

About the University of Cambridge



The University of Cambridge is one of the world's oldest universities and leading academic centres. Its reputation for outstanding academic achievement is known world-wide and reflects the intellectual achievement of its students, as well as the world-class original research carried out by the staff of the University and the Colleges.

It is the second oldest university in the English-speaking world (after the University of Oxford), and the third-oldest surviving university in the world. The institute grew out of an association of scholars that was formed in 1209, early records suggest, by scholars leaving Oxford after a dispute with townsfolk.

The University's mission is to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence. It engages in cutting-edge research across the globe to find solutions to the world's problems.

It has more than 18,000 students from all walks of life and all corners of the world, nearly 9,000 staff, 31 Colleges and 150 Departments, Faculties, Schools and other institutions.

Hugh Balsham, Bishop of Ely, founded Peterhouse in 1284, Cambridge's first college. Many colleges were founded during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries but colleges continued to be established throughout the centuries to modern times, although there was a gap of 204 years between the founding of Sidney Sussex in 1596 and Downing in 1800. The University's most recently founded college is Robinson, established in the late 1970s. However, Homerton, which was originally established in the eighteenth century as an independent institution, only became a full college of the University in 2010, making it technically the youngest.

Interesting facts

A total of 96 Nobel Prizes winners are affiliates of the University of Cambridge. 15 British Prime Ministers have been educated here, including Robert Walpole, considered to be the first Prime Minister of Great Britain.

The University Library is one of the UK's six Legal Deposit Libraries, meaning it is entitled to a free copy of every book published in the UK. The practical limits of space mean its holdings are slightly more modest, but it is still home to over eight million works, with access to tens of millions more in electronic format. The University Library has an agreement with the British Library and Oxford's Bodleian Library that between them they will attempt to hold every book ever printed in Britain.

It is the town where: the atom was first split, where the structure of DNA was discovered, where Charles Darwin developed the theory of evolution, where Newton theorised the laws of gravity, where the order of human DNA was first deciphered and where the electron and neutron were discovered.