



# SHADOWING SCHEME APPLICANT INFO



2024

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Cambridge SU's 2024 Shadowing Scheme! I'm Caredig, the Undergraduate Access, Education and Participation Officer at Cambridge SU. It's my job to lead the Shadowing Scheme, an access residential program that aims to demystify student life at Cambridge, and help students from under-represented backgrounds understand the admissions process. This will be the 22nd scheme we have run, and the second in-person scheme we have run since the pandemic.



The Scheme this year will consist of a three day residential starting on a Sunday where students can visit Cambridge and get a taste of all aspects of university life. They will go to lectures with their Mentor in the morning, and social events in the afternoon organised by your SU. They can even attend a formal dinner on the first night! We're so excited to welcome our group of 'Shadows', and show them that Cambridge University is a place for everyone, regardless of background - hopefully this group will include you!

This guide will tell you everything you need to know about the Scheme at this point: it will help you to decide if you want to apply, tell you how to go about the applications process, and includes key dates for the Scheme this year. If you have any more questions, your teachers have also received a guide that explains everything to them, and of course you are always welcome to contact us. The contact details you need can be found at the end of this guide.

A massive congratulations on your GCSE results, and we hope to welcome you to Cambridge soon!

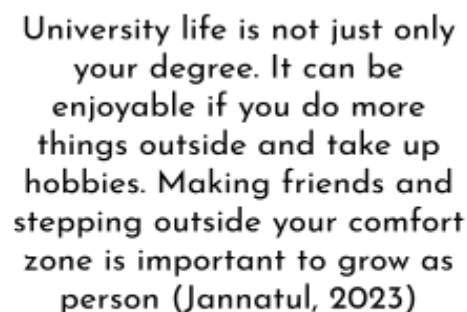
## Caredig ap Tomos

Undergraduate Access, Education and Participation Officer, 2023-2024

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## 2. CONTENTS

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Contents</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3. What is the Shadowing Scheme?</b>	<b>2</b>
3.1 Staying in Cambridge	2
3.2 When is the Shadowing Scheme?	2
3.3 How much does it cost?	2
<b>4. Applications</b>	<b>3</b>
4.1 Who is the Shadowing Scheme targeted towards?	3
4.2 Is the Scheme for me?	3
4.3 How do you apply?	4
4.4 Special requirements	4
4.5 Will applying to the Scheme affect my Cambridge application?	4
4.6. What happens after I apply?	4
<b>5. Staying Safe</b>	<b>5</b>
5.1 Online Communication and MentorNet	5
<b>6. Key Information</b>	<b>5</b>
6.1 Important Dates	5
6.2 Contact Details	5



University life is not just only your degree. It can be enjoyable if you do more things outside and take up hobbies. Making friends and stepping outside your comfort zone is important to grow as person (Jannatul, 2023)

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## 3. WHAT IS THE SHADOWING SCHEME?

The Shadowing Scheme is Cambridge SU's flagship Access Scheme and has been running for over two decades. It is aimed towards state-educated Year 12 students in England & Wales, S5 students in Scotland, and Year 13 students in Northern Ireland, who are on track to achieve highly in their A Levels (or Advanced Highers).

The Scheme itself is about demystifying some of the myths and misconceptions surrounding Cambridge. We aim to give students the chance to experience authentic and everyday life in Cambridge should they choose to study here, as well as developing an understanding of University admissions.

### 3.1 Staying in Cambridge

During the Scheme, students (who are referred to as 'Shadows') are paired with a current undergraduate (their 'Mentor') studying a subject they are interested in. Participants come to Cambridge, attend lectures and supervisions (small group teaching), stay in student accommodation and eat in a college dining hall. Shadows can attend events organised by current students and staff about university life and get advice on applying to Cambridge from staff and students.

Living in Cambridge and 'shadowing' a student for 3 days gives an authentic sense of the community and everyday life at Cambridge. Shadows will also get the chance to stay in contact with their Mentor after the Scheme, and attend online application and study skills sessions, in order to help them make well-informed, successful University applications.

### 3.2 When is the Shadowing Scheme?

The 2024 Scheme will take place in person from Sunday to Tuesday, on the dates:

- 28-30 January
- 4-6 February
- 11-13 February

Successful applicants will attend one residential, as well as online events afterwards.

### 3.3 How much does it cost?

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, and therefore shadows' accommodation, food, and travel during the Scheme are **free**.

We will reimburse travel costs to and from the Scheme as far as possible. We would like to reimburse all travel costs, but due to limited funding we will prioritise those who are most in need. More information will be available to successful applicants when they are notified of their place on the scheme.

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## 4. APPLICATIONS

### 4.1 Who is the Shadowing Scheme targeted towards?

All students who attend the Shadowing Scheme must attend a state school and have the potential to achieve A\*AA at A level, or AAA Advanced Highers.

Moreover, the Scheme is for students with little family history of attending university, who go to schools where few people progress to university.

We are looking for students who :

- Have no family or friends who have attended university
- Are eligible for free school meals
- Have parents/guardians with a low level of education
- Are refugees
- Have caring responsibilities
- Have been/are in local authority care
- Are from neighbourhoods where few people are university educated

Additionally, we are looking for students from schools and sixth forms with:

- A high proportion of students on free school meals
- A low GCSE average points score
- A low level of students applying to university
- A very low level of students applying to Cambridge and Oxford

The most important thing I learned was that Cambridge is for everyone and that it's not specifically for a set group of people (Felix, 2023)

I felt welcomed from start to finish, not only by other shadows but by the staff and the students being shadowed. (Eliot, 2023)

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## 4.2 Is the Scheme for me?

If you're in Year 12 or equivalent and you meet some of the criteria listed above then the Shadowing 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 to 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 it too!

## 4.3 How do you apply?

By 11th October, students must complete the online application form at [www.shadowingapply.cambridgesu.co.uk](http://www.shadowingapply.cambridgesu.co.uk). The form should not take more than 10 minutes to complete.

We ask applicants for information about themselves, including their family background, their school, and their qualifications. Applicants also need to indicate which courses they are interested in studying at University, so that we can match successful applicants with the right Mentor for them.

By 18th October, parents/guardians and nominated teachers must fill in consent and accompanying forms. Applicants will receive a unique number to pass onto their nominated teacher, and their parent or guardian, who can use it to log into our website and complete their consent form.

Shadows must sign up to a Code of Conduct to accept their place on the Scheme that you can view [on our website](#).

## 4.4 Access requirements

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 students participate with a wide range of unique requirements and will make every accommodation possible to meet specific needs. 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.

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## 4.5 Will applying to the Scheme affect my Cambridge application?

Applying to the scheme, whatever the outcome, will have no direct effect on any future applications you make to University. Due to the number of applications we receive, every year we have to reject highly qualified applicants who go on to successfully apply to Cambridge.

## 4.6. What happens after I apply?

If you are selected you are then matched with a current student Mentor. We aim to complete the selection and matching process in time to let applicants know whether they have been selected by the end of December.

In January, all successful Shadows will receive a full information guide about the Scheme, including travel advice and details of events and expectations during the residential days. If you have any questions before then, don't hesitate to contact the team.



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## 5. STAYING SAFE

We have a dedicated Safeguarding team who will be available before, throughout, and after the residential Scheme if there are any concerns. You can contact them at [safeguarding@cambridgesu.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@cambridgesu.co.uk), along with a 24/7 phone number that will be available during the residential days. All Shadows and parents will have access to this number before the Scheme.

Upon arriving in Cambridge, all Shadows will have a welcome session that includes safeguarding information and procedure.

Each Mentor on the Scheme receives an enhanced DBS check, attends mandatory safeguarding training and sign a Code of Conduct. Failure to meet the expectations of the Code of Conduct will result in participants being removed from the Scheme.

### 5.1 Online Communication and MentorNet

All online 1-1 communication takes place on MentorNet which is a monitored platform for their safety. Shadows and Mentors must not share contact details, including full names, and cannot contact each other outside MentorNet. Messages are presented to participants as 'instant' (similar to platforms such as WhatsApp) but each message is automatically screened against a list of prohibited terms. This includes words / phrases relating to personal communication (e.g. email and social media), foul language, or terms of a sexual nature. These messages are not delivered and flagged to a designated moderator at Cambridge SU.



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## 6. KEY INFORMATION

### 6.1 Important Dates

24th August: Applications open

11th October: Applications close

18th October: Deadline for guardian and teacher consent forms

October-December: Shadows are selected and matched with an undergraduate Mentor who has been trained and received a DBS check from Cambridge SU.

December: Shadows are emailed with the outcome to their application.

December-January: Arrangements are made for travel, special requirements and access needs, and dietary requirements

### 6.2 Contact details

General Enquiries, Shadowing Scheme email:

[shadowingscheme@cambridgesu.co.uk](mailto:shadowingscheme@cambridgesu.co.uk)

Safeguarding email:

[safeguarding@cambridgesu.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@cambridgesu.co.uk)

The most important thing that I learnt at Cambridge is essentially what it would be like to study at university, be that Cambridge or any other university. It also helped me focus on a degree that I would like to do because before I came I was quite unsure about what I wanted to do. Being able to walk around as a student was really beneficial for me as it made me feel like I could fit in when I go to university, therefore I loved being able to study for a few days in a university environment. (Imogen, 2023)