



**SHADOWING SCHEME 2021**  
**TEACHER & STUDENT PACK**

# SHADOWING SCHEME



## TEACHER INFORMATION PACK

### AN INTRODUCTION FROM ESME

'Hi I'm Esme! I'm the Undergraduate Access, Education and Participation Officer for the Cambridge Students' Union and it's my job to lead the shadowing scheme. Whilst the scheme can't take place in-person this year as it normally would, I'm really excited about the virtual programme that we've developed - it should still be a fun, exciting and immersive insight into what student life is like here! The scheme not only aims to bust common myths about Cambridge and demystify the admissions process, but also to give talented students a feel for the kind of experience that Cambridge has to offer by introducing them to the students, activities and wider community that shape University life. Even if students can't physically visit us this year, we are keen to welcome them virtually and show them that Cambridge can be a space for them!'

Esme Cavendish

Cambridge SU Undergraduate Access, Education and Participation Officer 2020/2021



### WHAT IS THE CAMBRIDGE SU SHADOWING SCHEME?

The Shadowing Scheme is a University access scheme run by Cambridge Students' Union that gives high achieving students the opportunity to experience life at Cambridge. It is aimed towards state-educated Year 12 students (S5 in Scotland, Year 13 in Northern Ireland) who are on track to achieve A\*AA in their A Levels (or equivalent) and have little family or community experience of university, or great reservations about applying to Cambridge. The Scheme itself is about demystifying some of the myths and misconceptions surrounding Cambridge, giving students the chance to see how they would fit in should they choose to study here, as well as developing an understanding of University admissions. The scheme is also open to mature students - those who will be 21 or over at the time they start their course at university.

This year, in its twenty-first year, the Cambridge SU Shadowing Scheme is going virtual. To ensure that all participants and volunteers can safely take part, the entire scheme will be delivered securely online, giving us the opportunity to offer places to students who previously may have struggled to attend a physical scheme. During the scheme students will 'shadow' a current undergraduate studying a subject they are interested in. They will attend events organised by current students about College life, their academic interests, and sports and societies. Catch-ups with mentors, forum discussions, and interactive activities will give students the chance to understand what it is really like to be a student at Cambridge.

## WHEN IS IT?

The 2021 Shadowing Scheme will run for four weeks, from Monday 25th January 2021 until Friday 19th February 2021. This will consist of one week of regular activities and evening events, from Monday 25th to Friday 29th, giving students a chance to speak to current undergraduates, make friends, and understand what it's like to study at Cambridge. The next three weeks will include a number of events focused on admissions and study skills, supported by online discussion forums and access to mentors, culminating in an end of scheme event on Friday 19th February.

Students are able to attend from anywhere, and every effort will be made to make all live events available afterwards. For more information on support available to students to attend the scheme please see the section on Costs.

## WHEN CAN STUDENT APPLY?

The [online application form](#) for the Shadowing Scheme opened on GCSE Results Day - Thursday 20th August 2020 and must be completed by Sunday 15th November 2020. Parents/guardians and nominated teachers must fill in their respective forms by the following week - Sunday 22nd November 2020. Mature students must also complete the online application form by Sunday 15th November.

## SUPPORTING STUDENTS TO APPLY

We appreciate the work that goes into promoting the scheme and supporting students to apply. The information in this pack is intended to help you answer questions that students and their parents or guardians may have, but we also encourage people to get in touch with us if they require any more information.

In particular, students may want advice and support in choosing a subject and in determining whether or not they have the necessary prerequisites, which is covered in more detail in the section on Selection Criteria.

The form that nominated teachers are asked to complete by the stated deadline asks teachers to flag any factors that may have disrupted or disadvantaged an applicant's education or other relevant factors. We ask that this section is completed only when necessary, but strongly encourage you to flag anything you believe is important for us to consider. Please see the Selection Criteria section for more detail.

## **COSTS**

The Shadowing Scheme is funded by Cambridge SU, the University of Cambridge, and the Colleges. We want every student to be able to easily participate in the Shadowing Scheme, but we understand that there are specific challenges that come with taking part in an online scheme. This might include accessing a good internet connect or a reliable computer. We are able to offer financial support to students who require it, and who are successful in getting a place on the scheme. Cambridge SU would like to reimburse all costs to participants, but due to limited funding we will prioritise students whose lack of access to technology is most detrimental to their ability to participate. More information will be available to selected applicants when they are notified of their acceptance.

## **SAFEGUARDING**

Cambridge SU makes every effort to ensure the safety of all participants, including training and DBS checking all of the mentors, and using secure, moderated online platforms to run the scheme. While Cambridge does everything possible to ensure the safety of the participants, it is not legally responsible for their welfare. Should you have any concerns about a participant's safety, please contact us.

## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

The scheme is intended for students from schools and backgrounds where progression onto higher education is not the norm. These are the students who we think might benefit most from the Scheme, as they may be least likely to have immediate access to resources about university life.

To help you advise your students on whether to apply for the Scheme, some details of the selection criteria are set out briefly below. If you would like further information on these criteria, please do not hesitate to contact us!

We apply this selection method in preparation for a much higher volume of applications to the Scheme than we generally have places for; this has been the case in every year of the Scheme's operation. We are unfortunately unable to give places to every student who applies, even if they match all criteria listed below.

## CANDIDATE FILTERS

These filters, generally speaking, would rule a student out of the Scheme altogether, although this is monitored and can be subject to exception:

- The three-part application is incomplete.
- The student would be younger than 16 at the start of the Scheme;  
*The nominated teacher and parent/guardian must give consent in their forms or it will be assumed that consent is not given and the application will be considered incomplete. All students participating in the Shadowing Scheme must be at least 16 at the beginning of the Scheme.*
- The student attended a private secondary school and/or sixth form college.
- A close family member has studied at Oxford or Cambridge.
- Both parents/guardians hold higher education qualifications;  
*Students in these situations are likely to already have access to information regarding higher education, or may have received advantageous encouragement to proceed with HE applications. They are therefore less in need of the Shadowing Scheme experience.*
- Fewer than 8 GCSEs/equivalent.
- Studying for fewer than 3 A Levels (/equivalent);  
*Scheme participants must have a demonstrable likelihood of being offered a place at Cambridge. Whilst the University makes holistic undergraduate offers based on a broad range of criteria (i.e. 3 A levels or equivalent, school data, performance at interview etc.), having fewer than 8 GCSEs/equivalent means they cannot demonstrate likelihood of being offered a place.*
- Students choose Shadowing Scheme subjects they do not have the AS/A Level (or equivalent) prerequisites for;  
*Some undergraduate courses at Cambridge have prerequisite qualifications. The requirements for all Cambridge University undergraduate courses can be found on the [Undergraduate Admissions website](#).*

## SCORING AND RANKING

After the filters have been applied to the applications we receive, we score and rank the remaining applications using a set of criteria to assess their relative merit (as far as reasonably practicable). We refer to official national demographic data, such as POLAR data, to be able to score particular factors. Applicants all start with 0 points, and accumulate points when they fulfil the criteria. The factors below are not weighted evenly (as some factors may be more important than others), and as above are intended only as an indication of the selection process:

- Potential to achieve A\*AA at A level (or equivalent) according to teacher
- No family or friends have attended university
- Each 9, 8, 7 and 6 graded GCSE/equivalent scores points for the applicant
- Student eligible for free school meals
- Parent/Guardian 1 has low level of education
- Parent/Guardian 2 (if applicable) has low level of education
- Secondary school has high proportion of students on free school meals
- Secondary school has low GCSE average points score
- Sixth form has low level of students applying to university
- Sixth form has very low level of students applying to the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford
- Neighbourhood in which few young people progress to higher education
- Neighbourhood in which few adults are university-educated

This system is designed to rank applications according to both academic and widening participation criteria.

All applications are anonymised - every application is distinguishable by a randomised "Application ID" only - so that no inappropriate information about the candidate, for example name, gender, or religion, is able to form any part of the selection process.

It should be emphasised that applying to the Shadowing Scheme will not impact any potential future application to the University of Cambridge.

# SHADOWING SCHEME



## STUDENT INFORMATION PACK

### AN INTRODUCTION FROM ESME

'Hi I'm Esme! I'm the Undergraduate Access, Education and Participation Officer for the Cambridge Students' Union and it's my job to lead the shadowing scheme. Whilst the scheme can't take place in-person this year as it normally would, I'm really excited about the virtual programme that we've developed - it should still be a fun, exciting and immersive insight into what student life is like here! The scheme not only aims to bust common myths about Cambridge and demystify the admissions process, but also to give talented students a feel for the kind of experience that Cambridge has to offer by introducing them to the students, activities and wider community that shape University life. Even if you can't physically visit us this year, we are keen to welcome you virtually and show you that Cambridge can be a space for you!'

Esme Cavendish

Cambridge SU Undergraduate Access, Education and Participation Officer 2020/2021



### WHAT IS THE CAMBRIDGE SU SHADOWING SCHEME?

The Cambridge SU Shadowing Scheme gives UK students from schools without a tradition of top university entry a chance to experience life at Cambridge over four weeks in January and February. The whole scheme is completely free to participants, and completely online.

You will be matched with a Mentor studying a subject you're interested, get the chance to meet lots of current undergraduate students, learn about applying to Cambridge, and understand what it is really like to live and study here.

The idea is to give people with little or no experience of university a taste of student life at Cambridge, in real time, with real people.

## WHO IS IT FOR?

The Shadowing scheme is open to:

- Mature students (people who are 21 or older when they start their course)
- Year 12 (England and Wales) / S5 (Scotland) / Year 13 (NI) students

We are looking for students with:

- Little or no history of university in their family
- Those who have reservations or worries about applying to Cambridge
- Students whose school rarely sends students to University.

We would love to be able to everyone a chance to learn more about life at Cambridge, but every year we receive considerably more applications than there are places. This means that we ask that if you're applying and in Year 12, that you are on track to get As and A\*s in you're A Levels or equivalent.

## WHEN IS IT?

The 2021 Shadowing Scheme will run for four weeks, from Monday 25th January 2021 until Friday 19th February 2021. This will consist of one week of regular activities and events, from Monday 25th to Friday 29th, scheduled in the evening but available to access at any time so you can fit the scheme in around other commitments you have. You'll chance to speak to current undergraduates, make friends, and understand what it's like to study at Cambridge.

The following three weeks will include a number of events focused on admissions and study skills, supported by online discussion forums and access to Mentors, culminating in an end of scheme event on Friday 19th February. The aim is that you get to know other students and make friends, as well as get useful information about applying to Cambridge, so that you're well prepared and well supported if you choose to do so.

## WHAT DO I DO ON THE SCHEME?

As a 'shadow', you'll see what students who are doing a course you're interested in get up at Cambridge, including;

- Attending academic taster sessions
- Trying out extra-curricular activities with different clubs and societies
- Learning about living in a College
- Social activities with the other members of the shadowing scheme



You will also be given a lot of useful information about the application and admissions process by both Admissions Tutors and Current Students themselves. So, there will be a lot of people who can answer all of your questions and help with the myth-busting process surrounding applying to Cambridge.

## HOW DO I APPLY?

The [online application form](#) for the Shadowing Scheme opened on GCSE Results Day - Thursday 20th August 2020 and must be completed by Sunday 15th November 2020. Your parent(s)/guardian(s) and nominated teacher must fill in their respective forms by the following week - Sunday 22nd November 2020. Mature students must also complete the online application form by Sunday 15th November.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### WHAT DO I NEED TO PARTICIPATE?

To access the Shadowing Scheme you will need access to the internet, and a device that allows you to join video calls. Events will be scheduled in the evening and made available to watch afterwards, and other activities will be available to take part in at any time. There will not be any in person events, so you can participate in the entirety of the scheme from wherever you are.

### IS IT EXPENSIVE?

Participating in the scheme is completely free. We know that accessing online events and activities may create a specific challenge for participants and we are able to offer financial support to students who require it in order to take part. We would like to be able to offer financial support to everyone, but our funds are limited and therefore we prioritize students whose lack of access to technology is the most detrimental to their ability to participate. You'll get more information about financial support if selected.

### WHAT IF I AM NOT SELECTED?

Applications are extremely competitive. Not being offered a place on the Shadowing Scheme does not mean you shouldn't apply to Cambridge. Please come along to an Open Day, or consider other schemes you may be eligible for instead.

## I HAVE SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS, WILL THIS AFFECT MY APPLICATION?

Not at all. Cambridge SU works to ensure that every participant gets the very best out of the scheme, and this includes catering for individual needs. We routinely have student participate with a wide range of unique requirements, and this doesn't change when the scheme is online. We encourage you to mention any special requirements in your application, not to influence our selection, but so we can ensure you are able to participate and enjoy the scheme.

## IS THE SCHEME FOR ME?

If you're in Year 12, an equivalent, or you're a mature student, and you meet some of the criteria listed above then the scheme is absolutely for you.

We can't guarantee that you will love Cambridge or choose to apply to the University, but we can guarantee that you will leave the scheme knowing a lot more about what it is really like to be a Cambridge student. We want you to have the support, experiences and information available for you to feel confident about whatever decisions you make about University. This includes building friendships with other prospective students, asking honest questions of current students, and having a Cambridge Admissions Tutor explain to you exactly how the process of applying to Cambridge works.

We would love you to come to Cambridge. The scheme is put together to give you an authentic sense of what it is like here, behind all the myths and stereotypes, to see if you could love to it too!