

Rowing Experience

The Cambridge Rowing Experience offers students a rare opportunity to take part in one of Cambridge's most iconic traditions, rowing on the River Cam, in a professionally coached, beginner-friendly environment. No prior rowing experience is required.

Students begin with an introduction to rowing technique in the gym before moving into the boathouse to learn how to safely carry, prepare, and launch a boat together. Working as a team, they then row in a coxed eight (the same style of boat used in the famous Cambridge–Oxford Boat Race) guided throughout by an experienced rowing coach.

The session takes place at the City of Cambridge Rowing Club, the oldest town rowing club on the River Cam, in a modern, purpose-built facility overlooking the river. Alongside the physical challenge, the experience develops leadership, coordination, communication, and trust, with time for informal reflection at the end of the session.

All participants also receive an exclusive co-branded Dukes Cambridge rowing hoodie.



Key Information

- **Optional Extra - Cost:** £270
- **3–4 hour rowing experience**
- **Maximum 16 students per cohort** – Spaces are offered on a first come, first served basis
- **Professionally coached throughout**
- **No prior rowing experience required**

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is this experience suitable for?

This experience is suitable for students aged 14–17 who are comfortable with light to moderate physical activity and keen to take part in a traditional Cambridge experience. No previous rowing experience is required.

Is this a competitive or elite rowing session?

No. This is not competitive and not a trial. The focus is on basic fundamentals, teamwork, coordination, and confidence, rather than athletic performance.

Do students need to be able to swim?

No. Swimming ability is not required. Life jackets can be worn if needed, and the section of river used is shallow. Safety is closely managed throughout.

How is safety managed?

Students are coached by an experienced rowing professional and accompanied by SBC Dukes Cambridge staff throughout. If river conditions are unsafe, the session will move to an indoor rowing tank experience instead.

Are there any students who should not take part?

Students with significant mobility issues, medical conditions that limit physical activity, or anxiety related to water environments are advised not to participate. Families are welcome to discuss suitability in advance.

Does this replace academic classes?

No. This is a one-off enrichment experience designed to complement the academic programme, not replace it.

What makes this experience special?

Students row in a full eight-person boat, work together to launch and return the boat, and experience rowing in one of the world's most historic settings – something few visitors to Cambridge ever do.

What do students take away from the experience?

Students typically leave with a strong sense of pride, confidence, and shared achievement, as well as a deeper appreciation of Cambridge's traditions and the importance of teamwork.