

Dear Fresher,

You are probably reading this because you made the wise decision to take some combination of Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Earth Sciences, Computer Science and Materials. One or two of you might have even chosen a bio option and good for you; break the cycle, rise above, focus on science etc.

Now, as a 'Phys NatSci' you will know all about cutting corners. Therefore, below I've copied and edited slightly the Bio NatSci welcome letter which covers the important information of your first days at Pembroke. I felt it completely unnecessary to paraphrase such a fine introduction - so you can thank Ben Mortishire-Smith for this.

*"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 till 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 [physical] DoS [can be helpful]). 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.*

- *Pembroke is better placed than pretty much any other college as far as travel distances – for most [physical] 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.*

[Moreover, if you do materials, physics or computer science you will likely be over at west Cambridge for experiments (a 30 minute walk), bare that in mind as some of you will have these scheduled on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup>.]

- *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 ['odd' is an underestimate for me personally, don't follow suite] 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! [Although if you find out they aren't working for you do approach your supervisor, DoS or us older years and talk about it – college is very accommodating in making sure you get the most out of your supervisions (new supervisor, more supervisions, less supervisions, individual supervisions etc.)]*

- *On Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> in freshers' week, we'll have a subject lunch. [It will be] a good opportunity to get to know each other and chat to some older veteran NatSci. [If you email me you can suggest where we eat – as Food and Bar Officer I'm obliged to take your thoughts into account]"*

I hope that has offered some insight, and that you figured out the bits in [brackets] were me. I would also like to add that, as President of the Stokes Society, it would be great to see you at our some of our events (Wednesdays, 9pm) throughout the year (shameless plug). We are focusing particularly hard this year on ensuring Pembroke students have potential to talk to speakers and potentially find summer research work (seems a long way off but preparation never hurt anyone). If you would like to ask further questions or give dining suggestions, and please do, I desperately crave the attention - email me at [oh255@cam.ac.uk](mailto:oh255@cam.ac.uk). Even if I can't help, I will happily put you in contact with someone who will be able to.

Best of Luck and see you around!

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