

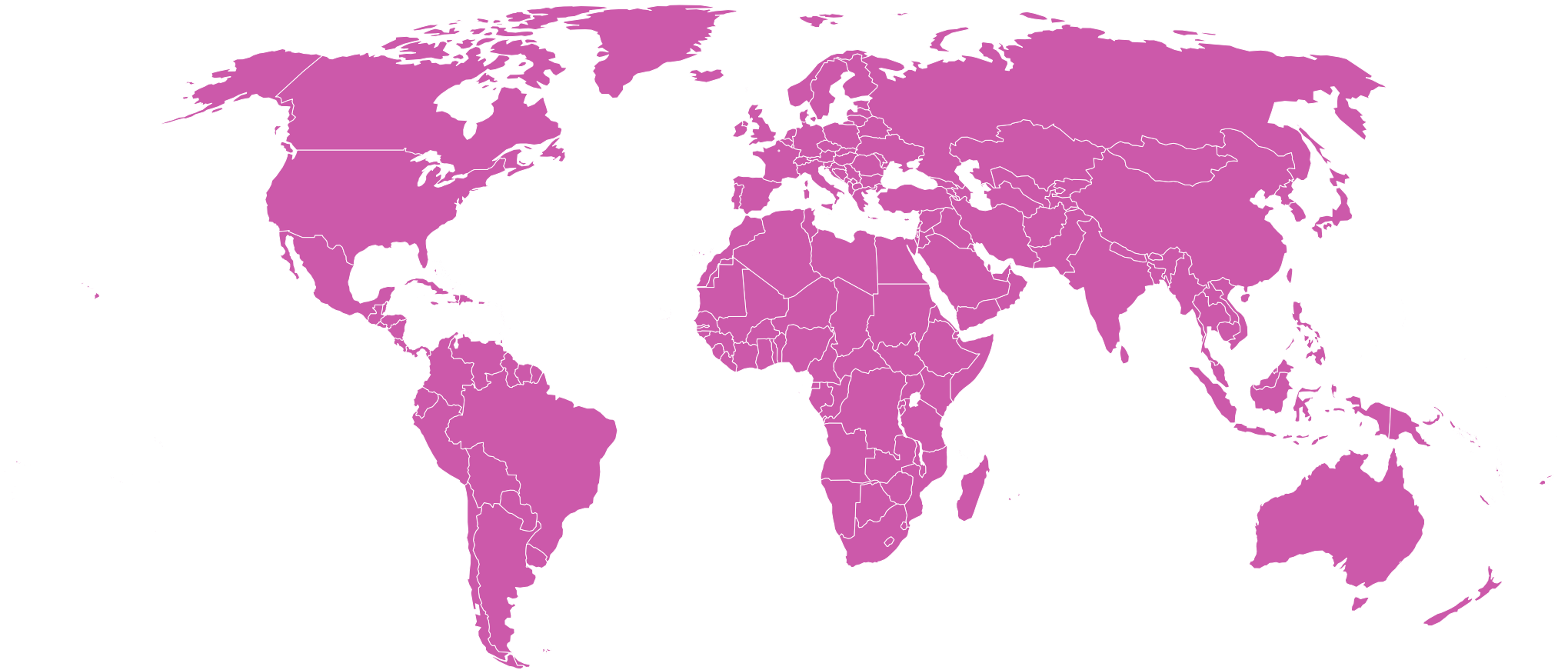


CAMBRIDGE

Supporting Cambridge Aspirations Through Super-Curricular Engagement

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Why are we here?



Hinc lucem et pocula sacra

“From here, light and sacred draughts”

Cambridge degrees are different, challenging, stimulating

Highly ranked individual subjects: **30** Bachelor's degree programmes but **65** subjects:
42 are ranked in top 10 in the world (QS World Rankings)

Full Term: 8 Weeks

Michaelmas Term

October - December

Full Term: 8 Weeks

Lent Term

January - March

Full Term: 8 Weeks

Easter Term

April - June

Long Vacation

July - September

Teaching is through lectures, seminars, studio work, independent research, labs, and ***supervisions*** (small-group teaching [1, 2 or 3 on 1] with a subject specialist to support each student's studies)

College

Supervisions

1-3 students
1-2 per week*
1 hour**

Academic Department

Lectures

*<100+ students
50 minutes**

Seminars

10-30 students
1-2 hours**

Practicals & Labs

*Course
dependent*

Field Research, Work experience Study abroad

*Course
dependent*

Independent

Independent study & research

A lot!

**Minimum 35 hours
per week**

**What makes a strong application
beyond grades?**

- Serious academic interest in the subject beyond school curriculum
- Strong personal statement
- Ability to think independently and critically
- Skills and experience related to chosen course
- Super-curricular *engagement with* the subject



Super- vs Extra- curricular

Super-curricular

**Connected to subject
and academic interest**

**Deepens subject
knowledge**

Extra-curricular

**Connected to broader
personal interests**

**Broadens
transferrable skills**

- Extra-curricular activities include non-academic activities, such as taking part in sport, music and volunteering
- Our admissions decisions are based on academic criteria
- Extra-curricular activities which are of no relevance to the course will not increase a student's chances of receiving an offer
- We're very interested in super-curricular activities

What are super-curriculars?

These are activities you do in your spare time that are **academically relevant** and **deepen knowledge** of a subject beyond the school curriculum.

There's no one specific thing applicants need to do!

- ✓ Reading articles, books or newspapers
- ✓ Watching documentaries or lectures
- ✓ Listening to podcasts
- ✓ Visiting museums or galleries
- ✓ Competitions or challenges
- ✓ Visiting historical sites or nature reserves



Ready for
the **world**



**Ready
for the
world**

Follow your interests – don't force yourself to do activities that you don't enjoy

Super-curricular activities help to

- **Discover which subject you really want to study**
- **Demonstrate subject interest**
- **Develop research skills**
- **Broaden the student's subject knowledge**
- **Show that the student can work independently and be self-motivated**
- **Make an application more competitive**

Why **explore super-curricular
activities?**



Helps develop key
subject-specific
knowledge and skills



Shows your ability to
study independently and
manage your time well



Evidence to Admissions
Tutors at universities that
you are interested in your
subject and motivated to
study it – great for your
personal statement!



Not sure on your subject?
This is a great way to
discover which subject
you really want to study!

Super-curricular exploration

Anything that enhances a student's subject interest beyond their compulsory school studies.

Super-curricular activities help to:

- Demonstrate subject interest
- Develop research skills
- Broaden the student's subject knowledge
- Show that the student can work independently and be self-motivated
- Make an application more competitive

Directed Reading

- Related to the Course
- Analytical and **critical**
- Extension activities for Maths/Science subjects

Online Resources

- Online resources like [Improve your Application](#)
- Suggestions by subject on [our website](#)

Project Work

- EPQ / Extended Essay / AP Capstone / Independent Directed Studies

University Activities

- Subject Masterclasses
- Summer schools

Work Experience

- Can help to demonstrate commitment to intended career for vocational entry courses e.g. Medicine

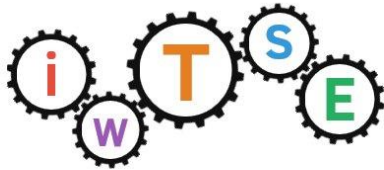
How to build up a bank of potential content

- 1. Search** - use categories and keywords (in resource hubs, repositories, book indices) and ask for recommendations from teachers/librarians
- 2. Evaluate** - type, provenance, purpose, citations
- 3. Summarise** - main points/arguments in your own words; what have you learned from it?
- 4. Reflect and respond** - what are the opinions and questions you're left with; fill in any knowledge gaps from new concepts or terminology in the resource; find alternate viewpoints or approaches.
- 5. Discuss** - consolidate what you've learned by explaining it to someone; share ideas and resources with your peers
- 6. Follow** where the thread leads... and **KEEP A RECORD**





- Current events
- Problem solving
- Literature
- Documentaries



iWantToStudyEngineering



- Exhibitions
- Podcasts & TED talks
- Sample lectures

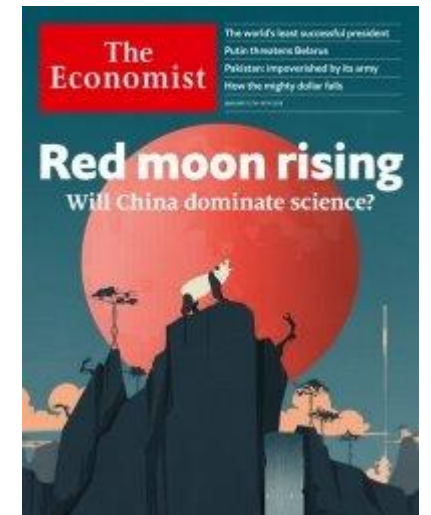
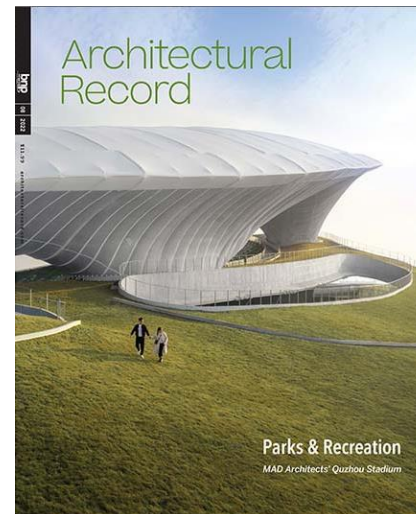


Super-curricular ideas

Directed Reading

Reading must be critical and analytical:

- What is the argument in the book/article?
- What is the supporting evidence?
- What does the reader think?

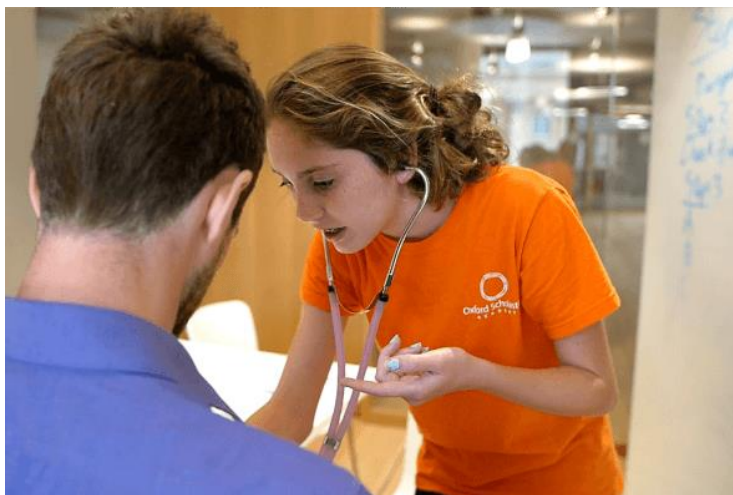


Getting the most from super-curriculars



- Keep a record of what you have done and what you learned.
- Talk to peers/family/teachers about what you have understood.
- Reflect, and find out more.

- Have you completed any super-curricular activities for that subject so far?



If 'yes':

- What were those activities?
- What did you learn, how did they deepen your understanding of the subject?
- Did they give you any leads for further super-curricular activities?
- What are you going to read / watch / listen to next?

If 'no'

- Make a plan!
- What activities could you do to find out more about that subject?
- Where could you access this material?
- How will you record your thoughts and findings?

Empowering Educators

- Teachers: integrate super-curricular thinking into their classrooms (e.g., suggesting further reading, encouraging project-based learning, facilitating discussions).
- Counsellors: guide students in identifying and pursuing meaningful super-curricular activities that align with their interests.
- School-Wide Culture: Heads of Schools can help foster a school environment that values and supports academic exploration, as well as assure resources to support super-curricular development (e.g., book clubs, guest lectures, research opportunities).



How are super-curriculars considered?
&
How can students demonstrate
their super-curricular engagement?

In the Personal Statement

The new style UCAS personal statement for 2026 entry will collect broadly the same information as previously, in a format that is more student friendly.

There are 3 sections to complete covering:

1. Why do you want to study this course/subject?
2. How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this subject?
3. What have you done to prepare outside of education and why were these experiences useful?

The content should be:

Predominantly academic and super-curricular

- How have they explored their chosen subject
- Super-curriculars are what a student has done to explore subjects beyond the school curriculum

Lesser focus on extra-curricular

- Demonstrate transferable skills, sports, volunteering, etc

Q1: Why do you want to study this course or subject?

Evidence your curiosity, interest and knowledge of your subject area

Motivations for studying this course	Knowledge of this subject area and interests	Future plans; demonstrate why this course/subject is a good fit
Have you been inspired by a key role model or moment in life?	Is there a particular subject area you've researched and are excited to learn more about?	Do you have a particular career path or future in mind?
What do you love about the subject and why do you want to pursue it further?	Have you read/watched/listened to something that's sparked your interest?	How might the knowledge gained from this subject help you achieve your future goals?
How has your path led you to this course or subject area?	What have you done that demonstrates independent engagement with the subject?	Demonstrate that you understand the area and the qualities required to succeed in it

Q2: How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?

Focus on what's most **recent** and **relevant** to the subject or course(s)

How do your studies relate to your chosen subject?	What relevant/transferable skills do you have?	Any relevant educational achievements
Don't waste space listing subjects or grades – be specific	What core skills do you have relevant to the subject area?	How will these help you succeed in this subject area?
Evidence the skills and experiences you've gained from formal education	Have you developed these through a particular module or topic?	Demonstrate an understanding of the subject area and the qualities, skills and knowledge it could provide
Be specific about how these skills and experiences will help you succeed in chosen subject	Have you completed any relevant projects or tasks that have helped you understand where your interests and strengths lie?	Examples could include EPQ, competitions, projects, specific modules/topics, representing the school/college

Q3: What else have you done to prepare outside of education and why are these experiences useful?

Examples should be **reflective** and demonstrate further suitability for the subject or course

Personal life experiences or responsibilities	Work experience, employment, volunteering	Hobbies, super-curricular or outreach activities	Achievements outside of school or college
Have your personal experiences or responsibilities influenced your subject choice?	In-person or virtual experiences	Think reading, community work, trips, summer schools, podcasts, documentaries, events	Possible examples: Courses Qualifications Tutoring or mentoring Shadowing Competitions
Have your personal experiences helped you develop key qualities for the course?	Reflect on how the experiences and skills gained are relevant to chosen subject area	Any activities outside of school/college studies that showcase why you're a good fit for the course	

In 'My Cambridge Application'

Applicants have the option of submitting an additional personal statement

Used to collect information not in the UCAS application but useful when assessing applicants, including:

- Topics covered as part of A level / IB / equivalent courses
- Optional Cambridge-specific personal statement

If an applicant is applying to a course that is only offered at Cambridge, they can give information about why they want to study that course specifically.

Applicants can use the second personal statement to expand on super-curricular activity.

At Interview

- Students will most likely have 1-2 interviews; some applicants may have up to 4.
- Typically, 35-50 minutes of interview time combined
- Discussion based – designed to be like supervisions

How to help applicants prepare

- Signpost them to interview films on our website
- Encourage them to re-read their personal statement
- Advise them to practise talking about your subjects, interests and super-curricular activities.
- If possible, do a practise interview.

How your school can support your students

Encourage Exploration

Motivate students to explore their passions and promote opportunities beyond the classroom

Provide Resources

Share or provide subject-specific resources with teachers, counsellors, and students

Seek Meaning

Help students reflect on their super-curricular activities and how these experiences demonstrate their passion and commitment to their chosen subject

Highlight Accessibility

Reassure students that super-curricular activities don't need to be costly

Teacher reference

highlight any key achievements in their subject (include details about the student's engagement with and their placement within the cohort)

Thank You



supercurriculars