

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS LIVING OUT **as well as those in Girton-owned couple/family accommodation**

We want to invite all matriculated postgraduates who either live in external Girton housing or do not live in College-owned accommodation to use any of the College facilities. This includes the MCR (Postgraduate room at Swirles court), the Library, Chapel, and gym facilities at Main Site.

The University asks that all postgraduates live within 10 miles of the centre of Cambridge in order to fulfill the residency requirements of a degree. If for some reason you cannot do this, then you need to apply for permission to live “outside the precincts” via your [Camsis self-service](#) as soon as possible after 1 October – the application can take some time to go through the system.

If you live out, you may still receive post at the Main Site – you’ll find alphabetical pigeonholes (i.e. surnames A-M, etc.) in the post room (behind the Porters’ Lodge, accessible with your University card).

If you have children, they are welcome, accompanied by yourselves, at the Main Site, Swirles and in the Gardens. They must be supervised carefully at all times and please keep children under 5 to the ground floor for safety reasons. Our gardens are particularly special but do, again, keep your children supervised as there are many types of plants, some poisonous if eaten! There is a baby change unit near the Dining Hall in the disabled WC near the Old Kitchens entrance. Further units are in the pool changing room and the Library.

If you are on a **Student Visa**, you will need to make arrangements to have your immigration documents scanned as soon as you arrive in Cambridge. Please email postgraduate.office@girton.cam.ac.uk to make an appointment to do this. You will be sent detailed information about the visa, Share Code, entry document requirements and about collecting your BRP closer to the beginning of term.

Once you’re here, please make sure to keep your personal details, particularly your term-time (which should be in Cambridge) address and mobile phone numbers, up to date in your Camsis self-service portal (accessible with your Raven password after 1 October).

Meals

You are always welcome to use the Main Site dining options – the Served or the Social Hub / bar – as if you lived in College accommodation. You will receive the subsidised rate and any food bought on site will be charged to your College bill. You may also bring your family in to eat occasionally but not to Formal Halls. You are allowed adult guests at Formals but not children.

Girton has reciprocal arrangements with both Robinson and Downing Colleges which means you can use your Cam card at their serveries and be charged student prices.

Sports Facilities at the Main Site

Girton College has a pool that is available free of charge for all College members. You do need to swim with at least one other person and children are welcome as long as they are under your strict supervision and are competent swimmers. There is a weight gym which requires an induction before first use (please sign up online for one or speak to the Main Site Porters). There is a squash court, erg room (rowing machines), and small cardio room – the latter 3 do not require inductions and your University card should give you access. For the weight gym and pool access, please speak to the Porters at the Main Site.

Utilities (water, gas, electricity, broadband)

For those in College-owned family/couple properties: Utilities will appear on your College bill if you are in most of our family housing. The prices of heating and electricity have gone up significantly so we recommend that you’re

careful with how much heating you use as the bill you receive may come as a shock. Most of the College-owned properties also have broadband contracts and the charge for this would be part of your residence charge.

If you're living privately (not College owned), first check the utilities with your landlord. You will most likely need to obtain your own broadband provider and obtain an energy provider. Water is also a chargeable utility in the UK so you will receive water bills.

A very useful, multi-purpose, go-to website in the UK is [Money Saving Expert](#). You can look up the best and reliable deals for almost anything – mobiles, savings accounts, travel insurance, broadband, etc.

Council Tax

Another chargeable item in the UK is Council Tax, a charge that varies according to the size of the property and to the status of the adults residing there.

Discounts and/or exemptions can be claimed for all full-time students, and for non-employed spouses of overseas students where the visa restricts eligibility for employment and benefits and for working adults on low incomes. Charges vary from property to property and are increased by the Local Authority in March each year.

Very importantly, this needs to be paid by the occupant directly to [South Cambs District Council](#) and should be organised soon after moving in. Bills will come from the Council to your property address and you need to deal with them – the College does not get involved – please don't leave it, as the charges will build up and the Council is not forgiving about late responses.

So, if you're in private accommodation or in Girton-owned housing for couples or families, you will need to request a letter for Council Tax Exemption purposes from the Student Services Office as soon as you arrive (email postgraduate.office@girton.cam.ac.uk).

Information about Council tax discounts available can be found [here](#). We suggest that you inform the Council of you and your partner's status (what visa they have / if they are working) before arranging payment. Their email address is revenues@scambs.gov.uk or you can call 01954 713000.

Mobile phones

It's quite easy to get a UK mobile number while you're in the UK. If and when you do, please make sure to enter the number into your Camsis self-service. [Giffgaff](#) is a good and cheap mobile provider and coverage is fairly good (O2 network). There's no need to get an expensive mobile contract in the UK.

There has been a recent spate of mobile phone thefts in London so we recommend you be hyper-vigilant with your phone wherever you are.

[TV Licence so that you can legally watch BBC television / iPlayer](#)

If you watch any BBC programmes live or on BBC IPlayer – live, catchup or on demand, you need to pay for a TV licence. You do not need a licence to listen to BBC Sounds.

University Childcare Office

The University has a [Childcare office](#) to assist students who have children with them in Cambridge. You may contact them with any questions about childcare or other issues. There is also a central [childcare Bursary Scheme for overseas students](#).

GP Surgeries (Doctors' Offices) – please register as soon as you can with the closest surgery to your accommodation. Girton uses the Huntingdon Road Surgery which is down Huntingdon Road towards town. Please see the Nurses' document and Health and Wellbeing Centre pages sent separately for more health info. You may access the [Wellbeing Centre](#) even though you live out of College.

Bus Travel in Cambridge

The [Ubus](#) is the University bus and runs from Swirles Court (in Eddington) where College PG accommodation and the supermarket, Sainsbury's are. The route will be extended starting in October and will stop near the Girton Main Site

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as well as at Homerton and Wolfson Colleges. Its route goes through the centre of Cambridge, past the Judge Business School, Engineering Dept and then to the Cambridge train station and ends at Addenbrooke's Hospital. You can download the Whippet bus [myTrip app](#).

Stagecoach Bus number 5 runs from near Girton Main Site down Huntingdon Road into the centre of Cambridge. In order to get a student fare on buses in Cambridge, you show your university card and ask the driver for a single fare or a Student dayrider which allows you to travel all day on Stagecoach buses.

Train Travel

If you plan to travel around the UK while here, it's cost-effective to get a [railcard](#). There are a number to choose from and most give you 30% off your travel. You can get one online or at the Cambridge station. If you need the College to verify that you're a student, either bring your form in or send it via email and we'll sign it for you. Trainline is a great app to download for buying train tickets.

Cycling

Cycling is one of the most popular ways of travelling around Cambridge. Keep an eye out for used bicycles as they can be expensive to buy and bike theft in Cambridge is quite high so make sure you also have a good lock. Also, make sure to have a front and back light for the bicycle and it's helpful to also wear a helmet particularly if you're not accustomed to riding on the left.

[Cycle Streets](#) is an online journey planner which you can also use to plan a cycle journey around Cambridge. The University of Cambridge website contains information on [cycle safety](#), as well as tips for security and preventing theft.

There are a number of bicycle repair options in Cambridge – one runs a stall in the central Cambridge market.

All students must register their bicycles to keep them on College property. The form can be found [here](#). Please note that e-scooters are not permitted on College property.

Wendy Klein
Postgraduate Administrator

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PS – we would find it useful to receive feedback on this document and any suggestions of information that would help those not living in College accommodation.