



Laidlaw Leadership and Research Programme at  
Newnham, Murray Edwards, Trinity Hall, and  
Fitzwilliam Colleges at the University of Cambridge  
Application Guide 2023-2024



*Revised October 2023*

About the Laidlaw Programme at the Four Colleges .....	3
The Application Process.....	4
Eligibility .....	4
Application Components.....	4
Selection Process .....	4
Commitments by the Scholar.....	5
Your Research Proposal.....	6
Planning Your Proposal .....	6
Finding a Research Supervisor .....	6
Contacting academics .....	7
Funding.....	7
Other considerations .....	7
Your Personal Statement .....	8
Thinking Ahead: Leadership in Action .....	9
Overview.....	9
Options .....	9
Other considerations .....	9
Your Laidlaw Programme at a Glance.....	11
Application Checklist.....	11
Contacts and Useful Links.....	12

## About the Laidlaw Programme at the Four Colleges

Generously funded by Lord Laidlaw of Rothiemay and the Irvine Laidlaw Foundation, the Laidlaw Leadership and Research Programme provides undergraduates with hands-on experience of research, bespoke leadership development and mentoring, as well as an immersive leadership experience to prepare and develop them as global citizens and future leaders who believe in evidence-based decision making and ethical leadership. Laidlaw Scholars and their research supervisors at the Cambridge colleges are part of an international network of leading research-intensive universities which deliver the programme.

The programme has three main components:

- An original, student-led six-week research project in the first long vacation.
- An immersive six-week Leadership-in-Action experience in the second long vacation where students put their leadership training into practice to create a positive impact in society
- An intensive leadership development programme which takes place over the eighteen-month duration of the programme.

Laidlaw Scholars also benefit from a certificate course in ethical leadership designed by the Oxford Character Project and participate in the annual Laidlaw Scholars Conference alongside cohorts from the other member universities.

# The Application Process

## Eligibility

Only members of Newnham College, Murray Edwards College, Trinity Hall, and Fitzwilliam College are currently eligible to take part in the programme.

We accept applications from all subject areas, but you must be an undergraduate in the first year of a three-year course or in the first or second year of an eligible four-year course such as Engineering, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, or Classics (4-year option).

Second-year students who have intermitted, are on other four-year courses, or Modern & Medieval Languages students leaving for their year abroad may still be eligible, but on a case-by-case basis agreed by their home college.

Foundation Year students are not eligible until they progress to further study at a participating college.

Applicants should verify that they will be able to participate fully in all elements of the programme including both summer projects before applying. If you're unsure whether you're eligible, contact the Laidlaw Coordinator or the named contact person at your college (see the Contacts section of this guide).

## Application Components

Your application will consist of the following items. You do have some choice as to format and there are templates to help you structure your materials on the website. In the case of written statements/proposals, you may fill in and submit the template itself or reformat according to your preference. Video proposals will be submitted separately via a Google Form; a URL and instructions are provided in the CASC FAS portal.

Research Proposal:

- Video pitch (maximum of 5 minutes; may include slides in the video itself or be accompanied by a 300-word max. handout)
- Pitch Poster (PDF - 600-word max. In the style of posters used for research poster sessions)
- Traditional written proposal (1000-word max.)

Personal Statement:

- Video statement (maximum of 5 minutes).
- Traditional written statement (1000-word max.)

Reference from your Director of Studies detailing your suitability for the programme.

Confirmation that a Cambridge-based academic has agreed to supervise your work and to act as your Research Supervisor.

## Selection Process

Applications will be reviewed by a Selection Committee composed of senior representatives from the participating colleges. Applications are assessed within their own college group throughout, with 6 places guaranteed per college (7 for Newnham).

Once the window for applications closes, shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview ahead of the final selection.

Key Dates:

Applications open	November 27, 2023.
Applications close	February 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2024 (11:59pm).
Interviews	Week of March 4-8, 2024.
Scholars announced	March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2024.

Applications will be submitted using the CASC Fellowship Application System (FAS) accessible via [laidlaw.fund.ac.uk/apply](http://laidlaw.fund.ac.uk/apply) starting on November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Please do not attempt to send materials directly to the Laidlaw Coordinator unless specifically instructed to do so.

### Commitments by the Scholar

Before applying, you should be sure that you can commit to participating in the programme in full, including:

Following your proposed research project through to completion and generating a report to be presented during a poster session as part of a programme review event.

Attending all leadership development activities.

Spending six weeks abroad (either for research, or as part of the Leadership in Action component).

Completing the following Laidlaw Scholar Outputs over the course of the 18-month programme:

After the first summer:

- A research poster (presented within the University and posted on the Network)
- A *c.* 3000-word research essay (posted on the Network) – accessible to a wide, non-subject specific audience
- *Optional:* an academic research paper for publication or for presentation at conferences (co-authored with your research supervisor if appropriate to your field)
- *Optional:* a reflective blog post

After the second summer:

- A 3–5-minute leadership experience video **or** a *c.* 600-word blog post
- A summary description of the Leadership project, its goals, objectives, and outcomes.
- *Optional:* Weekly experience log (posted on the Network).

Participating in your overall programme by providing details of your research, by acting as a mentor to incoming scholars, and by using the Laidlaw Scholars Network to connect and collaborate with a growing global community of scholars and alumni, their supervisors and College coordinators.

Keeping the central Laidlaw programme office informed of your career developments in future years via the Laidlaw Scholars Network.

# Your Research Proposal

## Planning Your Proposal

Whether you submit a traditional written proposal, a video, or a poster, you should answer the following questions:

Why is your project important?

What are your research goals? Are they achievable within the time and budget allotted?

What impact will the project have?

Does the project have an interdisciplinary approach or methodology? Is there a cross-disciplinary value or impact? Are there benefits outside of the academic community?

Remember that members of the Selection Committee come from a variety of personal, professional, and academic backgrounds. Your proposal should not only make sense but be compelling to people in fields outside of your own.

Examples of project proposals submitted by current and former Laidlaw Scholars from a variety of disciplines can be found via the Laidlaw Scholars Network:

<https://laidlawscholars.network/search/content?query=proposal>

Please note that this project cannot be the same as any other dissertations or year abroad projects you plan to undertake as part of your regular course of study. If you are unsure whether your proposed project is too similar to work you plan to submit for your degree, please consult with your DoS. It is your responsibility to make sure you're within the rules of your degree programme.

## Finding a Research Supervisor

Your Research Supervisor must be affiliated in some way with the University of Cambridge (including its many centres and institutes, the University Library, faculty libraries, the Fitzwilliam Museum, Kettle's Yard, the Botanic Gardens, etc.) or with a Cambridge college. In addition to college and university lecturers and professors, final-year PhD students, Postdoctoral Researchers (such as Junior Research Fellows, Early Career Fellows, Teaching Fellows, and Research Associates) are eligible to supervise for the Laidlaw Programme. They do not have to be members of a participating college and we encourage you to branch out!

Department and Section websites will have a 'people' or 'staff' section that offers a list of academic staff, along with their primary research interests and contact details.

Tap into your network. Ask your DoS if they know researchers working in your proposed area, talk to your lecturers and supervisors, talk to friends in other colleges. PhD finalists and Postdocs can sometimes be difficult to find on either college or faculty websites, depending on how their funding is structured – you may need to ask your DoS specifically about these folks, or send more general queries to departments to find out who is available. They will generally have fewer supervisory and service obligations than their more senior colleagues, and therefore make very good candidates for supervising Laidlaw projects.

A broad search might start with the A-Z of Cambridge Schools, Faculties, and Departments:  
<https://www.cam.ac.uk/colleges-and-departments/department-a-z>

In addition to this, the University lookup service is keyword searchable (requires Raven log-in):  
<https://help.uis.cam.ac.uk/service/collaboration/lookup>

### Contacting academics

Be polite. Use Dr. or Professor where appropriate and a professional sign-off. Your tone should be formal and respectful. Thank them for their time (they may not have much of it for emails!) (No emojis.) Make sure you approach your proposed supervisor well in advance of the application deadline and keep in mind that an email urgently sent is not always urgently received – you should wait at least two full business days (Monday to Friday) before following up.

Be concise. Use a short but descriptive email subject line. Don't use something too vague like 'proposal' – they should be able to tell what type of email it is before opening it. Explain in a short paragraph what the Programme is and the broad strokes of the research project you are proposing. If they are interested in supervising your work, you can get into the granular details at that point.

Be clear. Tell them why you are approaching them specifically and why your project suits their research interests. Let them know that this is a summer research project—If they plan to be away doing their own fieldwork, they might not be the right research supervisor for you! It's ok to ask your first choice to suggest other potential research supervisors if they aren't available.

If you are shortlisted, the Laidlaw Coordinator will be in touch with your Research Supervisor to explain their role in more detail.

### Funding

If selected, you will receive a stipend of £500 per week for the duration of your six-week research project. Your research costs and day-to-day living expenses will come out of this stipend, but some additional funds are available to offset travel and other incidentals. You should be sure that your project is deliverable within this budget – your proposed Research Supervisor may be able to help you assess this. Bear in mind that you may not be eligible for college or university bursaries (including rent bursaries) during the period of your six-week research project, which will take place outside of term time.

### Other considerations

Ethics: If your proposed research includes human participants or animal subjects, you will be required to show that it meets ethical research standards. You don't need to submit any formal checks at this stage, but you should review Cambridge's processes for these ahead of time (outlined here along with a useful flow chart):

<https://www.research-integrity.admin.cam.ac.uk/ethical-review>

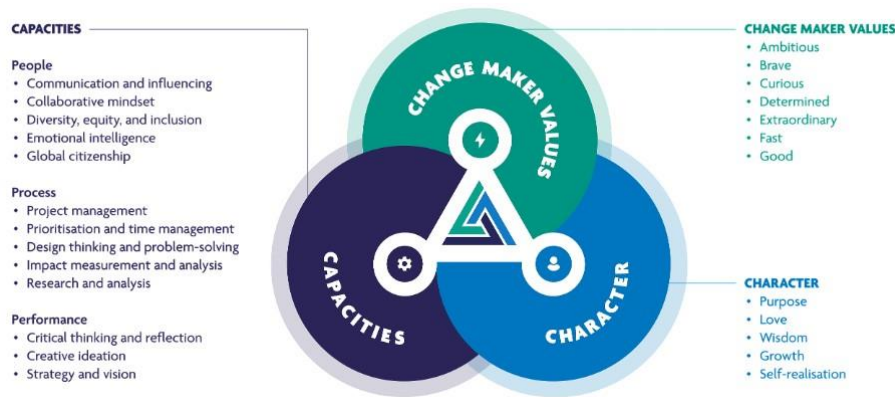
The Laidlaw Coordinator is also able to help with a broad overview of the review process.

# Your Personal Statement

Your Personal Statement should explain your motivation for applying to the Laidlaw Programme. You don't have to demonstrate loads of experience or perfection coming in! You should, however, show some self-awareness about the ways participation in the programme will help you grow as a leader, a thinker, and a global citizen.

You should tell the Selection Committee about your career ambitions and your personal aspirations. You should also tell them about your involvement in activities outside of academics - This doesn't just have to be at Cambridge, or things you've done as part of a group. Sports, arts, clubs, societies, volunteering, religious life, caring roles, etc., that you took part in at home, at school, or in your community are important whether you were in a leadership role or not.

In crafting your Personal Statement, you must incorporate elements of the Laidlaw 3Cs model and its Change Maker Values as well as the Laidlaw Attributes and address how the programme will help you to grow:



<b>Leadership abilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to lead without authority</li> <li>• Able to convey purpose and build coalitions</li> <li>• Cultural intelligence and capacity for empathy</li> </ul>
<b>Self-knowledge and awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honestly assesses own knowledge and leadership style/preferences</li> <li>• Knows own limitations and acts accordingly</li> <li>• Learns continually</li> </ul>
<b>Effective communicator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaks and writes clearly and confidently</li> <li>• Able to listen with understanding</li> <li>• Uses digital connectivity</li> </ul>
<b>Critical and creative thinker</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to make effective decisions in complex environments</li> <li>• Seeks out and fosters innovation and creativity</li> <li>• Strong intellectual ability</li> <li>• Turns ideas into action</li> </ul>
<b>Collaboration and team working</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Builds relationships and networks</li> <li>• Works collaboratively and across boundaries</li> <li>• Uses emotional intelligence to achieve this</li> <li>• Capitalises on the power of diversity</li> </ul>
<b>Social and cultural intelligence and awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to navigate new and foreign situations</li> <li>• Uses this to build relationships and networks</li> </ul>
<b>Resilience and determination to achieve</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has energy and impact</li> <li>• Makes things happen</li> </ul>
<b>Research and project management skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to analyse data and interpret results</li> <li>• Able to work and think independently</li> <li>• Prioritises activities and manages own time</li> </ul>

Don't be shy - **Tell us how great you are** (even if it feels cringe)!

If you're stuck, you can access how-to videos and advice using your free student access to LinkedIn Learning: <https://help.uis.cam.ac.uk/service/support/training/linkedin-learning-info>



# Thinking Ahead: Leadership in Action

## Overview

Leadership in Action is a six-week learning experience in a new and personally challenging environment with clearly defined objectives and outcomes. This will take place in the second summer of the Laidlaw Programme, so you don't need to make any decisions yet. You might find it helpful, however, to think about what you *might* do. A Leadership in Action experience (LiA) must meet the following criteria:

Own and be accountable for your project

Work to support communities in need

Develop and demonstrate the Laidlaw leadership skills, attributes, and values

Learn through service

To learn about the Leadership in Action experiences of Laidlaw Scholars across the world visit:

<https://laidlawscholars.network/channels/2061-leadership>

## Options

### Central Laidlaw Foundation Project

An immersive experience where Scholars will engage with projects and expeditions offered by organizations partnered with the Laidlaw Foundation. This will include working with Scholars for other participating universities to own and deliver on leadership projects addressing key societal issues. This can only be undertaken as part of an approved Laidlaw provider. Information about current partner projects can be found via their individual 'rooms' on the Laidlaw Scholars Network:

<https://laidlawscholars.network/rooms>

### Leadership Placement

Scholars will design and deliver a project in partnership with an external organization to make a positive impact for society and a community in need. Potential partner organizations identified by the Scholar can include charities, NGOs, or not-for-profit community-based organizations. This placement can be linked to the theme of the initial research project or can be in a new area of interest.

### In-field application of Research

Scholars will put the findings of their initial six-week research project (undertaken over the long vacation) into action with the aim of creating positive change in society. This will normally be supervised by the same Research Supervisor as the long vacation research project and should be identified and scoped with them as part of the initial application and planning process. Note that this is not a second summer of research and must include a clear leadership component.

## Other considerations

You will receive a stipend of £500 per week for the duration of your six-week Leadership in Action project. If you decide to join an expedition organized by the Laidlaw Foundation, your stipend is

applied directly to the expedition. Some additional funds are available to offset travel, visas, and other expenses.

If you did not spend six weeks abroad doing research, you will be required to meet the international criterion of the Laidlaw Programme in the second summer.

You do not need to submit a proposal for your LiA experience at the application stage. If you have some ideas of what you may decide to do, you should, as early as possible, think about **safety**. This is especially important if you envision building your Leadership in Action project around your initial research project. You should consult Cambridge's Safeguarding Work Away site and follow their guidance diligently. This might also include consulting Occupational Health, to make sure you can stay healthy during your time away. If accepted, you will be required to do formal risk assessment checks and take out university travel insurance before departure. You will follow the same processes if you elect to do your research abroad.

<https://www.safeguarding.admin.cam.ac.uk/>

<https://www.oh.admin.cam.ac.uk/services/travel>

Please note that if the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office advises against travel to a proposed area (including 'all but essential or non-essential' travel) and/or the United States Department of State indicates a risk level above 2 ('exercise increased caution') the proposal will be rejected. No exceptions will be made. Please be sure to check both FCDO and State Dept. guidance at the time of application:

FCDO: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

US State Dept: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages.html>

## Your Laidlaw Programme at a Glance

Leadership development has been planned to have minimal impact on your regular course of study during term-time – you should expect to attend activities and events in the evening or on weekends.

Scholars announced	March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2024.
Welcome event and induction session	April 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2024.
Guest Speaker & Meet 2023 Cohort	April 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2024.
Research Project	Six weeks immediately following the end of May Week ( <i>circa</i> June 24-Aug 4, 2024).
Development Centre 1	Between June 17 <sup>th</sup> and 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2024.
Leadership Workshop	Early October, 2024.
Development Centre 2 (retreat)	December 1 <sup>st</sup> through 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2024.
Development Centre 3	Mid-March, 2025.
Ethical Leadership Certificate with Oxford Character Project	Ongoing throughout 2025.
Leadership Workshop	Mid-June, 2025
Leadership-in-Action experience	Six weeks over Long Vacation 2025 (exact dates are variable)
Submission of reports	September 2025
Programme Celebration	October 2025

## Application Checklist

- Personal Statement
- Research Proposal
- Commitment from a Research Supervisor
- Reference from your Director of Studies
- Preliminary check of safeguarding procedures and where to find them
- Preliminary check of Ethics Assessments (where appropriate)
- I can attend all components of the programme
- I can fulfill the Scholar Commitments

## Contacts and Useful Links

### For general queries and queries related to the application process:

Dr. Geneviève Young - Coordinator for the Laidlaw Programme at Cambridge

[genevieve.young@newn.cam.ac.uk](mailto:genevieve.young@newn.cam.ac.uk) | 01223 335712

Make sure that you have read this guide and the website in full and that the answer to your question does not appear in either place before contacting Geneviève (and please note that her position is part-time, so allow ample time for a response to come through). Meetings during the applications phase are by appointment only.

### For queries relating specifically to the Laidlaw Programme at your College:

Mrs. Penny Hubbard | Trinity Hall | [development.associate@trinhall.cam.ac.uk](mailto:development.associate@trinhall.cam.ac.uk)

Dr. Gavin Stevenson | Murray Edwards | [gavin.stevenson@murrayedwards.cam.ac.uk](mailto:gavin.stevenson@murrayedwards.cam.ac.uk)

Ms. Catherine Quinn | Fitzwilliam | [sdo@fitz.cam.ac.uk](mailto:sdo@fitz.cam.ac.uk)

Dr. Geneviève Young | Newnham | [genevieve.young@newn.cam.ac.uk](mailto:genevieve.young@newn.cam.ac.uk)

### Useful information relating to the programme can be found via the following links:

<https://laidlawfoundation.com/undergraduate-scholars/>

<https://laidlawscholars.network/rooms/prospective-scholars-undergraduate>

### Past Laidlaw Projects at other member universities:

Trinity College Dublin: <https://www.tcd.ie/Careers/students/awards/laidlaw/laidlaw-trinity.php>

University of St Andrews: <https://laidlaw.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/researchprojects/>

University of York: <https://www.york.ac.uk/students/finance/bursaries-scholarships/laidlaw/i-am-a-laidlaw-scholar/>

### Data Protection Information

Data submitted by you, your research supervisor, and those providing references, will be held by Newnham College and other participating Colleges for the purposes of assessing your application, and for those who go on to be awarded a place on the programme, for monitoring your participation. The normal legal basis for processing your personal information is that it is necessary in the performance of one or more contracts with us. Data you supply will be shared with the participating Colleges and the Laidlaw Foundation. For those applicants who are successful your data will be retained permanently; the data of unsuccessful applicants is retained for no longer than 1 year. The Data Protection Statements for Newnham College (as the lead Cambridge College) can be found at <https://newn.cam.ac.uk/about/governance-documents/data-protection-2/> (and please click on 'Data Protection Statement for Students') and for the Laidlaw Foundation at <https://laidlaw.fund.cam.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2-Laidlaw-Fair-Processing-Notice.pdf> and these both provide more detailed information.