Murray Edwards College is a College for women at the University of Cambridge. We were founded in 1954 to welcome all outstanding young women to Cambridge no matter what their background, and are today known for our inclusive atmosphere, committed students and vibrant young Fellowship.

As a College for women, we are able to place special focus on how young women learn and develop so that you can get the best from Cambridge – both academically and personally. Our exciting Gateway programme complements the academic support you receive through your Directors of Study and Tutors, encouraging you to understand how you learn best, explore where you want to be in the future and providing the expert guidance to help you get there.

"Gateway is an amazing opportunity to meet new people and talk to professionals you usually wouldn’t have access to. The programme is unique to Medwards, and one of my favourite things about the College!"

PAULA STRUTHOFF, SECOND YEAR GEOGRAPHY STUDENT
Gateway is an optional programme that runs alongside your academic studies. It’s open to all students, undergraduate and graduate, throughout your time at College and beyond.

In your first year, we focus on adjusting to life at Cambridge – an environment that we know many of you may find inspiring and daunting in equal measure, especially at the start. Our sessions explore the practical skills you need to ‘work smarter not harder’ – for example, tips to help you get the most from a supervision, and exploring together how and why good note-taking makes a difference.

In the second year, the programme shifts towards understanding yourself so that you can start thinking about your future. We look at what motivates you and what motivates others, and we help you to explore your values and what matters to you in life. Alongside this, we continue to work on core academic skills, such as what you could do to move from a 2:1 to a 1st and how to make the step up from essay writing to dissertation writing.

By your third year, sessions centre on identifying the right career path for you and, practically, how you can take the first steps onto it. We connect you to internship and work shadowing opportunities, as well as running sessions on how to prepare for assessment centre days and what makes a good CV, even facilitating interview practice and mentoring (via live online tools) with alumnae working in the field you want to enter.

“Gateway has helped me to find out more about myself, how I learn and where I want to go in the future.”

Katya Kaliteevskaya, Second Year Physical Natural Sciences Student
At the heart of Gateway is the desire to build a supportive community within the College, and student to student support is key for this. The best way to learn is sometimes to take advice from someone who has been in your position, so we pair first year students with a second or third year who is studying the same subject as them and can act as a ‘student advisor’. The student advisor’s role is to bring to life the skills taught in Gateway sessions by sharing their own real life examples, as well as being another friendly face for you to look out for around College. The student advisors really enjoy the experience too, finding that it serves as a mirror which highlights their own progress.

“I’m proud to be a student advisor. When I think about my time in College, I don’t think I’ve changed that much from my first year – but through having the opportunity to talk through the skills that I’ve learned with other students, I can really see how much I’ve grown and how much Gateway has benefited me.”

DANIELLE OXBORROW, THIRD YEAR THEOLOGY STUDENT
Thanks to the generous support of Gateway Challenges Funding, I was lucky enough to spend my summer volunteering at a school in rural Kenya. Prior to the trip, my project partner and I had raised money through fundraising and grants that we intended to invest into improving the school’s infrastructure. When we arrived, we were immediately struck by how much of a community the school was – but, equally, how much it was lacking in resources. The largest class had 96 students, who had to routinely walk 4km to fetch water, the electricity supply was patchy, and a class was doing well if the teacher had a textbook!

We had £2600 to spend and decided to invest it in: a rainwater harvesting system; four handwashing stations next to each of the bathrooms; solar panels to power five classrooms, a dormitory and a security light. We were also able to improve the bathrooms, including connecting them to electricity and adding locks and disposal facilities for sanitary pads.

It was a great privilege to experience life in a community halfway across the world, certainly one of the highlights of the summer.
Gateway is a great way of connecting students across the whole College. As well as helping you to make friends, it’s also really valuable for creating a time to reflect informally with your peers about your work and what you want to do.

PAULA STRUTHOFF
FIND OUT MORE

Want to know more about Gateway Challenges?
Read our blog:

Interested in STEM subjects?
You might like our blog:
https://www.murrayedwards.cam.ac.uk/news/our-blogs/she-talks-science
Gateway provides an open space to discuss skills in a relaxed setting. It’s not competitive at all, so you can be honest about what is and isn’t going well for you and get advice from your peers and experts. It’s also given me opportunities I couldn’t have secured otherwise, such as a work shadowing scheme at Xbox!

DANIELLE OXBORROW