

Hello, fresher Bio NatScis!

Firstly, congratulations on meeting your offers, and (most importantly) congratulations on choosing Pembroke - rest assured you've chosen the best college, and we're all looking forward to welcoming you in freshers' week.

Hopefully, you've been enjoying your extra-long summer so far - make the most of the remainder of that, so that you're rested and recharged for the start of term. As scientists, we're fortunate that our work in the first week or two ramps up slowly compared to arts students, so take advantage of the early opportunities to get stuck in with societies and all the other fun Cambridge has to offer in that time! When you're in full swing, you can expect 12 lectures, 4 supervisions, and a couple of lab afternoons (in general) each week.

In freshers' week, you can look forward to all sorts of fun activities - the junior parlour committee will organise plenty of stuff to keep you busy. From the freshers' pub crawl to your very first night out at Cindies (don't knock it til you try it) for those of you looking forward to the night life, or from picnics and college-family dinners (you'll learn about these) to collage sessions for those who prefer a night in, rest assured you won't be bored (although your parents do appreciate it if you let them know in a spare moment that you're still alive and kicking)!

As far as subject stuff goes –

- Your lectures will begin on Thursday morning, and you should have chosen your modules by that point - your director of studies (DoS) will give you plenty of advice with this (and our biology DoS is really nice). You'll also be assigned a tutor, who has your back in non-subject welfare things. It's generally a good idea to try and make it to the meetings with these guys...
- Use freshers' week to buy any course materials (or anything else) you'll have forgotten! This may include but is not limited to: lab coats, goggles, calculators, books, stationery, toothbrush. Coat, goggles and calculator can be purchased from the chemistry department, although it's fine to bring your own if you have them already.
- The college library is usually adequate for textbooks, but the college provides a £60 book grant to all students too. It's not vital that you get hold of books just yet – the lecturers will usually tell you what they'd like you to read, so you can worry about that when you've heard it from them. If you've got absolutely nothing to do all summer, then Alberts' Molecular Biology of the Cell is the cell biology bible, so to speak.
- Pembroke is better placed than pretty much any other college as far as travel distances – for most biological modules, you don't need to go further than over the road! That said, bikes are super useful to get around the city so if you are able to get hold of one, you probably won't regret it.

- Most importantly, don't be daunted or nervous about starting out here! Everyone is in the same boat as you, and you'll find your own routine of work and play, even if it means missing the odd morning lecture after a wild night out. Our college is very supportive and helpful, and the supervisions aren't actually as scary as they might sound now!
- On Monday 3rd in freshers' week, we'll have a subject lunch. Not only does this involve free food (the value of which you will soon learn), it's also a good opportunity to get to know each other and chat to some older veteran NatScis too.

Ellie and I are your subject reps - we were in your place ourselves last year and we remember how overwhelming freshers' week can be, so please, don't hesitate to email us or chat to us about any questions or concerns you might have, or add us on Facebook or write us a letter or, uh, send us a carrier pigeon.

TLDR; congrats, enjoy summer, see you soon, don't panic, it's gonna be great.

Looking forward to meeting you soon!

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