



BME STUDENTS

quick resource pack

Welcome to the University of Cambridge! As a new student from a Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) background, navigating Cambridge can be both exciting and challenging. The university has a rich history, but it's also important to recognise that BME students may encounter unique experiences, particularly when it comes to mental health, belonging, and representation. This quick resource guide is here to support you and point you toward the services and communities that can enhance your time at Cambridge.

1. Understanding BME mental health needs

Mental health challenges can be amplified by racial and cultural factors, leading to a distinct experience for BME students. These can include feelings of isolation, pressure to achieve, or the impact of microaggressions. The Cambridge BME Mental Health Toolkit emphasises that it's okay to seek help and highlights specific resources available for BME students.

Key Resources:

- University Counselling Service (UCS): The UCS provides free and confidential support for all students. Notably, the BME Counselling Scheme allows you to request a BME counsellor who may better understand the racial and cultural context of your experiences. Visit [University Counselling Service](#) to access support.
- First Response Service (Call 111, Option 2): For immediate mental health support, this NHS service operates 24/7, connecting you to mental health professionals who can offer advice and referrals.
- Black, African, and Asian Therapy Network (BAATN): This UK-wide network offers a directory of BME therapists who provide culturally sensitive mental health support. Visit [BAATN](#) for more information.

2. Cultural and community support

Finding a sense of belonging is crucial during your time at Cambridge. Thankfully, there are several BME-focused societies and networks where you can connect with like-minded individuals, celebrate your culture, and advocate for important causes. You can find more in the 'Cultural & Faith' section of the Cambridge SU clubs & societies [webpage](#).

3. Dealing with racism and discrimination

Unfortunately, racism can still be a reality even in academic spaces. Cambridge provides multiple avenues for reporting and addressing racial harassment or discrimination:

- **Anonymous Reporting Tool:** If you encounter racial harassment but are uncomfortable with formal reporting, you can use the university's anonymous tool. This won't lead to direct action but helps the university track patterns of behaviour. [Report Anonymously](#).
- **Formal Reporting Procedures:** For those ready to take formal action, the Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Reporting Form allows you to initiate a complaint with the possibility of imposing sanctions. [Formal Report](#).
- **Racial Harassment Reporting:** If you experience racial harassment, the university's formal reporting system provides multiple levels of support, including measures to limit contact with those involved and investigation of complaints. You can reach out to the Racial & Religious Discrimination Advisor [here](#).

4. Accessing BME-specific health and wellbeing services

Being proactive about your mental and physical health is essential. Here are some BME-focused healthcare providers in Cambridge:

- **BME General Practitioners (GPs):** Sometimes having a GP who shares your cultural background can enhance your comfort and trust. Practices such as Newnham Walk Surgery, Trumpington Street Medical Practice, and Cherry Hinton and Brookfields Medical Centre have BME GPs available.
- **Lime Tree Clinic:** Offers various sexual health and contraceptive services, with a welcoming and inclusive environment.
- **Cambridge Nightline:** A student-run confidential listening service available from 7pm to 7am during term time at 01223 744444, and at cambridge.nightline.ac.uk for instant messaging. It provides support for those who need someone to talk to during the night.

5. Financial support and welfare services

Cambridge offers various financial and welfare support options tailored to the needs of BME students, especially in moments of crisis:

- **University Crane's Fund:** Provides financial assistance to students requiring treatment for physical or mental illness. Applications can be made through your college tutor.
- **Selwyn College Dawson's Fund:** Offers emergency financial support for mental health treatment, particularly when waiting times at the UCS are excessive.
- **Student Advice Service:** A free, confidential service offering guidance on academic issues, financial difficulties, and mental health concerns with a BME Advisor. Visit [Cambridge SU Advice](#) for more details.

6. Decolonizing the curriculum and anti-racism initiatives

Cambridge is actively working on decolonizing its curriculum to ensure that the academic content reflects diverse perspectives and histories. You're encouraged to engage with these initiatives:

- **Get Involved with Decolonizing Projects:** Many departments run student-led working groups focused on curriculum reform. Your input as a postgraduate student is highly valued in shaping more inclusive learning experiences.
- **Anti-Racism Advocacy:** Whether it's through campaigns or participating in forums, there are opportunities to advocate for systemic change within the university.

Consider connecting with the End Everyday Racism or the Brave Space Collective for more activism opportunities.

7. Self-Care and Setting Boundaries

Lastly, prioritising your wellbeing is key to thriving at Cambridge. Juggling academic pressures with personal life can be challenging, but integrating self-care practices can make a big difference:

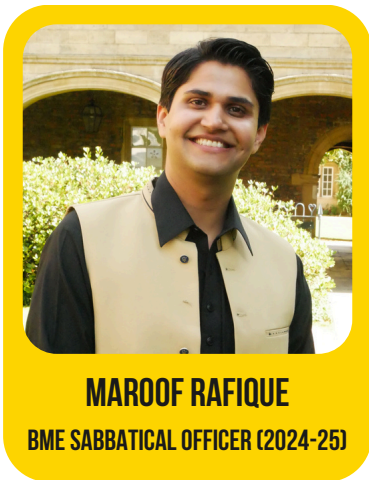
- **Set Boundaries:** Learning to say "no" and managing your time effectively is crucial. The toolkit provides guidance on how to set healthy boundaries with supervisors and peers.
- **Find Your Community:** Engaging with cultural societies and support networks can provide a much-needed sense of belonging and solidarity.
- **Take Breaks:** Cambridge's workload can be intense, so remember to schedule time for rest, hobbies, and socialising.

Conclusion

Your time at Cambridge is an opportunity to learn, grow, and build lasting connections. Remember that you are not alone—there is a strong network of support ready to assist you in navigating your postgraduate journey. Whether it's through accessing mental health resources, engaging in cultural communities, or participating in activism, this induction pack is here to help you make the most of your time at Cambridge. Stay connected, reach out when you need help, and take full advantage of the resources available to you.

For more information and ongoing updates, be sure to follow us on insta [@CambridgeBME](#) or reach out to your BME Sabbatical Officer at maroof.rafique@cambridgesu.co.uk

YOUR BME CAMPAIGN



MAROOF RAFIQUE

BME SABBATICAL OFFICER (2024-25)

Hello! I'm Maroof, your BME Officer at Cambridge SU and I'm proud to lead the BME Campaign and advocate on behalf of our diverse community. This year, I'm fully committed to representing and supporting BME students, with a focus on three key priorities: decolonisation at Cambridge, anti-racism campaigning, and BME mental health. I'm here to ensure that your voice is heard and that you feel supported throughout your time at Cambridge. If you ever need any guidance, support, or just a chat, please don't hesitate to get in touch. I'm here for you, and together, we can make a difference.

BME CAMPAIGN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (2024-25)

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WANT TO BE A PART OF THE BME CAMPAIGN?

We will be co-opting the following roles during Michaelmas term 2024:


- Secretary
- Education Officers (x2)
- Access Officer
- Campaigns Officer
- Events Officer
- Postgraduate Officer
- Mental Health & Disabilities Officer
- International Officer
- Women's Officer
- LGBT+ Officer

If you are interested, check out our governing documents on our website with roles description and email your expression of interest to campaigns@cambridgesu.co.uk and maroof.rafique@cambridgesu.co.uk

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