

Section 1: The Tutorial System - Postgraduates

Tutorial Support

All postgraduate students in Peterhouse are assigned a Tutor. Despite the name, the primary role of a Tutor is not to teach you, but to give advice about academic, social, financial or personal problems that may impact on your studies. The two Postgraduate Tutors are Dr Christopher Lester (for science students) and Professor Steven Connor (for arts students). If, at any time, a postgraduate student would prefer to see a female Tutor, they should contact the Senior Tutor.

Your Tutor will make arrangements to meet you early in your course. You should get to know him, and keep him in touch with your progress, even if things are going well. It is much easier to act quickly when a problem arises if you are already in regular contact with your Tutor. Both Tutors will have regular advertised times when you can come to see them in their rooms.

Your Tutor is also a source of general advice and support on academic matters. He is always happy to listen to your experiences of studying and research, to offer advice, where appropriate, and to introduce you to academic staff and students in College with similar interests.

Your Tutor can liaise with academic supervisors and departments/faculties, particularly if you are experiencing difficulties. If you are puzzled or concerned by what a report says, it may be helpful to discuss it in the first instance with your Tutor. In the rare cases, when things go wrong, (if, for example, your relationship with your supervisor becomes difficult or unproductive, or if you need to make a formal complaint or appeal against a University Department) your Tutor may have an important role as advocate, and can advise you about the formal procedures.

If you need to suspend your studies because of illness, or other forms of unavoidable disruption, your Tutor can help you ensure that your application is presented properly to the relevant University bodies.

Your Tutor will also be available to write references for various applications you may make, for funding or employment (though you should remember that in many cases an academic supervisor with detailed knowledge of your work will be able to provide a much stronger reference).

The Tutors for Postgraduate Affairs (Professor Steven Connor) have overall responsibility for the whole community of postgraduate students. Tutors meet regularly within College, and Postgraduate Tutors meet their counterparts in other Colleges along with senior University officers, representatives of the administration, the Postgraduate Union and the Colleges' Postgraduate Secretaries. This means they can all share information to ensure a co-ordinated and effective response to issues affecting postgraduate students.

Financial Support

Peterhouse is able to offer study awards to help with the cost of such things as research trips to laboratories and archives, conference-attendance and other research expenses. You can find out more about application for study grants at <https://www.pet.cam.ac.uk/graduate-grants>.

Your Tutor will try to assist you in cases of financial difficulty, both exploring the availability of the College's resources, and directing you to the services available to postgraduate students in the University and beyond.

Academic Community

The focus of most of your academic study will be your Faculty or Department, and you should not expect formal teaching or organisation of essential supervision on your research project to be provided by the College. However, Peterhouse has a very important role in providing a broader kind of academic contact and community, by putting you in touch with other postgraduate students working in other fields. Having to explain your ideas, or the importance of your research, to somebody who does not share your expertise, is excellent training for your future, and the best way for you to test whether you really understand something.

Peterhouse has the advantage of being relatively small, which makes it easy for students to get to know other students and Fellows of the College, at various points during the day, in term and during vacations. Sharing a meal, a drink or a common room allows postgraduates, undergraduates and Fellows with a wide variety of academic interests and cultural origins to come together, stimulating the cross-fertilisation of ideas.

One of the most important and enjoyable ways in which Peterhouse builds academic community is through the annual Postgraduate Symposium, which is organised jointly by the MCR and the Tutors for Postgraduate Affairs. The Postgraduate Symposium gives MPhil and PhD students the opportunity to give presentations on their work to an intelligent, interested, but not necessarily expert, audience of their peers and College Fellows. Peterhouse can also provide opportunities for you to organise and participate in informal seminars and reading groups, to allow you to develop your thinking and reasoning skills in broader ways than those required for the work you are doing for your degree. It provides training and support in academic writing and other general skills. You will also have the opportunity to run societies, and to meet and converse with alumni of the College or other College guests.

Peterhouse may also provide opportunities for postgraduate students to gain experience in supervision and small-group teaching.

Library

One of the great advantages of studying in Cambridge is the diversity of its libraries and information sources. Peterhouse students have access to the College library, which is an important accessory to the more specialised resources available in University and department/faculty libraries, and a quiet and comfortable place to work.

Recreational and Sporting Facilities

Peterhouse provides a large range of clubs, facilities and events, many of them run by students. Full and up-to-date details of these can be found at <https://www.pet.cam.ac.uk/clubs-and-societies>.