

Hi Freshers!

Congratulations on making it into Cambridge! I'm Jamie, your subject rep and a Pembroke CompSci (Computer Scientist) going into my third year. Freshers' week is always hectic and you'll be busy meeting new people and signing up for societies, so I'm just here to let you know what to expect from CompSci and to answer any questions you might have.

Hopefully your DoS (Director of Studies) will have been (or will soon be) in contact with you. They should send you this link: <http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/freshers/>, which has some good info for freshers on it. Some advice on the various things it tells you:

- The pre-arrival course is compulsory and gets marked online, but apparently it's not too difficult.
- No one will check if you do the maths workbook, and the maths lectures go over the basics anyway, so it's not really necessary to do it.
- The suggested reading is definitely optional; feel free to read something else or nothing at all. In my opinion, *The new Turing omnibus* is dull, but *How to think like a mathematician* is useful to read before starting the Discrete Maths course. As for textbooks, most courses have handouts with everything you need in them, so there's no need to bother. Pembroke will pay for the first £60 of textbooks you buy though, so maybe consider spending that much once you get here.

Unfortunately, the course choices are even more complicated than they used to be. They are:

- 50% CompSci + 50% Maths Tripos,
- 50% CompSci + 25% NatSci option + 25% NatSci maths,
- 75% CompSci + 25% NatSci maths.

The first two have been around forever, and the last one is new this year. You probably put one down on a form at some point, but your DoS should ask you to confirm your choice. Realistically you have until about a week after lectures start to change before catching up becomes too painful.

If you're doing the half maths option, then you'll have already met the STEP requirement, so you're well equipped to do it. In previous years, the vast majority of us took Physics as our NatSci option and hated it, mainly due to the long boring practicals. Looking at the course pages (<http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/teaching/1617/part1a-75.html>) the extra courses for the 75% option are: *Databases*, *Graphics*, *Real-world Data & Machine Learning* and *Interaction Design*. If those sound interesting to you, then I'd personally recommend it over NatSci. You will be trailblazing a bit with this option: two of those courses (Databases and Graphics) come from second year, and no one seems to have said what you'd do in second year instead.

We'll be having a subject lunch at the start of freshers' week (as long as I remember to book a restaurant) where you can pick our brains. Feel free to email me at jf549@cam.ac.uk if you have anything at all you want to ask before then. Otherwise, just enjoy the rest of summer :)

CompSci love,
Jamie