

NEWNHAM COLLEGE



alternative prospectus

This is a temporary version of just text

Hello and welcome to Newnham!

'What's this?' I hear you ask. This is our Alternative Prospectus. Unlike the big official one, this little prospectus has been written solely by Newnham students to give you an impression of what Newnham is really like - as told by the people who eat, sleep, work and play here.

Hopefully you're looking at applying to Cambridge, and you're probably trying to choose which college to apply to. This might seem daunting, but with any luck this prospectus will encourage you to choose Newnham as the best place to spend your time at Cambridge, because frankly, it's amazing - but please do ask if you have any questions that we don't answer here! You can email jcr.access@newn.cam.ac.uk, which will go straight to our student Access Officer who will be able to answer any queries you might have.

Of course the best way to find out exactly what Newnham is like is to come and see for yourself! If you want to look round come to one of our Open Days or email admissions@newn.cam.ac.uk if you'd like to arrange a visit another day - we're more than happy to show you around.

This is the text from our new Alternative Prospectus – a proper version that genuinely looks nice (and hasn't been made on word) will be here soon!

Newnham Explained

Right, let's get this out of the way! Newnham is a women's college. And that's a good thing. Newnham is a great place to live and work, and it's great to be part of a community that has been at the forefront of women's education for over a hundred years.

We're a supportive and diverse community - not a girls' boarding school or ladies' finishing college, and we're definitely not a convent! The University in general, your course and societies are still mixed and of course friends (of all genders) can stay over - Newnham has the best of both worlds.

As a medium-sized college with a high state school and international student intake we have a great variety of students living and studying here. Basically, there is no typical Newnham student as we all come from different backgrounds, countries, education systems, ethnic groups, religions and sexualities; there really is no stereotypical Newnham or Cambridge student. But what we do all have in common is a desire to study and great interest in our subjects.

What is special about Newnham (apart from all its lovely students - of course!) is its amazing location and surroundings. We are situated directly opposite the Sidgwick Site, where most arts lectures are given, and just 10 minutes walk to most of the science departments and the centre of town. Behind College is Newnham village, which conveniently has a Co-op, pub, post office and hairdressers. Newnham is central without having hordes of tourists!

In addition to our wonderfully convenient location, we also have some of the best accommodation in Cambridge - with many rooms having garden views and antique furniture, proper kitchens and everyone living on site for all years of their course - and almost certainly the prettiest gardens in Cambridge. Oh, and we also have one of the best stocked college libraries.

Sound good? Not convinced yet? Read on to find out more and see what we all appreciate about Newnham.

What are the rooms like?

So what's it like to actually live here? It's certainly very different from living at home, and you'll be living here for at least 8 weeks each term. So, what makes Newnham special?

Our rooms are quite big as student rooms go and many have pretty garden views - all have a large desk, pin board, bookcase and Wifi access. Some rooms are big with antique furniture, whilst others have a sink and lots of storage space; so whatever you're after there'll be something to suit you.

The best thing is that we all pay the same rent whatever room we have. So, unlike many other colleges, you can choose the biggest room available and still pay the same rent. The idea is that as you progress through college you're pretty sure to get a better and better room, as final years get first dibs! Room allocation is done using a ballot system that ensures room selection is fair during your time at Newnham.

The flat room rate means that we all have a chance to live in a nice room, regardless of financial limitations. There are an array of very generous bursaries and grants to ensure that no one should ever have to leave Cambridge due to money issues.

Other bits and pieces of useful info:

- Each corridor has shared bathrooms and a kitchen, with your own kitchen cupboard.
- There are 4 laundry rooms in College, with plenty of washers, tumble dryers and irons, as well as several drying rooms. College also provides bed linen, which you can change weekly for clean ones if you want to use it.
- All our student accommodation is on site, unlike most other colleges, meaning you meet people from all years.
- No one has to share a room here. Ever.
- We're one of the few colleges not to have bedders (cleaners who knock on your door at 8.30 every morning to clean your room), so you can enjoy your lie-ins in peace.

Take a look for yourself at some of our rooms below (some have even been specially tidied for you!).



What are college facilities like?

Where to begin? We have some fantastic facilities here that you can make use of – probably the two most important ones are the library (we do have to do work occasionally!) and the wonderful gardens, although we have other things too...

Library

Our library is one of the best-stocked libraries of all the colleges, because not so long ago women weren't allowed to use the main University Library, so the library at Newnham simply had to be brilliant. Today, of course, women are allowed to use the main library, but we've kept our tradition of having a great college library. There are around 100,000 volumes in total, so it's the first port of call for many of us, even those doing minority subjects which tend to suffer from under-representation in many college libraries.

Our library is a beautiful mix of Victorian and modern architecture, providing the best of both worlds. Many of us use it on a regular basis, as there is a group study room, large IT suite and a printer room. Of course, there are also plenty of desks with power sockets and Wifi.

JCRs

These are common rooms, of which we have three. They are great social spaces with sofas, bean bags, TVs and DVD players, so are ideal for a film night with friends.

Gardens

Possibly one of Cambridge's best-kept secrets, our gardens are simply stunning, especially in summer. We're allowed to walk on the grass here (something many colleges don't let you do) and you'll find plenty of people 'revising' on the lawns in summer.

College Bar

One of the cheapest bars in Cambridge, complete with pool table, Wii and games. It is also the location of film nights and other College events.

Sports Field

Ours is actually on site! We have a large playing field and tennis courts attached to the gardens, which many teams use.

Old Labs

This old building in the gardens is now a well-equipped and much-used performing arts and music space, which can be booked and used by anyone. There are weekly lunchtime recitals here, as well as choir and other ensemble practices.

Music Practice Rooms

We have two music practice rooms in College, both containing a piano, which are available for us to use.

Art Room

The art room is stocked full of arty bits and pieces that anyone can go and be creative with, as well as having a dark room for photographers. If you loved making stuff as a kid, this place is like a dream come true!

What do I do about food?

At Newnham you have the choice of being catered or self-catered (most colleges are catered with few facilities for cooking). Here you can do just as you like – your options are:

Buttery

When you can't quite be bothered to cook, are in a rush, or simply want somewhere nice to see friends, the buttery is the place to be. With its cafe-style seating and comfy sofas it's a great place to catch up with friends whilst you eat, and with several meat, veggie, salad and sandwich options on offer you will always be able to find something you fancy and for a reasonable price. Halal and kosher meals can be provided upon request.

Kitchens

Prefer to cook what you want, when you want? With some of the best kitchen facilities in Cambridge, Newnham is one of the few colleges where it's possible to be entirely self-catered - all kitchens have hobs, a fridge, microwave, lockable cupboards and many have an oven. Many also have tables and chairs, which is great for eating with friends, and to top it off, lovely cleaners come in and clean them every weekday.

Formal Hall

Formal Halls are fairly cheap three course meals that take place in all colleges - Newnham's happen once a week (think Hogwarts minus the owls!). Take the opportunity to see friends, dress up a bit if you want to and enjoy eating dinner in our beautiful old college hall.

Free Time!

As well as the hundreds of University-wide societies, we also have our fair share of College based ones too. These include sports, drama, music, art and photography, faith and subject-based societies and are great ways to become involved in the busy social side of Newnham.

There are several student groups directly involved with what happens in College; namely the JCR and summer garden party committee. The JCR is an undergrad committee that ensures we all get a say in what happens in college – from accommodation and green issues to aiding wider access.

In addition to student run events and societies, Newnham also holds regular talks from external speakers on a variety of subjects and career related topics; so there's always something happening!

Sport at Newnham

With a sports field and tennis courts on site, Newnham is a great college if you love sports. Whether you are an experienced sportswoman or complete beginner, you will always find a sport with the time commitment to suit you.

As well as having a gym and near-by squash and badminton courts, Newnham has a long history of rowing and our first boat is one of the best. With the boat house only 10 minutes cycle away, rowing is a great team sport to take up and we have boats with commitment levels to suit all. So, from occasional rounders matches to daily rowing training, there really is something for everybody!

What about work?

Ok, so you might be in denial, but work is what you've come to university to do. We might complain occasionally about the early lectures or lack of inspiration when writing essays, but being given the opportunity to study with some of the best academics in the world is truly amazing!

Whilst your subject department organises lectures, practicals and exams for students at all colleges, your college is responsible for arranging your supervisions. Supervisions are usually hour long meetings, with 1 or 2 other students, discussing the piece of work you've just handed in with the person who set it. They are the defining aspect of Cambridge degrees and are amazing opportunities to discuss your ideas with experts.

So what makes Newnham such a great place to study? Well, in addition to our wonderful library, Newnham cares a lot about making sure we all have the academic support we need. This means that if you need extra supervisions, or specialist software on the library computers, college will make sure it happens!

Importantly, the academic atmosphere at Newnham is encouraging and inspiring rather than pushy. Unlike many other colleges, Newnham does not allocate rooms based on exam results, or favour those with higher marks in any other way. What matters at Newnham is that everyone tries their best – yes, it's nice to get a first, but at the end of the day what matters is how hard you try and that you enjoy your course. In order to help everyone achieve their best, Newnham frequently offers talks on, and help with, study and exam skills.

A week in the life of...

A science student:



Hello! My name is Qiuying (more commonly known as Giulia) and I am a 2nd year Engineering student originally from China, but have been in the UK for a long time. My typical week consists of about 12 hours of lectures, 8 to 10 hours of labs and 3 hours of supervisions. The first two usually

happen in the Engineering Department, whilst supervisions are usually in-college. 9am starts almost everyday - yay! During non-contact hours I attach myself to the library when I need to work on example papers/lab reports, otherwise I usually go out to society events or just chill in the gardens.

Outside my studies I do a lot of photography and I am in the Cambridge University Photographic Society (PhoCUS). I go to their talks and events quite often, and take lots of pictures in my spare time too. I also enjoy Physics Society talks too, but the most important thing in all events is the free food (obviously!). Newnham JCR offers study nights and welfare nights which I occasionally went to last year for the free cakes and chats; they are a great way to get to know college people! Looking forward to my second year here.

An arts student:



Hi! I'm Georgina and I'm a 3rd year Social Anthropology student from the West Midlands. Typically I have about 6-8 lectures and seminars a week, plus 2-3 hours of supervisions. My department is in the centre of town, approximately five minutes cycling or ten minutes walking, and is very handy when

you need to go shopping or want to get a coffee after lectures! Newnham's library is very good for the books I need and on the rare occasions that I can't get them there my department library usually has multiple copies.

My lectures are quite spread out over Monday-Friday, with most days starting at 10am. A lot of my time outside of working is taken up doing things with my Church and the Christian Union. On Wednesday evenings and Friday mornings Newnham's Christian Union meets for bible study and prayer, and on Sunday mornings and Tuesday evenings I go to Church to worship and meet other Christian students. I also spend Friday evenings singing with Newnham's non-audition choir. Most of my work gets done around these activities (sometimes there are late nights!) but I definitely make sure there is time to relax and see my friends each day.

Diversity at Newnham

Banish forever any worries that you won't fit in, because you will!

Newnham is small enough to be friendly yet big enough to have a diverse community - we are from different backgrounds, countries, ethnicities and religions.

We have student Ethnic Minorities' and International Officers in college to ensure that everyone's views are represented. As well as being there to deal with any problems and implement your new ideas, between them they host International Freshers' Week and a range of film nights and cultural events throughout the year.

Although Newnham doesn't have its own chapel, we can use Selwyn Chapel, which is just over the road, and there is a prayer rooms for Muslim students right opposite Newnham on the Sidgwick Site.

What support is there?

Here at Newnham there is plenty of support in place should you need it, both amongst students and from College. Everyone has both an academic and a personal tutor, who are there to help with any course concerns or money and personal issues.

We all have college parents who are two students from the year above; they are there to help you settle in and answer all important questions, such as where to buy food and how to do your laundry.

We also have student Welfare and Women's Officers. Both are here to help with your physical and mental wellbeing and can provide you with information, support, free pregnancy tests and contraceptives, or just a friendly chat.

There is also a College nurse, a doctors' surgery close by and the University has a Disability Resource Centre and a counselling service, which provides free counselling for students from professionally trained counsellors.

Basically, there are loads of people who can help and want to make sure that you enjoy your time at Newnham!

Financial Support

Newnham has very generous bursaries to help with day to day living costs (in addition to government and University ones) – we are proud of the fact that no Newnham student has had to leave their course due to financial issues.

Unusually, Newnham also has loads of other grants which are available to everyone, regardless of financial situation; they are some of the most generous funds available from any Cambridge college. Here are the main ones:

- **Travel grant** – best grant in the whole of Cambridge. Everyone who applies receives something (often hundreds of pounds) towards the cost of their trip; be it course compulsory or relevant, or related to other interests.
- **Book grant** – generally covers 50-60% of the cost of any course books purchased.
- **Equipment fund** – for architects and any required medical, scientific or technical equipment.
- **Sports fund** – helps University level sportswomen with membership, kit and training costs.
- **Research costs fund** – helps towards dissertation related expenses.
- **Music fund** – contributes to cost of music lessons and equipment for non music students.
- **Opportunity fund** – covers 50% of the cost of language courses, among other things.

For more info about our wonderful grants, funds and bursaries have a look at College's website.

Still not sure?

For those of you who are still not sure about applying to Newnham, or even Cambridge in general – please do! You have nothing to lose by applying. Many of us were also unsure whether to apply, or were convinced that we wouldn't get in. Unless you apply, you will never know, so have faith in yourself and go for it!

How do I apply?

When you apply to Cambridge, you have to fill in an extra form and getting your UCAS application in early – sorry, that's just the way things are. The application process is slightly different for every course between colleges. If you want more info about applying in general, then the Cambridge University website is the best place to start (also try www.applytocambridge.com for student written summaries of the basic info). Make sure to then check Newnham's website for specific details about applying for your course here.

Generally, most applicants end up with an interview, before which you may have to submit work in advance or sit a test when you come for interview. It's natural to be nervous about the application process, but don't be daunted – many Cambridge students are walking proof that you can still get in despite being convinced otherwise!

A word of advice – make sure you look over your personal statement before your interview, as you may well be asked about it. Also, please don't lie on your form, as you can guarantee you'll be asked about the one thing you wished you'd done, but haven't, or the book you wanted to read but never got round to. Don't let it happen to you!

When you come for an interview, all they're interested in is what goes on inside your head, as they want to see you thinking at your best! This means that you should wear whatever clothes you feel most comfortable in, as you will not be judged on your appearance. Neither will you be judged by your accent, what school you are at, how many facts and figures you can reel off or if your parents went to Cambridge. Many myths and rumours surround Cambridge interviews, most of which are untrue, so don't believe everything you hear. The only things that matter are your enthusiasm for your subject and how you think about it.

If you want to know anything else about admissions or interviews, please email admissions@newn.cam.ac.uk and talk to Felicity, our Admissions Co-ordinator.

I have an offer from Newnham but I don't want to go to a women's only college!

If you have been offered a place at Newnham through the winter pool, but don't want to go to an all-girls college, don't despair!

You are not the only person ever to be in this position and the decision about whether or not to accept Newnham's offer is entirely yours. However, here are a few things to consider from some of us who have been in your shoes:

"Having been at an all girls' school I was initially concerned when I was pooled to Newnham, and at one stage I almost didn't accept the offer. However, I realised that the reason I applied to Cambridge was because I loved the course and the university, and that I shouldn't turn it down. Now I'm here it's clear that there was never any need to worry: you will meet men if you want to, and if anything the all girl environment is an advantage!" Nicole

"I was not going to throw away an opportunity to study at one of the best universities in the world just because I couldn't live with boys (and I figured I would get a chance to mix through my subject or extra-curricular activities anyway). In the end, it turns out that Newnham was the very best place I could have ended up at because its relaxed, supportive and friendly atmosphere suits me perfectly." Katie

"Coming from an all girls' school, being pooled to an all girls' college was not exactly cause for celebration for me. However, I've become completely captivated by Newnham's female solidarity and am heavily involved in the Cambridge feminist scene - now I'm the JCR Women's Officer, and proudly so!" Brontë

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