

## PGCE Guide to College Membership

Cambridge is a collegiate university, which means that all students are members of a college as well as of the University itself. There are more than thirty colleges in the University, and each one has its own character, buildings, governance, administration, intellectual and social life. Most colleges contain a broad cross-section of academics and students across the disciplines. As a PGCE student, you will spend most of your time immersed in work organised by the Faculty of Education and so your life in the college gives you a great opportunity to meet and mix with people from other disciplines. Each College has enclosed grounds on one or more sites, with student accommodation, and catering, sporting, cultural and social facilities.

### Application process

You may choose two colleges to whom your application for membership will be sent. The college membership application form (CAF-1) is only forwarded to your two choices, in order of preference, once you formally accept the offer of a place through the Department for Education (DfE). If neither of your college choices can offer you membership, your application will automatically be forwarded to an appropriate college chosen by the Faculty. College membership is final and once assigned cannot be changed, so it is important that you put all relevant information in your personal statement, eg. whether you will be applying for college accommodation, any preferences to the type of college etc.

Some colleges will only accept PGCE students if they are current/former members of the college. College applications are made on an ongoing basis throughout the year, so trainees applying for the course later in the cycle may find that their preferred colleges are already full. The colleges that take most PGCEs are Homerton (approx. 200), Hughes Hall (up to 40), Jesus (12), Darwin (10) and Downing (10) – most of the other colleges will only take up to 3 PGCEs each year.

You should not apply to Student Finance until you know which college you are a member of. Your College will tell you what codes to enter on the Student Finance forms.

### Things to consider when choosing a college

**Accommodation:** College membership **does not** guarantee college accommodation. Most colleges have some accommodation, but this is limited and may be allocated on a criteria-based or 'first-come, first-served' basis. Accommodation is not normally confirmed by colleges until the summer, so it is a good idea to have contingency plans in place in case you do not get a place in halls. Also be aware that college accommodation may be some distance from the Faculty.

**Car parking:** Not all colleges have parking on site, and those that do may charge for it. You will normally only be allowed to park at your college if you are in college accommodation.

**Location:** Whilst many colleges are in the city centre, some are located on the outskirts and so may be some distance from the Faculty. Even getting from the city centre to the Faculty in rush hour can take a while!

**Type of college:** Do you want a postgraduate only college, or do you want to also mix with undergrads? Do you want a college with a large number of PGCE students, or a college that may only have one or two? Bear in mind that the PGCE course has very different course dates to other undergrad/postgrad courses (particularly at the start of the year) so there may be times when there are no other students in college.

**Costs:** UK students do not pay a college membership fee, but they are still liable to pay a contribution towards the cost of provided facilities and a registration fee. This varies from college to college. The cost of college accommodation also varies. Overseas trainees pay a combined college/tuition fee.

**Facilities:** Are you looking for a college that has a choir/sporting activities/regular student social events or particular facilities? All colleges offer sporting/cultural and social facilities but bear in mind that these must fit in around the PGCE timetable – you will not be allowed to take time out of the course to attend them.

**Further information** about the Cambridge Colleges, and what they can offer postgraduate students, is available on our website: <https://www.postgraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/colleges/choosing-college>

Please note, college applications for PGCE trainees is slightly different to other postgraduate courses (as course applications are handled directly by the Faculty rather than through the central Cambridge Admissions Office) so if you contact colleges, please ensure that they are aware you are a prospective PGCE student as what they can offer may differ slightly from the information on the website. (For example, PGCEs do not have college supervisors as all teaching takes place in the Faculty, and they are not eligible for any postgrad college funding).

Cambridge Colleges:

Christ's	Churchill	Corpus Christi	Darwin	Downing
Emmanuel	Fitzwilliam	Girton	Homerton	Hughes Hall
Jesus	Lucy Cavendish	Magdalene	Murray Edwards	Newnham
Pembroke	Peterhouse	Queens'	Robinson	Sidney Sussex
St Catharine's	St Edmund's	St John's		

You can only apply to the colleges in the list below if you are a current or previous member of that College:

Clare	Clare Hall	Gonville & Caius	King's	Selwyn
Trinity	Trinity Hall	Wolfson		