

## Postgraduate Open Day

### PhD & MPhil Wednesday 4 Nov 14.00pm – 15.05pm

#### Question and Answer Session

Q-You've mentioned EU students qualify for the 'Home' status. However, my understanding was that EU students, even if they hold a UK degree, will be considered 'Overseas' starting October 2021. Could you please clarify this?

A- Students from the Republic of Ireland will continue to pay Home fees. Other EU students will be classified as Overseas students unless they have “settled” or “pre-settled” status under the EU Withdrawal legislation. That legislation will not be passed until December 2020.

Our understanding is that EU students currently in the United Kingdom only for the purpose of education (including situation where family are resident in an EU country but student attending a university in the UK for her/his undergraduate degree) are not eligible to apply for “pre-settled” status. The University is, however, obtaining a definitive ruling from the UK Government and an answer is expected by early December 2020. For the most up to date advice from the University please see <https://www.postgraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/finance/fees/what-my-fee-status>

Q - Is it possible to contact you before paying the application fee to get to know if my academic curriculum is high enough? Is there a specific contact or should we contact directly the possible supervisor?

A-Send in your transcript with a covering letter to [admissions@ast.cam.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@ast.cam.ac.uk) and we can have a look. We can also help you with overseas equivalency. It will be possible to advise regarding academic attainment but applications are assessed using information from transcripts, references and interview.

Q - Do applicants need a First Class Master's degree in Physics?

A- Subject wise most people come with strong Physics or Astrophysics background. Maths or Computer Science backgrounds are certainly not excluded but in these cases there needs to be a pretty strong link with a supervisor and project. It will be necessary for such students to acquire significant astrophysics knowledge during the Ph.D.

Equivalent of a 1<sup>st</sup> in a 4 year course is what we look for.

Q - In choosing a college, are we required to also take accommodation in the college?

A- No.

Some colleges offer accommodation to Ph.D. students in their first year only while others provide the option for three years. Many of our students live in private accommodation at some point during their Ph.D. but the standard of college accommodation in Cambridge is high and students often choose to take advantage of the option.

Q - Would you mind explaining a bit what is meant in the Gates Scholarship as “leadership” and “helping others” qualities? Would Payton mind sharing a bit about the application experience?

A- Helping others may mean helping individuals or you may have undertaken research which helps many people in an indirect way

Leadership - anything outside your own course work. You should talk about this in the context of your own goals

Q - Would a partial scholarship from my home country increase my chances of getting an offer? i.e. I would still need some financial support but not as much. Thanks!

A- Offer of admission is based on your academic background and ability. If you have partial funding secured it may be helpful as Cambridge would not have to find so much from the Trust and such funding shows that you're highly regarded by another grant-awarding body.

From time to time sources of money become available, that can't provide full funding, and match funding [with an award you may hold] can be possible.

Q - How does the day to day of a PhD compare with an internship?

A- An Internship is much shorter, usually something like eight to 10 weeks, and the research is normally well-defined and work patterns also more constrained. Overall, such short research-experiences tend to be more formulaic.

Ph.D.-research tends to be more flexible and you have more time to undertake background research. You join an active and supportive research community but, academically, you take ownership of your project. You become an expert. Unique experience of wading into a sea of literature, asking questions, freedom to explore ideas. So there can be stress and pressure but freedom to explore ideas in your own time.

Q - Is it possible for students to take modules as Ph.D. students?

A - There are no formal assessed/examined lecture courses associated with the Ph.D. That said, it may well be highly desirable to attend a specialist course (normally from the undergraduate/masters year four) relevant to your Ph.D. research. It is sensible to discuss course options with your Ph.D. supervisor.