions relating to your conditional offer. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the ICE Admissions team via pgadmissions@ice.cam.ac.uk

Accepting or declining your conditional offer

If you wish to accept your conditional offer of admission onto a Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma programme, you must accept your conditional offer via your Self Service Account.

Unspent criminal convictions

Having a criminal conviction will not normally preclude you from studying at the University. However, the University ask for this information to enable us to discharge our safeguarding duties. If you have a relevant unspent criminal conviction at the time that you confirm your acceptance of this offer, you agree to inform the Admissions Manager. You agree to permit the University to share the information with each other and that if you are subsequently convicted of an offence during your time at Cambridge, you agree to inform the University and tpermit the University to share the information with each other. Supporting information on relevant unspent criminal convictions will be provided on the University's website at:

www.postgraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/postgraduate-applicants-previous-criminal-convictions

5. Confirmation of admission

When we are satisfied that you have met **all** of the offer conditions, we will notify you via your Self-Service Account, where it will show an updated status of '**Admission Confirmed'**. You will also be able to print a certificate of confirmation.

You will need to accept your offer, via your Self-Service Account, before we can confirm your admission to Cambridge. Under no circumstances should you attempt to start your course until we have notified you via your Self-Service Account that your admission has been confirmed.

Once your place is confirmed, your Department/Faculty will be able to issue the required letter to allow you to apply for a *visa should you need one*.

Supervisor

Where we have been notified of your proposed supervisor, their name will be detailed in both your notification of offer email and your Self-Service Account. If it is not, don't worry – we will contact you as soon as your supervisor is allocated. For some programmes, the Course Director is the supervisor for all students at the start of the course.

Final stage

Once your admission has been confirmed, you will be contacted by the Department/Faculty for your programme to initiate the preparations for you to start your studies. There will be some final administrative details to complete, such as fee payments, access to course materials and any dates of events that you are required to attend.

To contact us by email, please use the contact details below:

Genomic Medicine
Medical Education Master classes
Foundation Programme for Clinical Educators
Practical Science and Biocuration
Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
Postgraduate Certificate in Clinical Leadership, Clinical Education

genomics@ice.cam.ac.uk
pg-stem@ice.cam.ac.uk
pg-stem@ice.cam.ac.uk
professionalstudies@ice.cam.ac.uk
education@ice.cam.ac.uk
crel@ice.cam.ac.uk

Appendix 1: Fee Status

Criteria for classification as a home or overseas student

Your fee status determines the level of tuition fees you'll be charged and the type of financial support available to you, so it's important that you're classified correctly.

If you're made an offer of admission to the University, your offer will state what we believe your fee status to be, based on the information you have provided in your application and on regulations and guidance published by the UK Government.

All students whose fee status is not classified as 'Home' will be classified as 'Overseas'.

If you're unsure of your fee status, please visit the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) website for further information.

ICE Admissions has responsibility for determining your fee status for the purpose of paying the University Composition Fee and is obliged to follow UK Government regulations when making fee status assessments.

In your conditional offer of admission to the University, we will tell you what we have assessed your Fee Status to be, based on the information you have provided in your application. If you disagree with your fee status, you may request a fee status re-assessment by submitting a fee status assessment questionnaire, which can be found at www.ice.cam.ac.uk/fee-status-assessment-questionnaire), together with supporting documentation (this may include a copy of your passport, utility bills to prove residence, etc.). These should be uploaded to your Self-Service Account using the fee status category.

If you are unable to upload these materials, you should send them to:

Admissions Manager University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education Madingley Hall, Madingley Cambridge CB23 8AQ, UK

Fee status reassessment

Please visit the University's Fee Status webpage for information on fee status criteria and eligibility before raising a fee status reassessment request.

If you're a **new applicant** and you have been made an offer of admission but you believe that we have misclassified your fee status, you may request a fee status reassessment as stated above

If you're a **current Cambridge student or graduate** (undergraduate or postgraduate) and you're made an offer of admission for a **new postgraduate course**, your fee status will be reassessed for your new course at the point of offer. If you believe that we have misclassified your fee status, you may request a reassessment of your fee status

We are not able to process any fee status reassessments prior to an offer of admission.

Appendix 2: Policies

Policy and guidance

Information on the University's policies and guidance relating to graduate studies, which should be observed by all parties concerned with Postgraduate study, can be found on the University's student admissions webpages: www.admin.cam.ac.uk/students/studentregistry/current/graduate/policy/

Admissions appeals and complaints policy

An applicant who is dissatisfied with the admissions decision made by the Institute of Continuing Education can appeal the decision on one of the following grounds:

- 1. an error in the decision-making process or a procedural irregularity.
- 2. bias or perception of bias in the decision-making process.
- 3. extenuating circumstances, which, for good reason, the applicant did not inform ICE of in their application, which would have had a material impact on the admissions decision.

For further information please visit https://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/info/applicant-appeals-and-complaints-procedures

If your application has been rejected, in some circumstances you may have recourse to appeal or complain about the decision.

The Institute of Continuing Education (ICE) cannot give reasons for not offering admission, nor advise you how to improve your application. However, if you believe that there has been an administrative error, or if you believe you have been treated unfairly because of bias or prejudice, or if there are circumstances unknown to the University that might have affected the decision, you should write to the Director of Programmes at the Institute of Continuing Education within three weeks of receiving notification of the outcome, setting out your reasons. Please note, however, that there is no right to appeal against academic judgements made by the University.

Complaints

Academic decisions

The Institute of Continuing Education cannot provide feedback on admission decisions. Departments/Faculties are not obliged to provide feedback but may agree to do so and should be contacted directly.

The Institute of Continuing Education will not consider an appeal against an academic judgement made by the University.

Personal data

For information about how your personal data is used as part of the application and admission process please see https://www.information-compliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/data-protection/applicant-data

Appendix 3: Disabled applicants

The University makes every effort to anticipate and to make reasonable adjustments to support disabled students, including those with unseen disabilities and medical conditions.

Disabilities or medical conditions include:

- Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, AD(H)D, etc
- Autism or Asperger's syndrome
- Mental health conditions such as anxiety, bi-polar, etc
- Sensory and physical impairments
- Medical conditions such as epilepsy, diabetes, etc

If you have any disability or medical condition, you are encouraged to disclose this via the personal data sheet, which accompanies your application. It is helpful for us to know about these so that the University can assess your needs as early as possible and to give sufficient time for any reasonable adjustments to be made to enable you to undertake a particular course of study at Cambridge.

The personal data sheet is circulated to Departments/Faculties along with the rest of your application, but information on this sheet will not be considered when making the academic decision on whether to make an offer of admission. The sheet is circulated with the application because, if you do disclose a disability, it may be helpful for your Department to know this in the event that they wish to organise an interview, so that any relevant adjustments can be made.

If you have disclosed a disability or medical condition, and if you are made a conditional offer, your details will then be forwarded to the Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre (ADRC). They will contact you to discuss your particular needs and offer advice on, for example, access to Departments/Faculties, or transport options,. It is important that you respond to the ADRC as early as possible. Other things you may need to consider before applying include:

- Funding arrangements for equipment and assistance.
- Personal assistance/non-medical helper requirements.
- Examination allowances.
- Accommodation requirements.

If you have a specific disability which might need to be taken into account during your studies or examination, you are strongly encouraged to disclose this on the personal data sheet and to inform the supervisor. The staff of the ADRC can advise on accessing a range of support provisions including study skill support, specific examination/assessment arrangements and support for non-medical personal assistants such as proof readers, library help, etc.

Further information

- Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre: www.disability.admin.cam.ac.uk
- Disabled Students' Campaign: www.disabled.cusu.cam.ac.uk
- Disability Access Guide: www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/disability/guide