

Room Ballot Information 2021

What is the Room Ballot?

The Room Ballot is the mechanism by which undergraduate College rooms are allocated. Essentially, students choose their room in turn from any of those still available, in an order established as described below. The process is managed by the Accommodation Manager, Pauline Walker, and the General Manager, Chris Pope, with support from the Deputy Senior Tutor, the Tutorial Office and with the agreement and assistance of MECSU.

Room Ballot information will be emailed to you and be on display in the walkway in the Main College building.

You can also email questions at any time to roomdraw.enquiries@murrayedwards.cam.ac.uk

How does the Room Ballot work?

Rooms are allocated to the following five groups in order:

- 1) Anyone sharing a room now or next year; Current JCR President and Vice President (random order);
- 2) Anyone living out now (in the private sector, not a College house) (random order);
- 3) Other current 2nd years (reverse of their order/ranking the previous year);
- 4) Current 3rd years who were admitted on to a 4-Year Courses (e.g.: - Engineering). Please check with Tutorial if you are unsure.
- 5) Current 1st year students (random order).
- 6) Other current 3rd years on an elective 4th-year course (e.g. Physical Nat Sci's, Maths) (random order);

The Ballot covers all College-managed rooms (on- or off-site) – single or shared, with or without en-suite facilities.

Accommodation charges are based on 1) the size of the room, 2) whether the room is modern / refurbished or dated / non-refurbished, 3) whether the room has en-suite facilities; rents also reflect the shared facilities available. Accommodation charge categories are reviewed periodically, in consultation with MECSU.

Some students are exempt from the Room Ballot and select their rooms directly with Accommodation:

- a) Students with religious consideration or disabilities or those with other specific needs;
- b) Students studying Music who need a piano and/or space for instruments; and Architects for model building.
- c) Students returning from a year away as a part of their course.

Timetable of Events Lent 2021

Monday 15 March	Posting of students' ranking order for the Ballot; room chart and full room information available
Monday 22 March	Accommodation charges paper due at Council, publication subject to the discussions that take place.
Sunday 28 March, 11:59pm	Deadline for requests: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to share rooms; • to form groups; • to email corrections; • to withdraw from the Room Ballot; • to have declared medical conditions to your tutor; • to raise religious considerations.
Monday 12 April	Posting of final student list / rank order. Schedule for room sign up circulated.
Monday 19 – Friday 23 April	Sign-up for rooms
Sunday 16 May , 11:59pm	Deadline for withdrawing from a signed up room without charge: later withdrawal will incur a substantial penalty charge

Signing up Procedure

The Room Ballot aims to achieve a 'fair' allocation of rooms across years, as agreed with MECSU, and through a consultative, supportive and transparent process.

A schedule of signing up appointments (for the period 19-23 April) will be available to view in RMS online with the link circulated by email as well as being posted in the main College walkway on Monday 12th April.

You will be able to access information on the rooms available and the room chart in the Accommodation Office and we will also email this information to you. MECSU hope to arrange times before the Ballot starts when you can visit representative rooms in all parts of the College.

You are responsible for signing up for a room at the time specifically assigned to you at the "Ballot Choice" page under "MY ACCOMMODATION" in RMS.

At the time allocated to you, you should be logged in to RMS on the Ballot Choice page where the time slot box will be red (closed). At the opening time of your slot, click the "Refresh rooms and choices" button. Your box will turn green (open).

Click anywhere in the green box and a room selection page will open, click on your name to highlight it and then select the room of your choice available in the list. Once highlighted you must then click "Add to list".

Your name and chosen room will be added in to the Choices box on the right. This box also displays a countdown timer showing the remaining minutes and seconds of your time slot. Your room selection is not complete until you click on "Request". Once your request is accepted you may not change your selection. Your time slot box on the Ballot Choice page will be Blue.

If you not have made a choice, or if you have selected a room but not clicked on Request when your time slot expires your selection and your position in the ballot will be lost.

Your time slot box will turn yellow when you return to the Ballot Choice page.

You will not be able to select a room until the person in each following time slot has made their selection and this will only be visible to you if you keep clicking the "Refresh rooms and choices" button. If the box turns green you can continue to room selection but only for the period remaining in that current time slot.

If you will not be able to access RMS at the time of your assigned time slot, you can nominate another person, a "Proxy", to sign up for you:

To request someone to act as your Proxy visit the Ballot Choice page on or after the 12 April and before Friday 16 April. Click on the Proxy link in the red time slot table. Choose the person who you would like to ask to act as your Proxy from the drop down list and then click "Request". They will automatically be sent an email notifying them that you have requested that they act as your Proxy. They will be able to accept or decline the request the next time they visit the Ballot choice page whilst logged in to RMS. You will be notified of your requested Proxy's choice and should they decline you should repeat the process choosing another person.

If you have serious problems with either signing up in person or nominating a Proxy to sign on your behalf, please email the roomdraw.enquiries@murrayedwards.cam.ac.uk : every effort will be made to accommodate your needs in such circumstances.

NB: The lower you are in the ranking in the Room Ballot, the less likely it is that your choice of room will be available.

Do, therefore, review carefully all accommodation options in advance: make time to see the different rooms and ask questions as necessary to be sure that the room you sign up for is suitable for you in terms of license agreement terms and conditions, cost per term, dates for coming up and going down, location, style/type of room, etc. This is particularly important to 1st years, as the lowest group in the Ballot. Your attention is particularly drawn to the length of the lease: students who expect to be in Cambridge for periods over the vacation are reminded that some 39 week leases are available, and that the College does not routinely offer funds to students who choose shorter lease periods and then apply to remain in College accommodation outside term.

Sharing a room

There are a number of rooms in college suitable for sharing by two people.



Accommodation

Working towards making College your

Home from Home

Sharing means lower charges, and priority in next year's Room Ballot, allowing current 1st years to choose the best rooms in College in their 3rd year. If you are very low on the Room Ballot list, it may well be your best option. The shared rooms will all have appropriate facilities for each student. **Do view the rooms designed to be shared before making your choice to ensure the rooms meet your requirements.**

If you want to share a room, you must let us know by the deadline shown above by emailing and copying in your sharer to roomdraw.enquiries@murrayedwards.cam.ac.uk

New for this year are two sets of two bedrooms with their own shared shower and toilet facilities, these are in the Kaetsu building and will be available in the Ballot.

Forming a group

Extraordinarily, for this year only, following a year of household restrictions and isolation we will allow students to form groups of up to 8 (eight) people. This allows you to sign up for rooms at the same time, making it more likely you can live together. The final positioning of the group in the ballot is the mean of the individual students' rankings.

When forming a group you must select a "Signatory". The Signatory will be the only person who accesses RMS for the group to book the rooms for each member of the group. They do this by clicking on the "Refresh rooms and choices" button on the Ballot Choice page, whilst logged in to their (the signatory's) RMS account. When the time slot is open click inside the green box to get to the room selection page.

The signatory clicks on the name followed by their chosen room for each member of the group, adding them to the choices box each time by clicking "Add to list". To secure rooms you may click "Request" at any time and then continue to make choices for the remainder of the group up until the time slot closes.

Should not all the group be able to select a room within the time slot or have selected a room, but not have clicked on Request, by the time slot expires their selection and position in the ballot will be lost.

Your time slot box will be yellow when you return the Ballot Choice page.

The Signatory will not be able to select a room until the person in each following time slot has made their selection and this will only be visible to them if they keep clicking the "Refresh rooms and choices" button. If the box turns green you can continue to room selection but only for the period remaining in the current time slot.

If you want to form a group, you must email roomdraw.enquiries@murrayedwards.cam.ac.uk copying in each member of the proposed group and nominating the Signatory by the deadline shown above. We will acknowledge the groups formation by return email.

If you are exempt from the draw but would like to be a part of a group you can. By joining a group you forego the opportunity to select your room outside of the ballot and make your room selection in your group's allocated timeslot.

Students expecting to be away on exchanges next year

MML, AMES or any other Exchange students due to spend a year abroad next year do not take part in the Room Ballot this year and need do nothing about it.

Students who are currently out of residence

If you are expected to return from a year abroad or are on an exchange scheme we will contact you by email about a room allocation.

If you will be returning in Michaelmas term following a period of intermission you will be offered the opportunity to join the Ballot and form or be a part of a Group with friends.

For those returning from intermission in a later term we will contact you closer to your return date.

Students who require specific rooms for medical or religious reasons

If you require a room for a specific medical condition or for religious reasons, you must make your application for the room via your Tutor and/or the College Nurse who will then forward your application to Accommodation. A letter from your Tutor or the Nurse will be required the first time you make such an application.

You must apply **each year** for this, by the deadline shown above, though a letter is only required the first time.



Accommodation

Working towards making College your

Home from Home

No applications for specific rooms for previously existing medical conditions or other reasons will be considered after the Room Ballot has taken place. However, if new requirements arise after the Room Ballot has taken place, do please apply as above.

Room Changes & Room Cancellations

You will be **charged half a term's rent** if you sign up for a room in the Room Ballot and then decide after the withdrawal deadline shown above that you do not want the room, unless certified medical or academic circumstances prevent your return the following academic year.

Waiting List

There are occasionally a few more students in the published Room Ballot List than there are rooms available. However, rooms normally become available over the following months for various reasons, and everyone is likely to be offered a room sooner or later: the Accommodation Office keeps a Waiting List and offers rooms to those at the top of the list as they become available.

Chris Pope
General Manager
(Residences, Catering and Events)

Pauline Walker
Accommodation Manager