

Cambridge Teaching Forum 2025



Tuesday 22 April
09:30-16:00
Student Services Centre



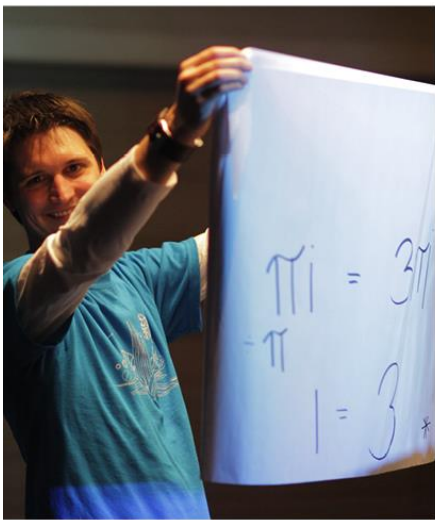
Keynote Speaker

Prof. Tansy Jessop
Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students
University of Bristol



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge Centre for
Teaching and Learning



Practicalities

Finding the Teaching Forum

The Cambridge Teaching Forum 2025 will take place at the Student Services Centre, New Museums Site. Please see the [map for directions](#).

Registration will take place from 9.30 for a 10.00 start. Follow directions for the atrium.

Plenary sessions will take place in the [Babbage Lecture Theatre](#) in the David Attenborough Building: exit the atrium into the New Museums Site, and head left.

Parallel sessions will take place in the Exam Rooms adjoining the Atrium, and in the New Wing Seminar Room on the second floor, accessible via the stairs or lifts. Refreshments will be served in the atrium itself.

Assistance

If you need assistance, please look for a member of the CCTL team, who will be wearing purple lanyards. There should usually be somebody available in the atrium. Otherwise, please ask at the main Student Services Centre reception desk.

Event Recording and Photography

The plenary sessions will be recorded to share with delegates and other members of the University afterwards. Questions will not be included in the recording.

A photographer will be present throughout the day. These photos may be used by the Centre for Teaching & Learning in promoting events in a variety of formats such as webpages, social media and publications. If you do not wish to be identifiable in any photos, please let us know at registration in the morning.

Agenda

09.30	Atrium Registration
10.00	Babbage Lecture Theatre Opening Address Dr Meg Tait Head of the Cambridge Centre for Teaching & Learning
10.15	Babbage Lecture Theatre Keynote: Fostering student agency and engagement in assessment and curriculum design Prof. Tansy Jessop Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students, University of Bristol
11.00	Break
11.20	Parallel Session One
	Exam Room A&B: <i>Presentations</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surviving and thriving: Sustaining a research group culture to support postgraduate wellbeing and development Robbie Duschinsky, Julia Mannes • Unpaid student carers: The experiences and needs of this hidden student population Alice Lawrence, Rachel Bailey
	Exam Room C: <i>Workshop</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting and celebrating supervisors and Directors of Studies through a Community of Practice Harriet Groom, Ruth Jackson Ravenscroft
	Exam Room D: <i>Presentations</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding students' use and experience of generative artificial intelligence Benjamin Knight, Ella McPherson • Understanding the impact of AI and education: Guidance, learning and further support Chris Baker, Briony Frost, Maria Toro-Troconis, Iulia Coanda
	New Wing Seminar Room: <i>Lightning Talks</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientists and educators co-creating for the classroom: Lessons from SCoPE Hélène Doerflinger, Diogo Martins Gomes, Naomi Clements-Brod, Natalie Walls, Fran Riga, Mark Winterbottom • Cambridge Future Museum Voices: A creative partnership with outreach programme participants Libby Beckett, Roz Wade, Ed Turner • Ready for the real world: From classroom concepts to career triumph Dequn Teng • Enhancing workplace-based learning for neurodivergent veterinary students Anna Hollis

12.10	Lunch
13.00	<p>Parallel Session Two</p> <p>Exam Room A&B: <i>Presentations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection, impact, action: Student-centred delivery of a Skills Evaluation Tool and its impact on engagement Emily Stoner, Hannah Wilson • Impact of sustained remote interventions on access to top HE courses Lisa Jardine-Wright <p>Exam Room C: <i>Presentations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidating the ‘Supervision Essay Journey’ Engy Moussa • An online, interactive essay-writing tutorial Matthew J Mason <p>Exam Room D: <i>Presentations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generative AI: friend or foe? Using chat-based Large Language Models (LLMs) effectively for teaching, learning and assessment Anthony Harris • Harnessing AI to advance education for sustainable development Maria Toro-Troconis, Catrin Darsley, Amy Munro-Faure <p>New Wing Seminar Room: <i>Lightning Talks</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lucy Cavendish College Tutorial Review: Initiatives, findings and ways forward Sophie Hughes, Benedict Wiedemann, Koenraad Claes • The Medical Student Systematic Review Group: Lessons learned and future plans Becky Dennison, Lily Taylor • Cultivating academic writing communities: Extended writing retreats as spaces for developing sustainable writing practices Alberto Garcia
13.50	Transition: 10 minutes
14.00	<p>Parallel Session Three</p> <p>Exam Room A&B: <i>Presentations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advancing contextualised disability support at the University of Cambridge Helen Duncan • Academic support: The School of Clinical Medicine model Liz Hook, Paul Wilkinson, Mark Gurnell, Michelle Arora, Helen Duncan <p>Exam Room C: <i>Presentations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PREPping to learn well: Embedding academic literacy and EQUIPping for the future Harriet Groom, Catherine Sumnall, Ruth Jackson Ravenscroft, Brett Gray, Sarah Millington Burgess • The complex practices of ‘inclusion’ in Cambridge teaching and learning settings Amy Smail, Mary Beth Benbenek

	<p>Exam Room D: Roundtable Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A different kind of pedagogy: The Social & Ethical Context of Health and Illness course for first-year medical students Robbie Duschinsky, Archana Jayaprakash, Rick Welch, Deborah Brown, Nancy Karreman, Sara Al-Khafaji
	<p>New Wing Seminar Room: Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tripos trajectories: Working with Directors of Studies to enhance the student experience Ellie Greer, Stuart Davis, Annie Collinson, Helen Van Noorden
14.50	Transition: 20 minutes
15.10	<p>Babbage Lecture Theatre</p> <p>In Conversation: Course and curriculum design, review and change in practice</p> <p>Chair: Dr Mary Beth Benbenek</p> <p>Contributors: Dr Matthew Harper and Dr Dai Morgan</p>
15.50	<p>Babbage Lecture Theatre</p> <p>Closing Remarks</p> <p>Dr Meg Tait</p>
16.00	<p>Atrium</p> <p>Post-event networking space</p>

Kirsty Wayland Memorial Disability Lecture (5.30pm)



The annual Disability Lecture will be taking place on the evening of the Teaching Forum, at the Old Divinity School, St John's College. We encourage delegates to consider attending this always thought-provoking event. The lecture is followed by a drinks reception.

Harriet Cannon and Prof. Pam Birtill, University of Leeds, will be discussing "Competence standards and disability: What next for universities, following the Abrahart case?"

[Find out more and register for the lecture](#)

Keynote Speaker

Prof. Tansy Jessop

Fostering student agency and engagement in assessment and curriculum design

Abstract

How do we understand the interplay of curriculum and assessment design across a programme of study? This talk opens with reflections on our experience at Bristol of developing a curriculum framework and using [TESTA](#) to take a student and programme perspective of assessment.

Evidence from the 'Transforming the Experience of Students through Assessment' (TESTA) project shows that students often feel assessment is done *to* them, fail to see its wider purpose and relevance, and struggle to find space and time to take pride in their work. In this context, they may trade agency for the efficiency of AI.

Drawing on theories of alienation and engagement, we will discuss practical assessment and feedback ideas that nurture agency, foster curiosity, develop *human* skills and, surprisingly, enable students to have more fun.

Profile



Prof. Tansy Jessop is PVC for Education and Students at the University of Bristol, where she has led a programme of [curriculum enhancement](#) to re-imagine the design of programmes and assessment. Her experience of leading 'Transforming the Experience of Students through Assessment' (TESTA) is the inspiration for [her recent book](#), which offers fresh perspectives about the relationship between assessment and feedback and students' experience of alienation, agency and engagement.

Tansy worked at the universities of Solent and Winchester before joining Bristol. Outside of work, she can be found walking Teddy – the family lab – jogging slowly, reading detective novels, and messing about in the kitchen.

In Conversation

Course and curriculum design, review and change in practice

Session Chair:

Dr Mary Beth Benbenek, Associate Teaching Professor, Centre for Teaching & Learning

Contributors:

- *Dr Matthew Harper, Director of Teaching, Department of Pharmacology*
- *Dr Dai Morgan, Associate Teaching Professor, Department of Engineering*

Abstract

The curriculum, some argue, functions as a ‘locus and transmitter of values’ (Rudolph 1977:3) and, particularly in research-intensive universities, shapes a distinctive experience for students (Blackmore & Kandiko 2012:3). How the curriculum is designed and re-designed over time is therefore of paramount importance. This session focuses on two examples of curriculum design and review at Cambridge in order to take a close look at the realities of this process: the enabling factors as well as the barriers and tensions.

Institutional and sector-wide conversations about curriculum change can often get mired in idealised versions of curriculum design and review processes, reducing them to efficient linear cycles, as the oft-critiqued rational curriculum planning (RCP) does. These idealised models rarely capture the complexities and realities of the university environment or the complex developmental and transformational aspects of learning. Rather than focusing on the theoretical and the ‘should’, so to speak, this session looks at curriculum change in practice.

Matthew Harper will speak about the recent ‘deep dive’ re-design of the Mechanism of Drug Action IB course of the Medical & Veterinary Sciences Tripos as an example of a course team revisiting a course’s logic and design. Dai Morgan will speak about the processes and realities of the annual curriculum review for the MPhil in Engineering for Sustainable Development. We will then open to the audience for questions.

Contributors

Dr Matthew Harper is Associate Professor and Director of Teaching at the Department of Pharmacology. Matthew teaches across the Natural Sciences, Medical Sciences and Veterinary Sciences Triposes, and was recently awarded the British Pharmacology Society’s Rang Prize for Outstanding Achievement in Teaching.

Dr Dai Morgan is an Associate Teaching Professor in the Department of Engineering, Civil Engineering Division. Dai is the Course Director of the MPhil in Engineering for Sustainable Development and leads several courses covering design and manufacturing, change, and stakeholder perspectives.

Parallel Session One

Exam Room A&B: Presentations

Surviving and thriving: Sustaining a research group culture to support postgraduate student wellbeing and development

- *Prof. Robbie Duschinsky, Professor of Social Science & Health, Department of Public Health & Primary Care*
- *Julia Mannes, Research Assistant, Department of Public Health & Primary Care*

Creating a positive and inclusive culture is essential for research groups, supporting both graduate student wellbeing and development. Our team has developed a set of strategies to foster an environment of solidarity, shared goals, and mutual support. These include:

- “Surviving and Thriving” Meetings: Regular sessions where members can discuss some of the challenges of academic life, promoting a sense of shared understanding, and solidarity between graduate students, research assistants, postdoctoral staff and other group members.
- Supportive Induction Pack: A comprehensive guide for graduate students and other new members outlining our group’s values, collaborative practices, and support mechanisms. This pack has been co-developed with graduate students, and is a “live” document that is continually evolving.
- Celebrating Diverse Achievements: Providing space to collectively recognise both professional and personally meaningful milestones for graduate students.
- Fostering Reciprocal Help: Structuring graduate research projects to include collaborative elements, allowing group members to work together and contribute to shared projects.

This presentation, co-led by Julia Mannes (formerly MPhil student, now full-time research assistant) and Robbie Duschinsky (group leader), will share insights into how different roles contribute to maintaining this supportive culture. We will discuss the successes and challenges of these strategies and invite attendees to explore practical ways to use research culture to support graduate student wellbeing and development.

Unpaid student carers: The experiences and needs of this hidden student population

- *Alice Lawrence, PhD candidate, Department of Geography*
- *Rachel Bailey, Research Culture, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Facilitator, School of Biological Sciences*

Unpaid student carers e.g. students who provide support to someone with a physical and/or mental health condition face many difficulties when engaging with Higher Education: young adult carers are four times more likely to drop out of their studies and 56% of student carers struggle with their studies because of their caring responsibilities. Despite this need for enhanced support, the University of Cambridge does not collect any data regarding students' carer status and is lacking a comprehensive support system to enable student carers to participate effectively in their studies. A student-staff research project funded by the University Diversity Fund engaged with twelve postgraduate students with caring responsibilities (i.e. both unpaid carers and/or parents) to begin to understand their experiences and needs. This presentation focuses on the seven unpaid student carers involved. Findings include that current academic practices do not adequately support unpaid student carers and that students experience feelings of negativity about their caring responsibilities due to the (perceived and actual) culture of the Collegiate University system. Recommendations include developing a culture of openness and awareness, the creation of a disclosure and support provision mechanism, radical improvements in support provision and institutionalised and formalised hybrid working and learning opportunities.

Exam Room C: Workshop

Supporting and celebrating supervisors and Directors of Studies through a Community of Practice

- *Dr Harriet Groom, Research Fellow (College Assistant Professor), Sidney Sussex, Department of Medicine*
- *Dr Ruth Jackson Ravenscroft, College Teaching Associate, Sidney Sussex*

We identified a need for supervisors to be supported in their practice at Sidney Sussex. Supervisors would benefit from this through building a network of colleagues, sharing best practice, resources and flagging questions to more experienced colleagues. We designed a community of practice for current supervisors of students at Sidney Sussex (wherever they themselves are based) and hosted themed network events throughout the year. This culminated in a celebration and thanks panel discussion and dinner. A pleasing side benefit was engagement of DoSes, library and welfare representatives in events and asynchronous discussion to support supervisors and their work with our students. We will discuss our experiences in hosting this community and these events as part of a panel discussion.



Exam Room D: Presentations

Understanding students' use and experience of generative artificial intelligence

- *Benjamin Knight, undergraduate student, Christ's College, Department of Social Anthropology*
- *Dr Ella McPherson, Deputy Head and Director of Education, School of Humanities and Social Sciences; Professor of the Sociology of New Media and Digital Technology*

We sought to understand whether and how undergraduate students in the Schools of Humanities and Social Sciences and of Arts and Humanities are using genAI in their studies and how they make decisions about its use or non-use. Based upon 112 survey responses and 6 interviews collected between July and November 2024, we found that students were roughly evenly divided in their own use of genAI even though the majority knew of others using it. However, students had many concerns about its use and were often influenced by perceptions of others' use. Most students reported their own use or non-use was guided by their values, their perception of its quality, and its impact on their time. However, very few reported that it benefitted their learning or contributed to their personal growth. From students' responses and through our analysis of the data, we believe that continued work to expand study skills provision, clearly communicate appropriate workloads, and diversify modes of assessment may help students to align their choices with their values and learning goals. In this presentation, we will present our findings in greater detail and discuss the future recommendations from our findings.

Understanding the impact of AI and education: Guidance, learning and further support

- *Chris Baker, Head, Blending Learning Service*
- *Briony Frost, Blended Learning Design & Development Specialist*
- *Maria Toro-Troconis, Blended Learning Design & Development Specialist*
- *Iulia Coanda, Blended Learning Research Specialist*

In aid of raising awareness and informing deeper conversations about AI in education and both the opportunities it affords us and the challenges it presents, the Blended Learning Service together with colleagues across Cambridge, will be previewing a new short course designed to inform both staff and students and lead to further guidance and support for local decision making. The session will share the context behind the course, share some insight into what the course entails, and signpost how to access the materials and share them more widely.

New Wing Seminar Room: Lightning Talks

Scientists and educators co-creating for the classroom: Lessons from SCoPE

- *Dr Hélène Doerflinger, Public Engagement Manager, Gurdon Institute*

The Scientists' Collaborative Project with Educators (SCoPE) brought together scientists, teachers, learning specialists, and designers to co-create biology teaching toolkits for A-level and GCSE students. These toolkits are freely available on the SCoPE website. The project promoted a culture of mutual learning by introducing new practical activities and contemporary research into school classrooms. SCoPE aims to support various aspects of the biology curriculum, including cell structure and gene engineering, which are part of the exam syllabus and studied at the Gurdon Institute research centre at the University of Cambridge.

Through this collaboration, scientists gain insights into how their research aligns with the curriculum and how students perceive it. Teachers enhance their understanding of fundamental biology and current techniques, allowing them to provide their students with materials and information they might not otherwise access. Students benefit by seeing the relevance of what they study and how it connects to ongoing research, which can inspire them to consider future careers in research. The Gurdon Institute Public Engagement Team coordinated this project, which was funded by Wellcome, while the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education evaluated its process and outcomes.

Cambridge Future Museum Voices: A creative partnership with outreach programme participants

- *Libby Beckett, Outreach & Admissions Officer, Clare College*
- *Dr Roz Wade, Senior Learning & Engagement Coordinator, Museum of Zoology*
- *Prof. Ed Turner, Deputy Head (Teaching), Department of Zoology; Curator of Insects, Museum of Zoology*

The outreach programme Cambridge Future Museum Voices offers an interdisciplinary and uniquely collaborative approach to widening participation. During a week-long residential stay, sixth formers from underrepresented backgrounds across the UK partner with experts to co-curate a fully-funded public exhibition at the Museum of Zoology and other University collections.

Now in its third year, the programme supports participants to share the conservation stories that matter to them and offer fresh interpretations of the University's collections to the wider Cambridgeshire community. Participants lead the co-curatorial process as they design their exhibition on the relationship between people and the natural world, benefitting from hands-on academic enrichment through learning to critically engage with collections. The programme uses behind-the-scenes access to University collections to foster a sense of belonging in academic spaces and effectively widen participation; over one third of the 2024 programme participants received an offer to study one of nine Cambridge undergraduate courses.

This lightning talk will explore the successes and challenges of designing, delivering, and evaluating this collaborative programme, and the value of the University's collections for widening participation.

Ready for the real world: From classroom concepts to career triumph

• *Dequn Teng, PhD candidate, Department of Engineering*

This session will share insights from my experience as an instructor at the Cambridge University Algorithmic Training Society for the past 3 years, where I lead coding, brainteaser, Leetcode and mock interview sessions designed to enhance students' employability in the field of quantitative finance. In particular, I will focus on problems tailored to simulate real-world technical challenges, providing students with questions one week in advance, followed by in-depth walkthroughs during the session. Drawing on the theoretical knowledge gained from university courses, we demonstrate how to break down each problem step-by-step, offering frameworks for solution development. Mock exams are also a key part of the training, where students are given timed interview-style questions that help them develop the confidence and skills needed for real-life job interviews. By integrating these activities with a focus on employability, the session will highlight how Cambridge students can build the skills and mindset necessary to apply their academic knowledge in practical, high-stakes environments such as quantitative finance. This session will offer valuable takeaways for those looking to enhance their teaching approach for employability-focused learning in algorithmic problem-solving and technical fields.

Enhancing workplace-based learning for neurodivergent veterinary students

• *Prof. Anna Hollis, Teaching Professor, Department of Veterinary Medicine*

Veterinary students are required to complete workplace-based learning as part of their degree. These take place both at the Department of Veterinary Medicine ('intra-mural rotations', IMR) and externally ('extra-mural studies', EMS), and the number of weeks of EMS is dictated by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS, the professional regulator). EMS is further subdivided into 'animal handling' EMS (AHEMS), which takes place in environments such as farms, stables, and kennels, and 'clinical' EMS (CEMS) which takes place within clinical veterinary environments such as small animal hospitals, equine veterinary practices, farm animal veterinary practices, and abattoirs.

The constantly changing environments and contexts of these placements is largely outside the control of individual veterinary schools, and factors associated with these placements may be especially challenging for neurodivergent veterinary students. A national stakeholder event of students, educators, and placement providers was held in conjunction with the RCVS as a step towards developing guidelines to better support neurodivergent students on these placements.

Delphi analysis of the data generated identified areas of stakeholder consensus. Many of the recommendations generated are relevant for all teaching environments, and these will be discussed.

Parallel Session Two

Exam Room A&B: Presentations

Reflection, impact, action: Student-centred delivery of a Skills Evaluation Tool and its impact on engagement

- *Emily Stoner, Careers Consultant, Careers Service*
- *Hannah Wilson, LEAP Programme Manager, Pembroke College*

This session is focused on the design, implementation, and impact of a student-centred skills evaluation tool. With input from both students and skills-programme managers across its design and implementation, we'll explore whether this tool helps students reflect on their skills, recognise their successes, and navigate the array of development opportunities available at Cambridge.

Showcasing the student-centred journey of design through to early impact evaluation, we explore how the 'Skills Discovery Tool' aims to support undergraduate students by providing focused insights into their skills needs, empowering students to take control of their development.

For staff, we explore how the tool provides data dashboards that allow departments, colleges, and support teams to access valuable insights into student skills profiles and the potential to measure learning gain. These dashboards help staff make data-driven decisions about resource allocation, ensuring that support is tailored to students' evolving needs whilst enabling staff to use resources effectively.

This session will showcase the voice of the student in skills development support, their motivations to focus on skills development and why now, more than ever, it is important for students to make the most of their time at Cambridge.

Impact of sustained remote intervention of access to top HE courses

- *Prof. Lisa Jardine-Wright, Director of Isaac Physics and STEM SMART*

[Isaac Physics](#) and [STEM SMART](#) are national programmes founded in Cambridge that have reached more than half a million students and teachers since their inception. Their aims are to raise aspirations, raise attainment and to support students who are traditionally under represented in STEM higher education to secure places at top universities across the UK. In this session I will summarise how we are able to scale our sustained interventions with students and our evaluation of the impact of these programmes to date.

Exam Room C: Presentations

Consolidating the 'Supervision Essay Journey'

- *Dr Engy Moussa, Supervisor of Politics*

Essays are core to Cambridge's learning system. Across disciplines, students engage in a period of intensive individual study to produce an essay on an assigned question. While diverse learning tools and assessments enrich Cambridge's educational system, the essays' dominant position remains largely uncontested. This supremacy however meets increasing criticism from academics and professionals, who question the continuing value of essays for students' learning at university and beyond. Some criticism accurately reflects the lack of a consistent approach among supervisors to the learning objectives attached to essays. However, this issue doesn't necessarily undermine the essays' educational value, but constitutes a structural weakness that requires serious attention. In the meantime, I argue that supervision essays continue to play a multifaceted, arguably unique, role in the students' learning experience, representing more than writing exercises, research products, or assessment tools. When properly executed, essays offer a unique learning experience that starts with the students receiving the assigned questions until final exams and beyond. In this light, I advance three areas where supervisors should purposely invest to facilitate an enriching 'essay journey' that empowers and involves students in their own learning. These are communicating clear expectations, using essays to lead engaging and challenging discussions, and offering student-centred feedback.

An online, interactive essay-writing tutorial

- *Prof. Matthew J Mason, University Physiologist, Department of Physiology, Development & Neuroscience*

Colleagues from the University of Bristol recently developed an online tutorial, designed to help first-year physiology students construct scientific essays. This was revised and adapted for use in Cambridge 1A Natural Sciences, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine courses, and introduced onto our Moodle sites in October 2024. The interactive tutorial covers topics including structuring an essay, appropriate writing style, use of scientific figures and equations, referencing, plagiarism and the use of AI. An exercise at the end allows students themselves to mark sample essays, according to given criteria. The tutorial also considers scientific writing more broadly and the process involved in publishing a journal article. Although an optional resource, two-thirds of all physiology students have so far accessed the tutorial. The results of before-and-after surveys, collected from 123 students, reveal substantial improvements in confidence in their scientific writing. As well as offering science students, many of whom have had very limited experience of essay-writing, some clear ground-rules to help them get started, the tutorial also takes some of the pressure off supervisors, who can point their incoming students towards this new, central resource prior to their first essay submission.

Exam Room D: Presentations

Generative AI: Friend or foe? Using chat-based Large Language Models (LLMs) effectively for teaching, learning and assessment

- *Dr Anthony Harris, Fellow and Tutor, Clare Hall; Director Studies (Emmanuel College)*

This presentation will cover specific use cases for generative AI such as: (i) Generating assessments (quizzes and examinations) to ensure that students have engaged with set material; (ii) Summarising scholarship in other languages to widen reading; (iii) Directed searching and answering specific research questions; (iv) 'Prompt engineering' to return best quality results and avoid AI 'hallucinations'; (iv) Tips on identifying submitted student work that may have been generated using AI; (v) Subject specific use cases for generative AI in teaching areas such as mathematics, humanities, computer science, divinity, art history and others subjects.

Harnessing AI to advance education for sustainable development

- *Maria Toro-Troconis, Blended Learning Specialist, Blended Learning Service*
- *Catrin Darsley, Education Manager, Cambridge Zero*
- *Amy Munro-Faure, Head of Education and Student Engagement, Cambridge Zero*

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) enables learners to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary to contribute to a sustainable future. It fosters critical thinking, and action-oriented learning, making it an essential component of modern education (UNESCO, 2017). However, embedding ESD in curriculum design can be challenging without the adequate guidance and support. In this presentation, participants will be introduced to the CoDesignS ESD Framework (CoDesignS ESD, 2021), an open educational resource endorsed by the UNESCO ESD Network (UNESCO, 2023). The framework simplifies the process of integrating sustainability into curriculum design providing a pedagogic method using a codesign and a co-creation approach (Ahmad et al., 2023; Toro-Troconis, et al., 2023; Toro-Troconis et al., 2024; Varga-Atkins et al., 2024). To further enhance this process and recognising the transformative potential of AI, the CoDesignS AI Framework and CoDesignS ESD Coach were created to assist academics in embedding AI and ESD in curriculum design. Participants will be introduced to both resources during the session.

New Wing Seminar Room: Lightning Talks

Lucy Cavendish Tutorial Review: Initiatives, findings and ways forward

- *Sophie Hughes, Assistant Senior Tutor (Pastoral), Lucy Cavendish College*
- *Dr Benedict Wiedemann, Senior Tutorial Programme Coordinator, Lucy Cavendish College*
- *Dr Koenraad Claes, Assistant Tutorial Programme Coordinator, Lucy Cavendish College*

In the first few months of 2024, Lucy Cavendish College conducted a thorough review of its tutorial system. Several key themes emerged, including the need for tutorial support tailored to incoming students (both undergrads and postgrads), and a widespread call among students and staff alike for a greater integration of college support services in order to provide equitable access to information on procedures, wellbeing support and skills provision. As a college with a particularly high number of students from a Widening Participation background, we were also particularly interested in hearing how we could swiftly mitigate any social and personal challenges faced by incoming students and those progressing to work or further study.

This feedback led to several important changes throughout this past academic year, including the development of an integrated, year-long Tutorial Programme with group sessions delivered by two newly recruited full-time tutors, around three pillars—academic skills; life and wellbeing; employability—to supplement individual tutorial support, and the creation of distinct tutorial teams to consolidate expertise in the needs of specific student cohorts. This development process is ongoing, and has been designed to be flexible. From the start it has been closely monitored by an educationalist external evaluator running focused groups with students and tutors in order to implement evidence-based change when needed.

In this presentation, we will present our findings to date, and invite feedback on potential steps for further improvement currently under consideration.

The Medical Student Systematic Review Group: Lessons learned and future plans

- *Dr Becky Dennison, Research Associate, Department of Public Health & Primary Care*
- *Dr Lily Taylor, Research Associate, Department of Public Health & Primary Care*

Systematic reviews are an important component of evidence-based healthcare and being able to conduct them is a core research skill. The medical curriculum includes aspects of the methodology but without sufficient depth. The Medical Student Systematic Review Group (MSSRG) was established in 2018 by researchers in the Primary Care Unit and Medical Library of the Clinical School, University of Cambridge. It is an extracurricular course that has two primary aims:

1. To provide clinical medical students (years 4-6) with basic training in systematic review methods through six 1-hour sessions that combine both theoretical and practical elements, and
2. To provide the opportunity for interested students to be linked with researchers doing systematic reviews across the Cambridge Biomedical Campus in order to

give practical experience in systematic review research, be co-authors on research publications and present at national conferences.

In this presentation, we will describe the evolution of this course including key challenges from funding to scheduling extracurricular sessions with students out on medical placements across the region. We will reflect on lessons learned from students' and researchers' feedback, as well as engaging with the academics who supervise projects. Finally, we will discuss our plans for the course in the future.

Cultivating academic writing communities: Extended writing retreats as spaces for developing sustainable writing practices

• *Alberto Garcia, Academic Skills Librarian, Wolfson College*

Academic writing retreats provide time and space for students to develop sustainable writing practices while participating in a community of practice with other student writers. In April 2024, Wolfson College welcomed 22 students at various stages of their degree and at different levels in their study for its first extended writing retreat beginning on Friday, 12 April and ending on Sunday, 14 April. The retreat followed Murray and Newton's "structured retreat" model, which allows space for retreat attendees to have regular discussions on their "writing-in-progress" and "create a community of practice" by sharing their writing experiences with fellow writers (2009, p. 542). The feedback from this inaugural retreat was highly positive, and the extended writing retreat has now become an embedded part of the academic writing support offered by the Wolfson College Writing Centre.

Through an analysis of the feedback received from several of the extended writing retreats, this presentation will discuss how extended writing retreats can be equitable and inclusive spaces for students working on writing projects of varying lengths and lead to the development of healthy writing practices that extend beyond the retreat environment.



Parallel Session Three

Exam Room A&B: Presentations

Advancing contextualised disability support at the University of Cambridge

- *Dr Helen Duncan, Senior Neurodiversity Advisor, ADRC*

A research project was undertaken to evaluate the models of disability support operating at the university of Cambridge and identify best practice. The project involved collecting data via focus groups and semi-structured interviews and took an inductive, qualitative approach to understanding the real-life experiences of students and staff who use the disability service. The study identified approaches to disability support that promote deeper relationships of trust, contextual understanding, and proactive collaboration between disability advisory staff and academic staff, and which foster a sense of belonging for disabled students. Findings emphasised the importance of relational trust, accessibility, and systemic equity in service delivery and advocates for a model that combines the relational advantages of disability advisers working closely with departments with the structural benefits of central services. These insights contribute to advancing inclusive education by providing evidence-based recommendations for equitable disability service design, aligning with broader institutional commitments to diversity and student success.

Academic support: The School of Clinical Medicine model

- *Dr Liz Hook, Academic Support Lead, School of Clinical Medicine*
- *Prof. Paul Wilkinson, Clinical Dean, School of Clinical Medicine*
- *Prof. Mark Gurnell, Sub-Dean (Assessment), School of Clinical Medicine*
- *Dr Michelle Arora, Deputy Lead (Assessment), School of Clinical Medicine*
- *Dr Helen Duncan, Senior Neurodiversity Advisor, ADRC*

In 2023, at the instigation of the Clinical Dean, SCM appointed a clinically qualified senior faculty member as academic support lead for 8 hours per week to provide support for students with SpLD, neurodivergence and physical health challenges. Essentially starting this role with a blank slate, this talk will highlight the course-level model that has developed from this appointment. It will focus on how support is provided for students from before entry to SCM through to qualification and the initiation of employment within the NHS. The talk will cover transition support from pre-clinical, promotion of early diagnosis of SpLD and neurodivergence, support around examination failure, promotion of self-advocacy and faculty training in inclusive practice. Key aspects of the model to be discussed include close engagement with the ADRC team who cover the school of clinical medicine and how this partnership has provided significant benefits to students on the course, the ADRC and SCM faculty. We will highlight the potential significant benefits to students, departments and the central University in interfacing such a role into a formal Teaching and Scholarship pathway post, allowing and encouraging individual academics to develop significant subject-specific expertise in student support and reasonable adjustments.

Exam Room C: Presentations

PREPing to learn well: Embedding academic literacy and EQUIPping for the future

- *Dr Harriet Groom, Research Fellow (College Assistant Professor), Sidney Sussex, Department of Medicine*
- *Dr Catherine Sumnall, Deputy Senior Tutor, Sidney Sussex*
- *Dr Ruth Jackson Ravenscroft, College Teaching Associate, Sidney Sussex*
- *Dr Brett Gray, Fellow, Sidney Sussex*
- *Dr Sarah Millington Burgess, Senior Teaching Associate, Department of Pharmacology; Sidney Sussex*

Sidney Sussex College welcomes around 110 freshers each year across the arts and humanities, social sciences and STEM. In recent years, academic leads have highlighted academic and personal efficacy gaps in arriving students. This is in the background of increased mental health, access and disability needs of arriving students as well as recognised awarding gaps¹. In 2022 we introduced “Preparation Week” a compulsory week of wellbeing and academic efficacy induction activities, co-created with student academic, pastoral and student input. Aims are for students to learn in cognate subject groups how to:

- engage in Cambridge’s teaching, learning and assessment practices
- access, explore and use academic facilities such as libraries
- understand personal wellbeing and being aware of how to seek support if needed

Students were surveyed at the beginning and end of Prep Week on how well prepared they felt for university life regarding certain wellbeing, academic and personal efficacy parameters. Students were also surveyed on their return into year to assess the same parameters along with measures of belonging. We will present results from the evaluation of Prep Weeks to date along with an introduction to our EQUIP program to embed these skills through the students' continuing academic journeys.

The complex practices of ‘inclusion’ in Cambridge teaching and learning settings

- *Dr Amy Smail, Project Associate, Cambridge Centre for Teaching & Learning*
- *Dr Mary Beth Benbenek, Associate Teaching Professor, Cambridge Centre for Teaching & Learning*

Inclusive pedagogy is held up as an ideal in higher education teaching. However, despite an extensive literature-base on the values associated with inclusion, the concept remains ‘hazy and under-examined,’ and rarely grounded in the actual realities of everyday teaching. In this way, inclusive pedagogy remains something of a ‘black-box.’ This paper presents a complex understanding of inclusive pedagogy as described by Cambridge academics. As part of a research project into becoming and being a university teacher, we have conducted over twenty unstructured interviews with Cambridge colleagues; our aim was to capture whatever insights might arise from simply letting academics talk about teaching. Unexpectedly, these interviews painted a vivid picture of inclusive pedagogy. Our

colleagues conceptualised inclusion as both deeply relational (defined as needing-to-know the students and their orientations to learning) and as a boundary-making process (defined as needing to create a 'useful distance' from students to foster knowledge-making). For them, inclusion was enacted through balancing the students' social, cultural and personal inclusion with necessary experiences of tension, challenge, discomfort and transformation in learning, all of which leading to the students' own enhancement. This paper further highlights the role of Basil Bernstein's pedagogic rights in helping us to further unpack our colleagues' understanding of inclusion within our diverse teaching and learning contexts.



Exam Room D: Roundtable Discussion

A different kind of pedagogy: The Social & Ethical Context of Health and Illness course for first-year medical students

- *Prof. Robbie Duschinsky, Professor of Social Science & Health, Department of Public Health & Primary Care*
- *Archana Jayaprakash, Research Assistant, Department of Public Health & Primary Care*
- *Professor Rick Welch, Emeritus Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, University of Maryland*
- *Dr Deborah Brown, Director, Mmaa Social*
- *Dr Nancy Karreman, Postdoctoral Research Associate, MRC Epidemiology Unit*
- *Dr Sara Al-Khafaji, Public Health Registrar, East of England Deanery*

The Social & Ethical Context of Health and Illness (SECHI) is taken by all first year medical students, assessed through coursework. Topics addressed include the effects of economic and racial inequalities on health and healthcare; the role of social support and isolation on mental and physical health; challenging issues of medical consent; and the nature and implications of fairness for healthcare. It is quite different in scope and aims from what most medical students will have been used to in their previous studies, and from what else they are taught within Tripos. Five diverse seminar leaders (early and late career; clinical and non-clinical; based within and outside of academia) will present a roundtable discussion of the pedagogic challenges and opportunities of the course. These will address questions of how students are supported to engage with the course and its aims; how inclusion has been embedded in the course; and the implications for conceptualising and facilitating student learning. The roundtable will be chaired by the course lead, Robbie Duschinsky.

New Wing Seminar Room: Presentation

Tripod trajectories: Working with Directors of Studies to enhance the student experience

- *Dr Ellie Greer, Head of Student Development, Hughes Hall*
- *Dr Stuart Davis, Deputy Senior Tutor (Teaching & Learning), Girton College*
- *Annie Collinson, Pathways Programme Coordinator, Hughes Hall*
- *Dr Helen Van Noorden, Director of Studies in Classics, Girton College*

Teaching and learning teams at Girton and Hughes Hall have been working with College DoSs to explore and improve student experiences. This session will explore our methodologies of curriculum mapping and will connect our efforts to broader aims of improving student learning and experience. We will explore the central role of the College in supporting student learning while recognising the wider circumstances (departments, quality assurance, the teaching review, emerging pedagogical best practices, etc.).

Teams from both Colleges will explain the project scopes and activities and will discuss the varying motivations and frameworks for our work. We will share our processes and consider our findings, before identifying avenues for further action in our own contexts and beyond. There will be opportunities for questions and discussion with audience members.

The [Cambridge Centre for Teaching & Learning](#) supports educators, encourages innovation and provides a focus for enhancing education at Cambridge.

Our educational development work aims to provide a sustained focus on complex educational priorities, help develop an evidence base for both designing and evaluating enhancement activities, and engage with Departments and Colleges to identify opportunities to enhance teaching, learning and assessment. We aim to support the professional education and development of those who teach / support the learning of Cambridge students.

You can hear about new developments through our [Teaching & Learning Newsletter](#).



Cambridge Centre for Teaching & Learning

Student Services Centre
cctleng@admin.cam.ac.uk
www.cctl.cam.ac.uk