

Experiencing Cambridge Summer School 2015

Student Testimonials...

Paul Conway

The 'Experience Cambridge NI Summer School' is a very worthwhile experience for any students considering applying to the University of Cambridge. This three day scheme which I attended in summer allows prospective students the opportunity to attend lectures, visit colleges within the university, and explore the city of Cambridge. A similar scheme is offered by the University of Oxford. Following my stay at Cambridge I also attended the University of Oxford Open Day to allow myself to make comparisons between the universities.

The first day of the Cambridge summer school entailed a lot of free time in the morning. The two other students and I who attended the summer school made use of this time to familiarise ourselves with Corpus Christi College, which was hosting Northern Ireland students. In the evening we were welcomed by the admissions tutor of Corpus Christi College followed by dinner. The rest of the evening was spent with a quiz and then a movie; 'The Theory of Everything', based on Stephen Hawking, an alumni of the university.

My subject choice for the summer school was Natural Sciences. The second day for those who selected Natural Sciences included a visit to the plant sciences department, in which we explored laboratory techniques, leading us up to lunch. Following lunch we attended our first lecture, the content of which was dependent on your subject choice. The lecture I attended was about bone formation, growth and development. After this everyone met at the 'McCrum Hall' for a question and answer session on the admissions process at Cambridge, providing some very useful information. Later that night we had a lecture on a professor's study of wild chimpanzees. He spoke of the places to which he had travelled in his studies, and how they would study the chimpanzees without interfering with their natural habitat and daily lives. Succeeding this we had dinner in the formal hall, requiring a smart dress code relative to the casual dress of the rest of the scheme.

On our final day at Cambridge we were taken on a tour of the city via punting; small flat-bottomed boats which are propelled by pushing a long pole against the river bed. We received our final lecture and then had a picnic in the 'Master's Garden'. Later that afternoon we travelled to Oxford via train, and spent the night in student accommodation.

The Oxford Open day also consisted of specific subject talks and an admissions talk. When not at a talk, students were free to roam between colleges and explore facilities.

I would highly recommend such summer schools to any students considering applying to Oxford or Cambridge. Food and accommodation are provided by the college free of cost. It is excellent chance to stay in student accommodation, which I found very practical and comfortable, and to get a close experience to student life. The scheme also removes assumptions made about the universities, as rather than reading about the universities you get to experience them first hand.