Which of these best describes my current situation?

A. I think I know what subject I want to study at university
B. I’m torn between a couple of subjects
C. I have no idea what I want to do
Course Choice Workshop

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In today’s session

• Post-18 options and university
• What subjects are available?
• Narrowing down your interests
• Deciding what course to study
• Exploring your subject
• Comparing courses at different universities
• Q&A
Options after College

Leaving school

- Apprenticeship or vocational training
- University
- Into work
Why University?

• For academically talented students, best way into an excellent career with higher earning potential (28% average increase for men and 53% for women)\(^1\)

• Access to excellent teaching and fantastic resources – explore your subject like never before

• Meet people from different backgrounds, make connections for your future and long-lasting friendships based on shared experience

\(^1\) Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, Research Paper No. 112
Different types of university – what do you want to study?

• Specialist universities and colleges for the arts, drama and music
• Modern universities offer courses directly linked to a particular career, e.g. media, marketing, graphic design
• Some universities specialise in sports/sports science related degrees
• Traditional universities focus on the academic subjects

Whatever you want, aim for the best for that subject!
Oxbridge and the Russell Group

• Top academic universities in the UK
• Includes Oxbridge
• ‘Big name’ universities you have heard of

• Characteristics
  • Top of their field in many academic subjects, traditional course structure and research-based teaching
  • Outstanding facilities and resources
  • Highly competitive: typical offers range from BBB to A*A*A
Why study at Oxford or Cambridge?

• World-class education
• Teaching by expert academics
• Extensive small-group teaching
• Superb facilities and resources
• Academic, pastoral and financial support
• Excellent graduate opportunities, irrespective of degree discipline
• Fantastic student experience
• Close-knit peer communities through the college system
Colleges at Oxbridge

A College is like a mini campus, providing a base for students.

Role of Colleges:
- admit students
- academic and pastoral care
- accommodation, dining and recreation
- organise small-group teaching
- facilities for academic study

Role of the University:
- determines course content
- organises lectures, seminars, practicals, and projects
- sets and marks examinations
- awards degrees

www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/colleges/what-is-a-college
Introducing Lucy Cavendish College

- Previously a College for mature-age (21+) women, now open to all
- We welcome all students for all subjects offered by the university
- We are uniquely committed to widening participation at Cambridge
- We pride ourselves in having one of the most socioeconomically diverse student communities in Cambridge
- Our students are driven by a desire to make a difference and who are committed to having a positive and lasting impact on society
What are we looking for?

• Academic ability and potential
• Satisfy any subject requirements
• Ability to think critically and independently
• Genuine subject interest – motivation and enthusiasm
• Vocational commitment (where appropriate)

All universities are looking for the brightest and the best students, irrespective of social, religious, school or financial background. So go for it!
What subjects are available?
Which of these is NOT a degree offered by a UK university?

• Horology
• Contemporary Circus
• Equine Psychology
• Cybercrime
• Arboriculture
• Nautical Science
How many possible courses are there to study in the UK?

37 000
What can I study?

There are **thousands** of courses to choose from!

- Something you’ve done at school
  - History, French, Maths, Physics...
- Something ‘vocational’
  - Medicine, Architecture, Veterinary Sciences, Engineering...
- Something completely new!
  - Criminology, History of Art, Catalan, Egyptology...
Starting to think about what you want to study

• Oxbridge are looking for students with a proper, well-founded interest in the subject

• Do your best to identify a subject that really interests you and apply for that

• A good place to start is to work out your broad interests…

What do I enjoy at school?

What am I good at?

What method of learning best suits me? (e.g., essays, problems, creative writing…)

What career do I want?
What are your academic interests?

• Answer the following questions
• Make a note of your answers
What kind of questions do you prefer to think about?

A: Questions that have one single correct answer, which you have to find

B: Questions that might have many different answers, depending on how you approach them

C: Questions that require me to sort individual things into groups
What kind of information do you prefer to focus on?

A: **Facts, numbers, statistics**, and ‘laws’ about what actually happens in the world (e.g. the law of gravity)

B: People’s **opinions, feelings, motivations**, and analysing the kind of **words** or **language** people use

C: I am interested in **what people think and feel**, but I like to use **numbers, statistics** and **facts** to measure them
What kind of task would you prefer to complete?

A: Solving a list of **mathematical problems**

B: Writing an **essay** or a piece of **creative writing**

C: Conducting a **survey** and interviewing people on their opinions, and then writing a **report** about the results
How would you know if the answer to a question was ‘true’?

A: I would conduct an **experiment** to test the answer and **repeat it in a controlled environment**. If I got the same answer every time, I would know that answer was true.

B: It isn’t important whether an answer is ‘true’ or not. The most important thing is **asking questions**, **exploring different perspectives**, and **deciding which argument has the best evidence** to back it up.

C: I would need a **theory** or a **model** to figure out what we mean by ‘true’. Then I would **collect real-life information** and use the theory or model to test whether it is true or not.
Mostly As: Maths and Sciences

- Maths
- Natural Sciences
  - Physics
  - Chemistry
  - Biology
- Medicine
- Veterinary Medicine
- Engineering
- Computer Science
- Psychology

I prefer to focus on facts, numbers, statistics, and ‘laws’ about what actually happens in the world (e.g. the law of gravity)

I enjoy thinking about questions that have one single correct answer, which you have to find
Mostly Bs: Arts and Humanities

- English Literature
- History of Art
- History
- Classics
- Theology
- Music
- Modern and Medieval Languages
- Asian and Middle Eastern Studies
- Classics
- Anglo Saxon, Norse and Celtic

I like thinking about questions that might have many different answers, depending on how you approach them.

I prefer writing essays and creative writing.

I enjoy learning about people’s opinions, feelings, motivations, and analysing the kinds of words and language people use.
Mostly Cs: Social Sciences

- Political Science
- International Relations
- Sociology
- Psychology
- Law
- Anthropology
- Economics
- Education
- Land Economy
- Geography
- Linguistics

I’m interested in what people think and feel, but I like to use numbers, statistics and facts to measure them.

I like to conduct surveys and interview people on their opinions, then writing a report about the results.
A mix: Interdisciplinary Courses

- Architecture
- Psychology
- Philosophy
- Archaeology
- Languages
- Linguistics

I enjoy applying lots of different sources, skills and points of view to solve one problem.

I like doing lots of different tasks and activities – I get bored studying just one thing!
How do I choose a degree course?
What are the most important factors?

Which do you think are important?

Which would your parents/guardians say are important?

Which do you think I’m going to say are important?

- What you enjoy
- Linked to a specific career
- What you’re good at
- Suits your learning style
- Something interesting
- You know someone doing the course
- Something exciting and new
- Intellectually stimulating
How do I decide what to study?

- What do I enjoy?
- What subjects are linked to this?
- What degree is necessary for this?
- What job do I want?
- What am I good at?
- What subjects are linked to this?
Checking your profile

- Some courses (particularly sciences) may require specific A-Levels
- Some universities have a list of subjects they don’t accept
- Generally, we recommend that students choose one or two ‘keystone’ subjects, and one or two additional subjects that are relevant to their interests and add something to their profile
Interested in... **Sciences and Mathematics**

- We advise any student interested in Sciences/Mathematics degrees at competitive universities to take **at least 3 Science/Mathematics keystone subjects**
- For students interested in the physical sciences – Physics, Engineering, Computer Science, etc. – and Mathematics itself (or related disciplines), we would also strongly recommend **Further Mathematics**
- It is definitely possible to secure an offer with just two of these, but it is less likely, certainly at Oxbridge
- Useful depending on the course you are applying for:
  - Psychology
  - Computing
  - Statistics
  - Design & Technology
  - Electronics
  - Geology
Interested in... **Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences**

- Students interested in a degree in this area would be well advised to pick from a range of academic, essay-based subjects in the first instance.
- They may also wish to add in one or more Science/Maths subjects, if they are skilled at these subjects.
- Any academic subjects which build relevant skills and knowledge will be useful.
Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences: General advice

Other good choices, likely to be useful:
- An additional Language
- Economics
- Further Maths
- Geography
- Religious Studies
- Sciences (Biology, Chemistry or Physics)
- Ancient History
- Classical Civilisation
- Philosophy

Useful depending on the course you are applying for:
- English Language/Literature & Language
- Music
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Archaeology
- Environmental Science
- Government & Politics
- History of Art
Subjects to avoid as one of ‘only’ three subjects

There are some subjects which are generally less competitive as one of ‘only’ three A Level choices for applications to Oxbridge and the most competitive Russel Group universities.

- Art & Design (unless applying for related courses, such as Architecture or Fine Art)
- Drama & Theatre (unless applying for related courses, such as the English, Drama and the Arts track in Education)
- Business
- Criminology
- Film Studies
- Law
- Media Studies
- Photography
- Physical Education
- General Studies
- Critical Thinking
- Vocational Level 3 courses
How do I decide what to study?

University course choice

What subjects are linked to this?

What do I enjoy?

What subjects are linked to this?

What am I good at?

What degree is necessary for this?

What job do I want?
Which careers need a specific degree?

- Doctor
- Vet
- Engineer
- Architect
- Psychology
- Secondary School Teacher

Even though these careers require specific degrees, this can sometimes be achieved by e.g., a graduate course or other training.

Most careers DO NOT require a specific degree.
Course choice and career prospects

- Some careers **require** a specific degree
  - Architect
  - Engineer
  - Doctor
  - Vet
  - Psychologist
  - Secondary school teacher

- Some jobs in the commercial/business world (~5% of the total) also require particular degree subjects: typically, Mathematics or Languages

Even though these careers require specific degrees, this can sometimes be achieved by e.g., a graduate course or other training.
Course choice and career prospects

• The majority of top jobs don’t specify a degree subject – they ask for a good degree (Class I or II.1) from a good university, in any subject (and if necessary, professional training following your degree)

• Typical ‘open access’ careers include:
  - Law
  - Teaching
  - Business
  - IT
  - Accountancy and finance
  - Public administration
  - Journalism and publishing
  - Teaching
Graduate destinations of Cambridge historians (2018)
Graduate destinations of Cambridge engineers (2018)
How do I decide what to study?

- **What do I enjoy?**
- **What subjects are linked to this?**
- **University course choice**
- **What degree is necessary for this?**
- **What job do I want?**
- **What am I good at?**
- **What subjects are linked to this?**
What do I enjoy?

• University are broad and often interdisciplinary
• It is worth looking around at related subjects as you may find subjects that are a better fit
• There might be subjects you haven’t heard of!
Activity

Go to undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses

Find:
1. A new course which isn’t something you’re taking at A-Level but which links to an A-Level you’re studying
2. A subject which suggests English, History or Maths as a requirement or useful preparation
3. A module/paper in one subject which crosses over with another subject
Activity

Go to [undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses](undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses)

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3. A module/paper in one subject which crosses over with another subject
Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic

If you’re fascinated by medieval history, literature and languages, and you relish the prospect of doing your own research using original source materials, this course – unique in the UK to Cambridge – will appeal.
What subjects are available at Cambridge?

- Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic
- Archaeology
- Architecture
- Asian and Middle Eastern Studies
- Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology
- Classics
- Computer Science
- Economics
- Education
- Engineering
- English
- Geography
- History
- History and Modern Languages
- History and Politics
- History of Art
- Human, Social, and Political Sciences
- Land Economy
- Law
- Linguistics
- Mathematics
- Medicine
- Modern and Medieval Languages
- Music
- Natural Sciences
- Philosophy
- Psychological and Behavioural Sciences
- Theology, Religion, and Philosophy of Religion
- Veterinary Medicine
What do I need/want from a degree? Can I get this elsewhere?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enjoy learning languages?</th>
<th>Interested in history?</th>
<th>Love reading literature?</th>
<th>Want to study Medicine?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modern and Medieval Languages</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Biological Natural Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classics</td>
<td>Classics</td>
<td>Modern and Medieval Languages</td>
<td>Psychological and Behavioural Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian and Middle Eastern Studies</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Asian and Middle Eastern Studies</td>
<td>Veterinary Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic</td>
<td>Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic</td>
<td>Classics</td>
<td>Biomedical Sciences (Oxford)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History and Modern Languages</td>
<td>Modern and Medieval Languages</td>
<td>History</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What do I need/want from a degree? Can I get this elsewhere?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Love learning about ideas and societal systems?</th>
<th>Interested in culture and human behaviour?</th>
<th>Enjoying studying a breadth of disciplines?</th>
<th>Enjoy making and designing things?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classics</td>
<td>Archaeology</td>
<td>Asian and Middle Eastern Studies</td>
<td>Architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Chemical Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Computer Science</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Modern and Medieval Languages</td>
<td>Modern and Medieval Languages</td>
<td>Computer Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human, Social and Political Sciences</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Economy</td>
<td>Linguistics</td>
<td>Psychological and Behavioural Sciences</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Psychological and Behavioural Sciences</td>
<td>Psychological and Behavioural Sciences</td>
<td>Psychological and Behavioural Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Theology</td>
<td>Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theology</td>
<td></td>
<td>Joint honours courses</td>
<td>Design</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MDes Design

• A brand-new Cambridge degree
• Brings together architecture, engineering and materials science in a single degree
• Blends technical content with design freedom
• Offers a new approach to tackling societal and environmental issues, including poverty and climate action
• Studio work and practical skills, including drawing, writing, coding, and fabricating, will complement taught courses in the humanities, social and natural sciences, and mathematics
I’m stuck between two subjects. What should I do?
Be proactive in your learning: undertake **supracurricular activities**

- Subject-specific academic exploration
- Goes beyond your studies in school
- Directly relevant to your chosen degree subject
- Activities you do for fun in your free time
- Supracurricular activities are directly focused on academic exploration, whereas extracurricular activities are not

- Helps you discover what subjects really interest you
- Show universities that you can work independently & your interest goes beyond the school curriculum
- Beneficial for your current studies, all aspects of the application process and beyond
- An interesting and rewarding process: supracurricular exploration should be fun!
Exploring your subject

Wider reading
University lectures and talks, MOOCs
Theatre
Academic taster sessions or workshops
Work experience
Visits to museums/exhibitions (also digital collections)

Keeping up-to-date with current events
Podcasts and radio shows
Films and documentaries
Practicing key subject-specific skills
Competitions

www.lucy.cam.ac.uk/study-us/prospective-applicants
Comparing courses across different universities
How many universities are there in the UK?
How many universities are there in the UK?

165
How can I decide where I want to go?
Universities can differ regarding...

- Courses on offer
- Modules on offer
- Style of teaching
- Reputation and quality of teaching
- Entry requirements
- Facilities
- Location
- Type (campus, city, collegiate)
Type (campus, city, collegiate)

**Campus**
- Bath
- Warwick
- Exeter
- Birmingham
- Nottingham

**City**
- Manchester
- Bristol
- Newcastle
- Sheffield
- Edinburgh

**Collegiate**
- Cambridge
- Oxford
- Durham
- York
Reputation and quality of teaching

- Teaching Excellence Framework
  - The Guardian
  - THE World University Rankings
Method of assessment

• Exams?
• Coursework?
• Dissertation?
• Group work?
• Seminar contributions?
• Presentations?
• Lab reports?
• Over 3 years?
• Just in your final year?
Courses on offer

• Courses at different universities can vary significantly with regard to what they involve
• It is important to research which courses are the best fit for your interests
• Find out what you’ll actually be studying/doing by looking at the course content/course structure tab on university websites
Year 1 (Part I)

Part I provides an introduction to the subject, a common core of knowledge which can subsequently be extended. There are five compulsory papers:

- Microeconomics
- Macroeconomics
- Quantitative Methods in Economics
- Political and Social Aspects of Economics
- British Economic History

Through these papers you cover topics such as supply and demand, the role of prices and markets, employment, inflation, the operation of financial institutions and monetary policy.

The Quantitative Methods paper provides an introduction to the use of mathematical and statistical techniques in economics, and is assessed by a written exam.

Year 1 (For students WITH A-level or equivalent in Maths) [ENTER as BSc Economics]

Core Modules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic Principles (Macro)</td>
<td>155001494</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Term 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Principles (Micro)</td>
<td>155001495</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Term 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compulsory Modules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Statistics</td>
<td>155901496</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Term 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>155901200</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Term 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics for Economists</td>
<td>153400008</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Full Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Economic Issues in the Global Economy</td>
<td>153400100</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Term 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay Writing Workshop - Undergraduate Economics</td>
<td>153400146</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Term 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the above, students select ONE of the following:

- Year 1 guided option module(s) to the value of 30 credits
- Open option language module(s) to the value of 30 credits

Year 1 Guided Option Modules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Global Development</td>
<td>153001001</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Full Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Political Economy</td>
<td>153400124</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Full Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20th World Social Theory: Imagining Society from 500BCE to 1900</td>
<td>155900149</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Term 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H103 Colonial Curriculum: Empire and Education at SOAS and Beyond</td>
<td>155906741</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Term 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Logic, Critical Reasoning and Argumentation</td>
<td>156000193</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Term 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Natural Sciences at Cambridge

**Year 1**
- Biology of Cells
- Chemistry
- Earth Sciences
- Evolution and Behaviour
- Materials Science
- Physics
- Physiology of Organisms
- Mathematics
- Mathematical Biology

**Years 2, 3 and 4**
- Animal Diversity
- Astrophysics
- Biochemistry
- Biology of Disease
- Biomedical Sciences
- Cell Biology
- Chemistry
- Conservation
- Developmental Biology
- Earth Sciences
- Ecology
- Evolution
- Experimental Psychology
- Genetics
- History and Philosophy of Science
- Materials Science
- Mathematics
- Mathematical and Computational Biology
- Microbiology
- Molecular Biology
- Neuroscience
- Pathology
- Pharmacology
- Physics
- Physiology
- Plant and Microbial Sciences
- Systems Biology
- Quantitative Environmental Science
- Zoology
What subjects are available at Oxford?

- Archaeology and Anthropology
- Biochemistry (Molecular and Cellular)
- Biology
- Biomedical Sciences
- Chemistry
- Classical Archaeology and Ancient History
- Classics
- Classics and English
- Classics and Modern Languages
- Classics and Oriental Studies
- Computer Science
- Computer Science and Philosophy
- Earth Sciences (Geology)
- Economics and Management
- Engineering Science
- English Language and Literature
- English and Modern Languages
- European and Middle Eastern Languages
- Fine Art
- Geography
- History
- History (Ancient and Modern)
- History and Economics
- History and English
- History and Modern Languages
- History and Politics
- History of Art
- Human Sciences
- Law (Jurisprudence)
- Materials Science
- Mathematics
- Mathematics and Computer Science
- Mathematics and Philosophy
- Mathematics and Statistics
- Medicine
- Modern Languages
- Modern Languages and Linguistics
- Music
- Oriental Studies
- Philosophy and Modern Languages
- Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE)
- Philosophy and Theology
- Physics
- Physics and Philosophy
- Psychology (Experimental)
- Psychology, Philosophy and Linguistics
- Religion and Oriental Studies
- Theology and Religion
## Modern and Medieval Languages

### University of Cambridge
- French
- German
- Italian
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Spanish

- Asian and Middle Eastern Studies
  - Arabic
  - Hebrew
  - Persian

- Must study (at least) 2 languages

### University of Oxford
- French
- German
- Italian
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Spanish
- Modern Greek
- Polish
- Czech (with Slovak)

- European & Middle Eastern Languages
  - Arabic
  - Hebrew
  - Persian
  - Turkish

- Can study 1 or 2 languages

### University of Bristol
- French
- German
- Italian
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Spanish

- You can add non-European languages from your second year

- Can study 1, 2 or 3 languages
Want to study more than one subject?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Joint honours</th>
<th>Major/minor</th>
<th>Scottish degrees</th>
<th>Interdisciplinary courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Study each subject equally  
  • ‘and’  
  • e.g., Modern Languages and Linguistics (Oxford) | • Spend more time studying the major part of the degree  
  • ‘with’  
  • e.g., Modern Languages with Linguistics (Warwick) | • 4-year degree  
  • You usually study up to three different subjects in your first 2 years – related or not  
  • You then specialise in your final 2 years  
  • Can apply for Year 2 entry | • Liberal Arts  
  • e.g., HSPS, Education, PPE…. |
Year abroad

- Languages courses offer you the opportunity to study/work abroad
- Some universities offer the opportunity to study abroad if you are studying other subjects
Placement years

• Some courses offer a ‘sandwich’ year spent working in industry

Some examples...
• UCL – Economics with a Placement Year BSc
• Warwick – Biological Sciences with Placement Year BSc
• Sheffield – General Engineering with an Industrial Placement Year BEng
• Lancaster – Criminology and Sociology (Placement Year) BA
Courses on offer

www.ucas.com/explore/subjects
Final points

• Course choice is the most important decision
• There are lots of subjects available, so be open-minded!
• Explore your subject through supracurricular activities to find out
• Do your research on universities and course structure
Next steps

• Explore your subject!
• UCAS fairs: www.ucas.com/ucas/events/find/type/exhibition
• Open Days: www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/events/cambridge-open-days
• Informed Choices: www.informedchoices.ac.uk/degrees
• University websites
• University taster days
Any questions?
Or you can always email us at outreach@lucy.cam.ac.uk

Find out more about Lucy Cavendish, sign-up to our newsletter and get involved with events: www.lucy.cam.ac.uk/study-us/prospective-applicants