

Cambridge and other top universities: how to make good choices in Year 11

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Why University?

- 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.
- Independence
- Expand your horizons



¹ Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, Research Paper No. 112

Oxbridge and the Russell Group

- Many different types of university
- Top universities in the UK are Russell Group
- Includes Oxbridge universities

RUSSELL
INTERNATIONAL
EXCELLENCE
GROUP



Characteristics:

- Top of their field in many academic subjects
- World class research facilities and staff
- Traditional course structure (some modular courses)
- Some intense, small group teaching (Oxbridge in particular)
- Highly competitive: A*AA in Arts subjects A*A*A in Sciences at Cambridge



Why Cambridge?



- Broad range of courses
- World-class teaching – lectures, seminars/classes, practicals
- Small-group teaching – tutorials/supervisions
- Excellent facilities and resources
- Academic, pastoral and financial support
- Wide range of extra-curricular options
- Excellent graduate opportunities, irrespective of degree discipline

Year 11:

What can you do?

Doing your best in Year 11

- Move to linear A-Levels means GCSEs will probably be your most recent external examination results by the time you apply, so try to do your very best
- BUT don't panic if things don't go exactly to plan – universities do not believe GCSEs are strong indicators of future performance
- Most important thing is to start to make informed decisions about your future education

Starting to think about what you want to study

- University education in the UK is subject-focused
- Admissions Tutors for competitive courses 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
- How do you identify the ‘right’ subject for you?
 - What subject are you enthusiastic about?
 - Does the course interest you?
 - How long is the course?
 - How are you assessed?
- Don’t worry if you just don’t know right now – try to narrow down your broader interests

Course choice and career prospects

- Some careers **require** a specific degree, e.g. Architecture; Engineering; Medicine; Veterinary Medicine
- Some jobs in the commercial or business world (~5% of the total) also require particular degree subjects: typically, Mathematics or Languages

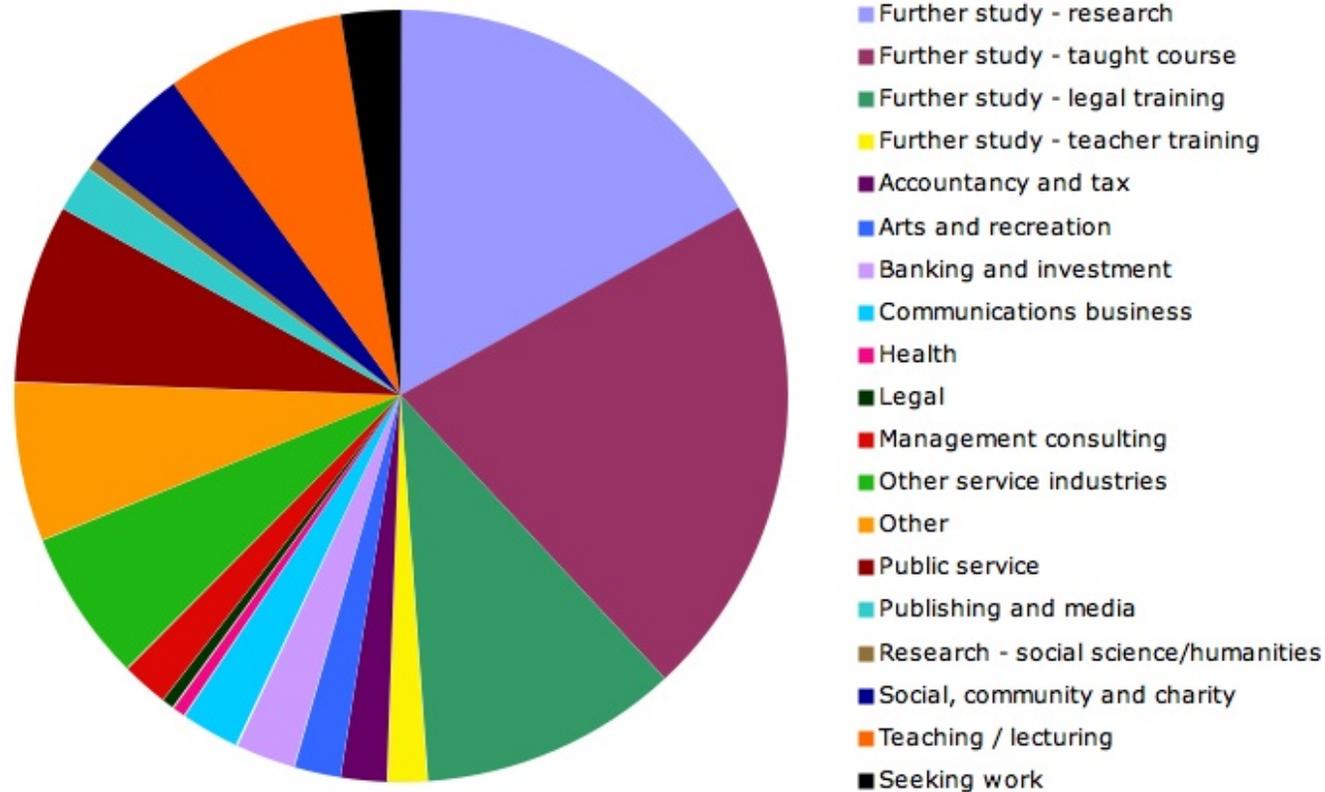


Course choice and career prospects

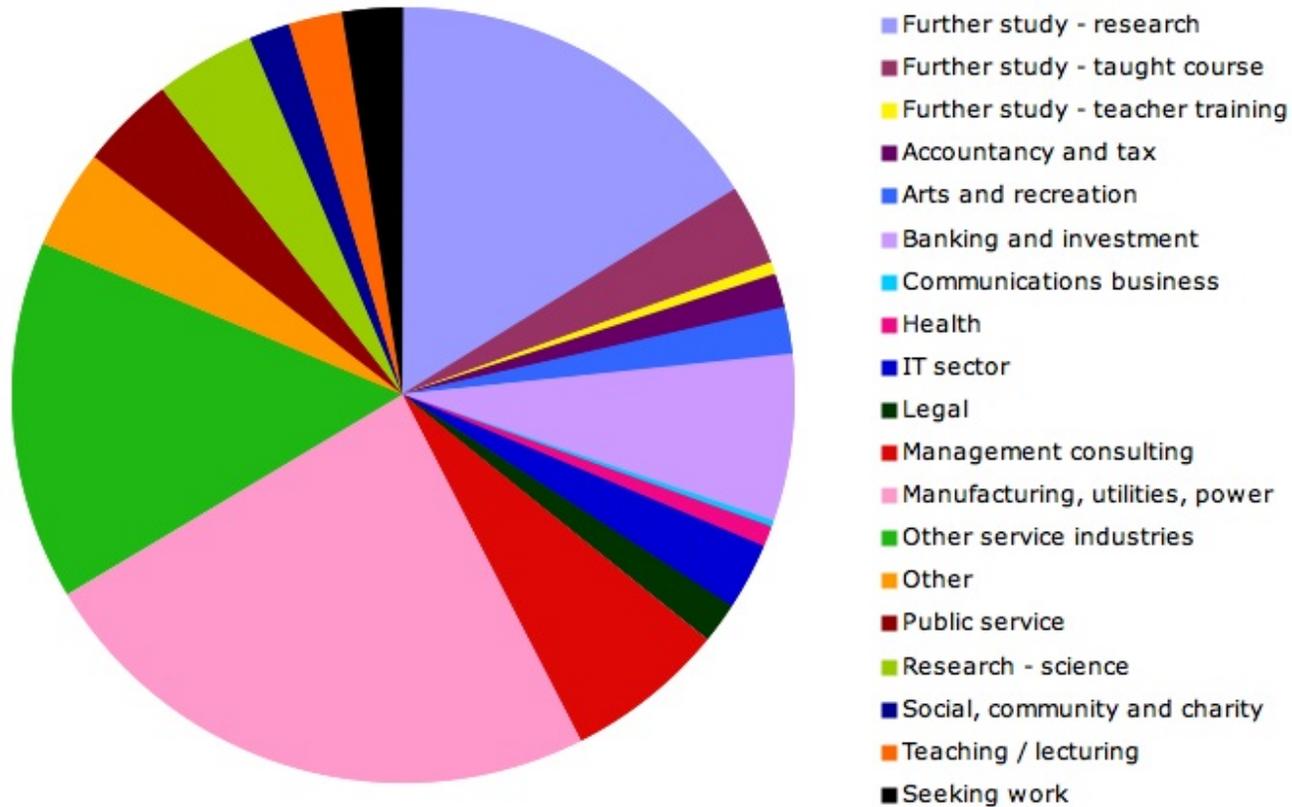
- The majority of top jobs **don't** specify a degree subject – they ask for a good degree (Class I or II.1) from a good university, in **any** subject (and if necessary professional training follows). Work experience is often important, though.
- Typical 'open access' careers include:

Law
Teaching
Business
Journalism and publishing
Public administration
IT
Accountancy and finance

Graduate destinations of Cambridge historians



Graduate destinations of Cambridge engineers



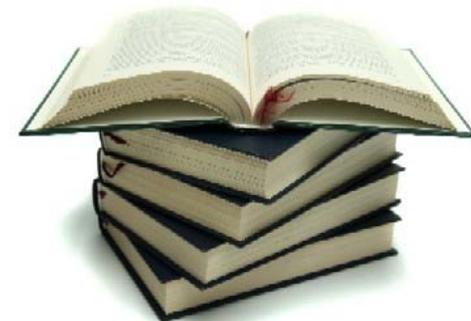
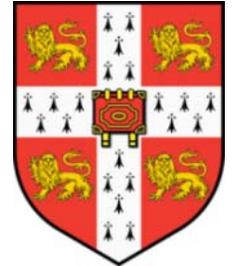
Courses available at Cambridge

ARTS

Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic
Archaeology
Architecture
Asian and Middle Eastern Studies
Classics
Economics
Education
English
Geography
History
History & Politics
History & MML
History of Art
Human, Social and Political Sciences
Land Economy
Law
Linguistics
Modern and Medieval Languages
Music
Philosophy
Theology and Religious Studies

SCIENCES

Chemical Engineering
Computer Science
Engineering
Mathematics
Medicine
Natural Sciences
Psychological and Behavioural Sciences
Veterinary Medicine



Choosing your A-Levels

- Cambridge and other top universities look for students who have studied subjects that prepare them for their university course
- Some subjects (particularly sciences) have compulsory A-Level requirements – without these you are exceptionally unlikely to be offered a place
- Research the courses you are interested in to check whether you need something you might not have thought about
- Think carefully about the number of subjects you want to study – our standard offers are A*A*A or A*AA, so would you stand a better chance doing just three A-Levels?

Arts and Social Sciences

- If you'd like to study an arts or social sciences course at university but you're not sure which one, then English Literature, History, languages and Mathematics are good 'keystone' subjects.
- Other good choices to combine these subjects with include: an additional language, Ancient History, Classical Civilisation, Economics, Further Mathematics, Geography, Philosophy, Religious Studies and sciences.
- More specific subjects (e.g. Archaeology, English Language, Environmental Science, Government and Politics, History of Art, Law, Music, Psychology or Sociology) are useful if you want to do a related degree course.
- All these are considered "academic" A-Levels. None are considered to be "better" than others – it is up to you to pick the ones you think are most relevant for what you want to do.

Sciences

- Most successful applicants take three or four of the following: biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, further mathematics.
- If you are planning to study biological or medical sciences you should take chemistry.
- For physical sciences or engineering you should take A-Level mathematics and physics, and ideally further mathematics. Chemistry is also very useful for physical sciences since it opens up large areas of the course.
- Other possible subject choices - for instance computer science, design and technology, electronics or psychology - may be useful preparation for some of our science courses. It depends what you want to do.

Subject-specific

- Economics at Cambridge is very maths-focussed. Mathematics and further mathematics are your best preparation.
- Architecture: physics, mathematics and art are a good combination.
- Languages: more than one language at A-Level shows your strength.
- Law: A-Level law is not necessary. Arts subjects like history and English literature are better preparation.
- Classics: at least one of Latin or Ancient Greek is expected.

Subjects you might not have considered

- Interested in international development, environmental policy, or NGOs?
Consider Land Economy
- There are now many joint degrees combining history with other subjects (history and politics; history and languages; Human, Social and Political Sciences; history of art) or you can look to specialise (Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic or Asian and Middle Eastern Studies)
- The archaeology degree has options including anthropology, Egyptology and Assyriology – all great for social scientists
- Can't get enough of Kant? Philosophy or even Theology might be for you

Where can I find out more?

<https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses>

Your one-stop shop for information on all the universities courses, including guidance on the subjects you should take at A-Level

<https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/events/subjectmatters>

Our subject guidance page, where you can download our guidance booklet and see events that we run

aces@christs.cam.ac.uk

My email – I'll be happy to answer your questions

Making a Competitive Application: What is Cambridge looking for?

**Independent
thought**

**Academic
potential**

**Academic
ability**

**Interest
in your
subject**

**Commitment
to study**

How do I demonstrate an interest in my subject?

- Reading books, journals, magazines and online articles
- Watching documentaries and online talks, lectures or seminars
- Keeping up to date with the latest developments in your subject
- Watching/listening to/reading any other media related to your subject
- Going to museums, concerts, or other associated public events
- Taking part in trips, expeditions, competitions, conferences, etc.
- Getting relevant work experience (esp. for vocational subjects)
- Doing extra work using libraries and online resources
- Talking about your subject with your teachers, peers, families, etc.



Where do I find all this extra stuff?

<https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses>

Again, look up your subject on this website. Each course has a 'resources' tab that contains links to useful enrichment material.

<http://www.myheplus.com/>

Our subject enrichment website, where you can access great super-curricular enrichment material.

aces@christs.cam.ac.uk

My email – I'll be happy to point you in the right direction.

Good Luck!

Any Questions?