



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge Centre for Teaching & Learning

Year in Review 2024-25

www.cctl.cam.ac.uk
www.rdp.cam.ac.uk

We specialise in educational development and postgraduate researcher development. Working in collaborative, research- and evidence-informed ways, we provide accredited teaching programmes and workshops for colleagues who teach and support the learning of Cambridge students, and a suite of opportunities for postgraduate research students to develop their academic and professional skills. We convene events and networks, encouraging staff and students to share ideas, learn from each other and improve education at Cambridge.

This *Year in Review* highlights some of the ways in which we support and enable research- and evidence-informed improvements in educational practice.

Links to our projects and resources are embedded throughout.

CCTL

Cambridge
Teaching Forum

Diversifying
Assessment
Forum

Annual Meeting for
Education Leaders
(undergraduate and
postgraduate)

Events

Supervising
Postgraduate
Research Students

Introduction to
Undergraduate
Supervision

Postgraduate
Certificate in Teaching
& Learning in HE

Teaching & Learning
Recognition Scheme

Writing
Retreats

One-to-One
Support

Advancing
Educational Practice
Programme

Developing Teaching

Students as
Partners Guide

Assessment Good
Practice Guide

Postgraduate
Research Supervision
Support Project

Cambridge Higher
Education Studies
Research Ethics Committee

Cambridge Skills
Educators' Network

Royal Literary Fund
Writing Tutorials

Teaching & Learning
Community of Practice

Researcher-Led
Events Funding

Researcher
Development Forum

Researcher Development
Guidance






Skills Development
Workshops and Events

Being and Becoming a
University 'Teacher'

Resources & Support

Projects & Networks

PG Education & Development

Developing Teaching		629 new undergraduate supervisors completed our introductory training	150 colleagues accredited via our development programmes	10 colleagues participated in our expanded RD Fellows Programme
Postgraduate Education	5,908 places offered on our postgraduate research student workshops	292 students contributed to our student voice evaluation study		465 visitors to the Supervising Postgraduate Students resource
Events	443 registrations across our suite of annual and one-off events		183 delegates attended the Cambridge Teaching Forum	22 of 31 Colleges had delegates at the Cambridge Teaching Forum
Projects & Networks	331 colleagues in the Teaching & Learning Community of Practice	20 institutions represented at our monthly evaluation reading group	73 members of the Cambridge Skills Educators' Network	
Resources & Support		1,893 subscribers to the termly Teaching & Learning Newsletter	15 applications received by the HE Studies Research Ethics Committee	74,337 visits to our websites across the 2024-25 academic year

Fostering a culture of enquiry

Pursuing research-informed evaluative practice as part of our Postgraduate Certificate

Cambridge teaching staff participating in the [Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching & Learning in Higher Education](#) develop enquiry-based approaches to engaging with education and improving the education of their students.

All participants of our Master's-level, Advance HE-accredited programme design a proposal for a research-informed evaluative project as part of their first assignment, exploring key educational challenges within their own teaching contexts. They then have the choice to take this project forward during the year, submitting it as part of their final portfolio, with the aim of providing practical enhancements for their own teaching, learning and assessment approaches. Some participants are subsequently able and choose to publish their evaluation projects in peer-reviewed journals.

Last year's cohort investigated a range of innovative questions. One participant, for example, explored different approaches to classroom engagement for small groups of 10-12 students, motivated by a desire to improve their own practice in facilitating these sessions for a Part IA course - something to which they were relatively new - and potentially feed into a broader reform of the Tripos. As part of the study, they experimented with different formats, sought feedback from participating students and also those from previous years to understand the longer-term usefulness of the course, as well as interviewing colleagues regarding their experiences. The study resulted in changes to how they design and teach these sessions, informed broader conversations amongst colleagues, and increased their own confidence.

Another participant undertook an evaluation of a College academic skills support programme they had recently launched, seeking to understand the impact of the programme on students as well as the benefits and obstacles emerging from the programme's specific model. Drawing on written reflections and semi-structured interviews with both students who had used the service and those providing the sessions, they were able to introduce improvements to how students are encouraged to engage with the programme most effectively, and compose a suite of recommendations to better support and reward those delivering the programme.

These types of projects demonstrate how research-informed evaluation can contribute to meaningful, context-specific improvements in teaching and learning at Cambridge.

For more information, contact Dr Meg Tait (mebt1)



Engaging students in educational enquiry

PhD students' perspectives on skills development

The Postgraduate Education & Development team within CCTL designed and undertook a mixed-methods project to understand the needs of PhD students in their skills development, with the aim of enhancing the impact of the [programme of activities and workshops](#) available to them. Funding was provided by the Research Culture Fund.

Nearly 300 PhD students from a broad range of disciplines and stages of study chose to respond to our survey, providing us with broad insights into their experiences. A diverse subset of nearly 30 students further volunteered to participate in creative workshops, co-creating visual representations of the key skills they envision developing by the end of their PhD in Cambridge.

These students' narratives provide a valuable evidence base for us to continue to respond to their needs and experiences, mapping pathways through the PhD journey and identifying new themes and modalities for development opportunities.

Our innovative evaluation methods for exploring student perspectives piqued interest beyond Cambridge; the project team were invited to speak at an academic skills forum at the University of Oxford and an academic evaluation policy conference at LSE.

For more information, contact Dr Jessica Scott (js2962) and Dr Annette Mahon (am354)

A student-led 'APP PAR' Project on awarding gaps

Between 2020 and 2025, in support of the collegiate University's Access & Participation Plan (APP), over 100 students worked with the support of CCTL to co-design and co-deliver almost 30 qualitative studies of what they perceived as factors contributing to persistent differences in educational experiences and assessment outcomes at Cambridge.

In accordance with APP commitments, for this ['Participatory Action Research' project](#) there was a particular focus on students with declared mental health conditions and Black British students.

By 2025, students had presented their research and engaged with almost 400 staff through CCTL events. Since 2023, project pages on our website have been viewed by over 1,100 different users, with each individual student project receiving almost 150 views. The project has established a strong qualitative foundation for understanding awarding gaps from students' perspectives.

The students' research and recommendations will continue to guide CCTL's focus on inclusive education in support of the new 2025-29 APP, with a priority on developing self-evaluation methods and creating pedagogy-led, evidence-informed enhancements.

For more information, contact Dr Ruth Walker (rgcw3) and Dr Pui Ki Patricia Kwok (pkpk2)

“I found it restorative to see the agency and leadership of students. Another highlight for me was the opportunity to confront the complexity of the problem, that there is no single ‘silver bullet’ to eliminate awarding gaps but, as students urged, this work provides much needed momentum to keep organising and acting on different levels across the University and beyond.”

Developing teaching

Becoming and being a university 'teacher'

Our nine-month '[Advancing Educational Practice Programme](#)' supports colleagues with substantive teaching and learning responsibilities to extend their understanding of teaching, learning and assessment. The programme was introduced in 2022-23 and has enrolled more than 120 participants so far.

To evaluate the impact of the programme and inform its development, we devised a qualitative study of the experiences of participants of being and becoming university teachers. Our in-depth study involved unstructured interviews with 25 recent participants, drawn from a range of disciplines.

It has provided key insights into how their thinking and educational practices have changed over time and how they engage with the realities of inclusive teaching, learning and assessment at Cambridge. Our findings highlight the depth and complexity of practices that underpin Cambridge's unique personalised teaching and learning.

Both the study and the practical examples that emerged from it have shaped the programme itself, as well as our *Introduction to Undergraduate Supervision* course, and talks and workshops that we have been invited to hold in Cambridge. We presented the project within Cambridge at our annual Teaching Forum and also at the Society for Research into Higher Education international research conference.

For more information, contact Dr Mary Beth Benbenek (mbb37) and Dr Amy Smail (as3394)



“Teaching should inspire deeper learning...
I want the student to leave the classroom
wanting to learn more, to form their own
opinion... It’s about empowering them with
conceptual tools.”