

Postgraduate students and Chapel Choirs

Postgraduate students are encouraged to play a full part in their college's music scene, including in chapel choirs. There are a number of ways to go about gaining a place in a choir:

- If you have received your college offer **by the 15 February Choral Award application deadline**, you are eligible to apply through Intercollegiate Choral Awards Scheme. (See the [webpages](#) for details, including [FAQs for postgraduate applicants](#).)
 - If you have received your college offer **after the 15 February deadline**, you should email your college director of music in the first instance, after the end of March, when the Choral Trials process has been completed and vacancies for the forthcoming year will be known. If there are no vacancies in your college choir, your next step should be to email the Choral Awards Co-ordinator ([Louisa Denby](#)) to ask for advice.
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What does it mean to hold a Choral Award?

Choral Award-holders are required to sing in the choir of their College chapel, attending regular rehearsals and services. Most Colleges also expect Choral Award-holders to play an active role in College music-making. The responsibilities of Choral Award-holders vary greatly from College to College and are outlined on the relevant College websites.

A Choral Award comes with a small financial award each year, which is the same across all Colleges participating in the Intercollegiate Choral Awards Scheme; however, the true value of the Award lies in the educational, social, and cultural opportunities and training made available to the holder, facilitating their intellectual and personal development in support of and far beyond the academic subject they happen to be studying. A Cambridge Choral Award is also an excellent addition to a CV: it demonstrates that the recipient is committed, reliable, and highly-skilled.

Do I need to be a brilliant singer with years of experience?

In a word...no! There is a huge range of choirs in Cambridge in terms of time commitment required – some ask for ten hours of your time per term, some a few hours a week; in others you may find yourself singing anything up to seven services a week. It's true some people have experience in school choirs or elsewhere, but for every one of them there will be others who do not. At the auditions (in March each year) we hear all sorts of singers, including some who might have perhaps played an instrument in the past and are enthused by the thought of being involved in college life by singing in their college's Chapel Choir. Some people will have had singing lessons, others not. Many who want to give it a go but have no experience often surprise themselves! (A basic ability to read music is required, however.)

I'm worried about the time commitment, as my course is intense!

Directors of Music understand that life can be complex for postgraduate students, and are usually willing to be flexible in terms of time commitment. The best strategy is to be up-front and clear from the start. If you have further worries or questions, please [email the Choral Awards Co-ordinator](#), Louisa Denby.