# **University of Cambridge**

The University of Cambridge (formally The Chancellor, Masters, and Scholars of the University of Cambridge) is a collegiate public research university in Cambridge, England. Founded in 1209 and granted a Royal Charter by King Henry III in 1231, Cambridge is the second-oldest university in the English-speaking world and the world's fourth-oldest surviving university. The university grew out of an association of scholars who left the University of Oxford after a dispute with the townspeople. The two medieval universities share many common features and are often referred to jointly as "Oxbridge". The history and influence of the University of Cambridge has made it one of the most prestigious universities in the world.   
Cambridge is formed from a variety of institutions which include 31 constituent Colleges and over 100 academic departments organised into six schools. Cambridge University Press, a department of the university, is the world's oldest publishing house and the second-largest university press in the world. The university also operates eight cultural and scientific museums, including the Fitzwilliam Museum, as well as a botanic garden. Cambridge's libraries hold a total of around 15 million books, eight million of which are in Cambridge University Library, a legal deposit library.   
In the fiscal year ending 31 July 2017, the university had a total income of £1.71 billion, of which £458 million was from research grants and contracts. The central university and colleges have a combined endowment of around £4.9 billion, the second largest of any university in the UK. The university is closely linked with the development of the high-tech business cluster known as "Silicon Fen". It is a member of numerous associations and forms part of the "golden triangle" of leading English universities and Cambridge University Health Partners, an academic health science centre.   
As of September 2017, Cambridge is ranked the world's second best university by the Times Higher Education World University Rankings, and is ranked 3rd worldwide by Academic Ranking of World Universities, 6th by QS, and 7th by US News. According to the Times Higher Education ranking, no other institution in the world ranks in the top 10 for as many subjects. The university has educated many notable alumni, including eminent mathematicians, scientists, politicians, lawyers, philosophers, writers, actors and foreign Heads of State. As of August 2018, 116 Nobel Laureates, 11 Fields Medalists, 6 Turing Award winners and 15 British Prime Ministers have been affiliated with Cambridge as students, alumni, faculty or research staff.  
  
By the late 12th century, the Cambridge region already had a scholarly and ecclesiastical reputation, due to monks from the nearby bishopric church of Ely. However, it was an incident at Oxford which is most likely to have formed the establishment of the university: two Oxford scholars were hanged by the town authorities for the death of a woman, without consulting the ecclesiastical authorities, who would normally take precedence (and pardon the scholars) in such a case, but were at that time in conflict with King John. The University of Oxford went into suspension in protest, and most scholars moved to cities such as Paris, Reading, and Cambridge. After the University of Oxford reformed several years later, enough scholars remained in Cambridge to form the nucleus of the new university. In order to claim precedence, it is common for Cambridge to trace its founding to the 1231 charter from King Henry III granting it the right to discipline its own members (ius non-trahi extra) and an exemption from some taxes (Oxford would not receive a similar enhancement until 1248).  
A bull in 1233 from Pope Gregory IX gave graduates from Cambridge the right to teach "everywhere in Christendom".After Cambridge was described as a studium generale in a letter by Pope Nicholas IV in 1290, and confirmed as such in a bull by Pope John XXII in 1318, it became common for researchers from other European medieval universities to visit Cambridge to study or to give lecture courses.  
  
After the Cambridge University Act formalised the organizational structure of the university, the study of many new subjects was introduced, such as theology, history and modern languages. Resources necessary for new courses in the arts, architecture and archaeology were donated by Viscount Fitzwilliam, of Trinity College, who also founded the Fitzwilliam Museum. Between 1896 and 1902, Downing College sold part of its land to build the Downing Site, comprising new scientific laboratories for anatomy, genetics and Earth sciences. During the same period, the New Museums Site was erected, including the Cavendish Laboratory, which has since moved to the West Cambridge Site, and other departments for chemistry and medicine.   
The University of Cambridge began to award PhD degrees in the first third of the 20th century. The first Cambridge PhD in mathematics was awarded in 1924.   
In the First World War, 13,878 members of the university served and 2,470 were killed. Teaching, and the fees it earned, came almost to a stop and severe financial difficulties followed. As a consequence the university first received systematic state support in 1919, and a Royal Commission appointed in 1920 recommended that the university (but not the colleges) should receive an annual grant. Following the Second World War, the university saw a rapid expansion of student numbers and available places; this was partly due to the success and popularity gained by many Cambridge scientists.