

Hello there! I'm Heidi, the Comp-Sci ( short for computer scientist) Subject Rep, and one of the two second year Comp-Scis. I've been asked to give you a bit more information about life at Pembroke as a Comp-Sci and feel free to contact me about any other questions you have before you start and whilst you're here at Pembroke. You can email me at [hh360@cam.ac.uk](mailto:hh360@cam.ac.uk) and I'll do my best to answer your questions.

## **Lectures**

Every week of full term you will have 12 lectures. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday you will have 2 Comp-Sci lectures, one at 10 and at 12 and on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday (yes, I did just say Saturday!) you will have one Maths lecture at 9. Also you will have 3 lectures a week in your chosen Nat-Sci (short for Natural Sciences) subject.

## **Supervisions**

Then you will have supervisions, typically 4 a week, though it often varies from week to week. You have to contact your supervisors yourself to organise supervisions and they all have different methods of organising this, though it's normally through email or/and online calendar apps. The best advice I can give you is to stay organised and contact supervisors as soon as possible, because you may be given the same time slot every week of the year, so try to get the best possible times.

So supervisions work as follows: the supervisor will email you the work and a deadline, typically one or two days before the supervision. You do the work and either email it back or go and deliver it (I advise you get a bicycle, it's really useful, but if you do need to get the bus it's the Uni4 or City4 and it costs 50 pence when you show your Uni card). Then the supervisor will mark your work and at the supervision, return it to you and go through it with you, as well as answering questions that you have from lectures and the course material. You can also contact supervisors, outside supervisions with questions and email about questions you intend to ask in the supervision in advance to give them time to prepare answers.

Take notes and don't be afraid to ask questions, that's the whole point of a supervision !

## **Practicals**

Next we have practicals, which take place on Thursday. These come in the form of ticks, which are basically exercise which you complete each week and then a person called a 'ticker' will ( surprisingly enough ) tick on a big table to say that you have completed the work. The ticks are split into hardware and two programming languages, ML and Java. If you have no prior experience of hardware or programming, then don't worry. There are demonstrators on hand to help you and there are some pretty comprehensive instructions too. I found the best strategy was to start the programming exercises before the lab and then aim to finish them in the lab because that way you can be prepared with questions to ask the demonstrators. But different approaches work for different people.

## **Life as a CompSci**

The workload is fairly evenly spread out throughout the year, as long as you stay up to date. Keep one eye on your timetable for next couple week, to ensure that you not suddenly going to be rushed off your feet because you have tried to fit too much into a couple of days. Your DoS ('Director of Studies') will be Austin Donnelly. He is based in Microsoft Research, which is just behind the William Gates Building and he's helpful and approachable.

Every year Pembroke takes a few Comp-Scis so you get the opportunity to work closely with someone over the year and, as you take a Natural Science subject, you also get to be part of Pembroke Nat-Sci population so you get the best of both worlds.

### **Nat-Sci**

You choose a natural science subject to study in your first year and I picked Physics so I'm going to tell to tell you a little bit about Nat-Sci Physics.

If you want to know about another Nat-Sci subject, email me and I'm sure I can find a natsci to tell you more. So Physics lectures take place every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 9 and Practicals take place at every other week on a given afternoon. The course teaches from the basics and assumes very little prior knowledge although it does expect strong Mathematics skills. The course is very popular and is very well organised but it's important to pick the Nat-Sci subject based on what you enjoy not just do a subject because everyone else does.

### **Maths**

Like all the Nat-Scis, you will take a maths course. There are two streams based on your previous experience. Lectures are Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 9 and there are no Practicals but there are some assessments in first term. This year it was Matlab but they may be changing it. The Maths exam is a no calculator paper so you may want to brush up on some of the basic skills.

Enjoy your summer holidays and get a good rest, I look forward to meet you in Freshers' Week and feel free to get in touch with any questions or just to introduce yourself.

Heidi :)