

Dear Sidney CompSci Fresher,

Hi! I'm Ananya, a second year Computer Science student (or 'CompSci') at Sidney Sussex, and your college subject rep for this year. Firstly, congratulations on getting your place to study at Cambridge! CompSci is such a great course here, and I really enjoyed my first year. As college subject rep, I hope I can make adjusting to Cambridge life a little easier for you. If you have any questions before or after coming up don't hesitate to ask me! Sidney is a lovely college to be at; we're right in the centre of Cambridge (opposite Sainsbury's, which is a great perk!) and known for being a really friendly college. It's easy to get to know people across your year and in the years above as there are plenty of places around college to hang out, such as the JCR (basically a big living room that all undergrads can use for a movie night or playing on the Wii), the bar (which has a pool table and well-priced drinks), and 'hall' which serves breakfast, lunch and dinner most days, and formal hall which is a pre-booked three-course dinner several times a week. I'd really recommend checking out brunch in hall on Saturdays!



Before arriving in Cambridge, our freshers' reps will assign you a college family – parents, one of whom does your course, and one or two siblings who take other subjects. This hopefully means you'll know a few names or faces before the start of term! CompSci is a small course - there are three of us in my year (Tautvydas and Harrison are the other ones and are next to me in the photo) – but all courses mix in the college community anyway.

The courses that you take in your first year will depend upon the option you pick, however in general you will have 12 lectures and 4 supervisions a week. Some lectures will be held roughly a 10-minute walk away from Sidney in the New Museums Site, however, others, as well as all labs are in the Computer Science department, which is a 15-20 minute cycle, or roughly a 40 minute walk away (or 30 if you pace it!). My subject rep from when I was a fresher recommended that we bike, and I would recommend this too (although none of the Sidney CompScis from my year biked as we all enjoy walking). Although not essential, I'd also say it's super useful to have a laptop for practical sessions in the computer lab so that you can take the work back to college with you, and don't have to rely on the computers there.

Being a Sidney CompSci in particular is fantastic, as we have supervisions with students from about 8 other colleges in a group that we fondly refer to as 'the duibase'. This is yet another opportunity to meet new people, as you won't only have supervisions with the other CompScis from Sidney! Some of these supervisions will take place in Churchill College, which is about a 20-minute walk from Sidney, so do factor this into your decision to cycle!

One of the main assignments we get set are called 'ticks'. These are small practical programming assignments that let you get stuck into a programming language or field of study. The pre-arrival work, especially the Java section, has a very similar set up to the ticks. It's especially important to take the time to read the material and do the exercises set before freshers' week. The first week even before term officially starts is really busy, and it really helps to be on top of things, so you have less to worry about. If you need any help or advice, please feel free to contact me!

Aside from academia, there is so much you can get involved with at Sidney and at the university. From college sports and societies, to university wide ones, there will be something for everyone. It's a great time to try something new and to meet new people; I would especially recommend going to the freshers' fair and trying lots of different things while you have time in the first few weeks to see what you like. Freshers' Week is one of those few times when you get an entirely fresh start and can literally try anything - and introduce yourself to everyone without it being too awkward! However, life at Cambridge can be busy and hectic, and you really don't need to fill every spare minute of time with an extracurricular activity; sometimes just chilling in the JCR, bar, gardens, or in someone's room and watching a movie or chatting is the best way to unwind. Formal hall is also another fun way to send an evening, and a great part of college life!

I really look forward to meeting you, and don't hesitate to get in touch with any questions, however trivial they may seem. You can contact me by email at ah2096@cam.ac.uk or message me on Facebook (Ananya Hari). I look forward to meeting you all and hope that this will be the start of three amazing years for you!