The Cathays Park Campus
A self-guided tour

www.cardiff.ac.uk
Welcome

Cardiff University is one of the UK’s leading universities and the largest in Wales. It has an international reputation for its teaching and research.

The University’s Cathays Park Campus is located in and around Cardiff’s civic centre, just a few minutes walk from the city centre. This self-guided tour is designed to give you an overview of the University estate.

The tour will take you approximately one hour (or 90 minutes if you make one of the optional detours to either Talybont student residences, or to the Queen’s Buildings (home to the Schools of Computer Science, Physics and Engineering), (or approximately 75 minutes, if you take the detour to the Optometry, Hadyen Ellis and CUBRIC buildings).

Please note: unless you have made prior arrangements, you will not be able to tour individual academic schools, as students and staff are working, and there may be health and safety reasons which preclude access. Likewise, you will not be able to see inside our student residences as students are living in them, but you are welcome to tour the sites to gain a feel for the place. You may view inside the residences at any of our open days.

If you are visiting the University during office hours (Monday-Friday 9am-5pm), why not come and pick up a Welcome Pack from the reception area in our Main Building (map ref 1). Staff here can also put you in contact with our team who can answer any questions you may have. Copies of our prospectuses and brochures can also be downloaded from our website at: www.cardiff.ac.uk/pubs/ug

Please note: anyone wishing to visit the Heath Park Campus (home to the Schools of Medicine, Dentistry, and Healthcare Sciences) should contact the relevant academic schools for further advice before travelling, as this is a large working hospital site. Parts of the Heath Park Campus are included in our on-line virtual tour: virtualtour.cardiff.ac.uk

We hope you find this tour enjoyable and informative.

NOTES:

Cardiff University Routefinder
Travel and parking information is available on our website. If you are planning to travel to Cardiff by car, you can obtain a full set of travel directions from your home to the University at: www.cardiff.ac.uk/directions

Satnav
If you are using satnav, the postcode for the University’s Cathays Park Campus (Main Building) is CF10 3AT.

Advice for visitors with a disability/medical condition/specific learning difficulty
Cardiff is committed to providing an accessible environment for all applicants, students and visitors. If you have special requirements that arise as a result of a disability, medical condition or specific learning difficulty, we encourage you to contact us in order that appropriate arrangements can be made prior to your visit.

For further information, please contact the Student Support Centre (map ref 11).

Tel: 029 2087 4844
Email: studentsupportcentre@cardiff.ac.uk

Virtual Campus Tour

Discover more about the University and the city of Cardiff through our interactive online tour at: virtualtour.cardiff.ac.uk

Our virtual campus tour covers both of our campuses, the city of Cardiff and selected student residences. Through 360 degree panoramic photos and videos, you can get a flavour of what it will be like to study and live in the vibrant capital of Wales.

Come and visit us on an Open Day...

Come and meet our staff and students, ask questions, get advice and information, and generally get a feel of what life as a student at Cardiff University is like.

To book your place visit: www.cardiff.ac.uk/opendays

Or contact the Open Day Office directly:
Tel: 029 2087 4455
Email: openday@cardiff.ac.uk
Your tour begins at the Main Building on Park Place. Map ref A

The University’s Main Building is home to the Schools of Earth Sciences, Chemistry and Biosciences as well as the Science Library. Regarded as one of the finest pieces of architecture in Cardiff, it is a Grade II listed building, and was designed by ecclesiastical architect William Douglas Caroe, who sought to achieve “the charm and quiet dignity and scale” of Trinity College, Cambridge, coupled with the “picturesque balance and delightful proportions of some of the Oxford colleges”.

Work began in 1905 and the first stage was completed in 1909, but money ran out, and the side wings were not completed until the 1960s. The Great Hall, which was a part of Caroe’s original plan, would have formed the fourth side of the quadrangle, was never added.

As you walk towards the central door, look to your right and the North Wing, which is home to the School of Chemistry.

This wing was constructed in stages throughout the last century. When the Prince of Wales opened the Tateum Laboratories in 1930, he caused an international press sensation by travelling from London to Cardiff and back by air in a single day.

Improvements have continued, and in recent years, millions of pounds has been invested in new and improved chemistry facilities to create an outstanding environment for research and education.

Opposite, in the South Wing (on your left hand side) is the School of Earth Sciences. Despite its classic appearance, this wing was opened as recently as 1962 - by the Duke of Edinburgh on one of his many visits to the University - although the School itself was established in 1891.

The historic-looking architecture houses state-of-the-art facilities including geomicrobiology and geochemical laboratories, microscopy, stable isotope laboratory and 3D semi-immersive visualisation laboratory. The School also has its own research microscopy, stable isotope laboratory and 3D semi-immersive visualisation laboratory. The School also has its own research...chemistry facilities to create an outstanding environment for research and education.

The car park, in which you are standing, was originally envisaged as a courtyard with lawns and fountains in Caerws’s original design. In the past, this area has been used for grass tennis courts, and more recently it has been taken over by film crews.

You may notice pock-marks in the stonework above the entrance - this is the result of bomb damage during World War 2. Elsewhere, an upper-floor corridor caught fire when an incendiary device lodged in the roof in February 1941.

If you look closely at the stained glass windows, you will see that one of them is a Manchester-inspired design. This area is used for many university functions and gatherings, including open days, conferences, the remembrance service and for carols around the Christmas tree.

There is a restaurant located down the corridor on your right hand side. Feel free to stop for a coffee or something to eat. There are other cafes and restaurants around the campus and in the Students’ Union.

Approach the central entrance and enter the Main Building through the door in front of you. Continue through to the Main Building Foyer.

(If you are visiting outside office hours Main Building may be shut in which case you will need to retract your steps out of the car park, turn left and then turn left down the side of Main Building towards Map ref B.)

The central part of the building is home to the Science Library and part of the School of Biosciences (the rest being in modern buildings next door to Main Building).

It is one of the largest bioscience departments in the UK and its former director, Professor Sir Martin Evans was awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 2007 for his pioneering work in identifying embryonic stem cells. The techniques which he, and his two colleagues from America who shared the prize, developed are now being used worldwide in research into cancer, cystic fibrosis, diabetes and other diseases.

This reception area is called the Vinam Jones Gallery after John Vinam Jones, who became the first Principal of the University College in 1883 at the age of just 27. The University was then located in Newport Road, but it was Jones’ vision and drive that led to its relocation here in Cathays Park.

He never saw his vision realised, as he died aged 45 in 1901. His statue was created by Sir William Goscombe John, one of Wales’ most famous sculptors, and was exhibited at the Royal Academy of 1906.

In 1998, the marble statue, weighing three tons, was moved 20 feet from its original location in order to improve access to the building for people with disabilities.

The University’s Main Building is home to the School of Chemistry.

As you leave the building, to your right you can see the Sir Martin Evans Jones’ Wildlife Patrol on BBC Wales.

Medical and Dental students receive some of their teaching here during the first year, and the building houses our dissection rooms which are the largest in the UK.

Walk across the Gallery and go out through the door opposite onto the Horseshoe Drive. Map ref B

This is the grand front entrance to Main Building, and if you look back at the entrance, you will see a Welsh inscription in the stone: “Nerth gwlad ei gywioddath - A nation’s strength is in its learning.” Note also, the impressive decoration including coats of arms of benefactors and supporters, a “figural frieze” and statues of King George V and of Edward VII, when he was Prince of Wales.

As you leave the building, to your right you can see the Sir Martin Evans Building, the main home of the School of Biosciences. Among those working there is Di Rhys Jones, a Distinguished Visiting Fellow, who presents Rhys Jones’ Wildlife Patrol on BBC Wales.

Beyond these buildings to your left is the main shopping centre of Cardiff - the pedestrianised city centre offers designer shops, department stores (including one of the largest John Lewis stores outside London) and all the High Street favourites, while the city’s glass-canopied Victorian and Edwardian arcades feature many small boutiques, independent stores and cafes.

Close to the shopping centre is Cardiff Castle, which was originally a Roman Fort and was redeveloped during Norman times. It was owned by many noble families until 1766 when it passed by marriage to the Bute family. The castle underwent significant redevelopment in the 19th century when the 3rd Marquess of Bute transformed it into the truly impressive gothic-style castle you see today. The castle and the parkland surrounding it (Bute Park) were bequeathed to the people of Cardiff in 1947.

The Principality Stadium is also in the city centre. It hosts major sporting events including international rugby, as well as concerts by the world’s biggest acts.

Walk left out of the Horseshoe drive onto Museum Avenue.

Pimpricinity Stadium

Cross through Alexandra Gardens in front of you.
These gardens are the central point of Cardiff’s civic centre. The area was conceived by the 3rd Marquess of Bute (1847-1900) who was reputed at one time to be the richest man in the world. He is largely responsible for many of Cardiff's stunning architectural and landscaped features and the foundations of its thriving economy.

The Welsh National War Memorial, which dominates the centre of the gardens, was unveiled by the Prince of Wales in 1929 and is now itself a Grade II listed building.

Walk straight across the gardens to King Edward VII Avenue. On the opposite side of the road is the Glamorgan Building. [Map ref C]

This Grade I listed building was designed by Vincent Harris and Thomas Moodie, following their success in an open competition. The building was completed in 1911 and opened the following year. For many years it was the home of the former Glamorgan County Council, which covered an area stretching from Cardiff to Swansea, including the Vale of Glamorgan and the South Wales Valleys.

The statues by Albert Hodge depict the means by which the old county’s wealth and status arose - through navigation and mining.

The University bought the building in 1997 and invested £5 million in creating a new home for the School of Planning and Geography and the School of Social Sciences.

The magnificent circular Council Chamber remains, and is now used as a lecture theatre.

Doctor Who fans may recognise the building as Cardiff’s council offices in an episode in which the Mayor of Cardiff turned out and mining.

and became the main building of UWIST (University of Wales Institute of Science and Technology) in 1968.

This building is home to the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences and was named after Theophilus Redwood, a founding father of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, who hailed from Boverton, near Llantwit Major in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Founded in 1919, it is the only School of its kind in Wales and several major internationally-recognised research centres are based wholly or partially here.

Five presidents of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society were graduates of the School and the only pharmacist in recent times to be knighted, Sir Roger Jones, graduated and went on to become founder of Penn Pharmaceuticals.

This hall of residence is exclusively for female students. The Hall was founded by Lady Abertare in 1885 to promote women’s education in Wales. Initially it housed 22 women in a rented house, but has occupied this impressive terracotta and brick building since January 1895.

Next to Aberdare Hall is the School of Music. Outside the School is the powerful bronze sculpture, Walk In (1966), by the acclaimed British artist Dame Barbara Hepworth.

The School of Music building was opened in 1970 and boasts facilities including electric acoustic studios and a 450-seat concert hall, used for public performances.

Alumni of the School include Karl Jenkins who has composed for Welsh baritone Bryn Terfel, written film scores and recorded an album with Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, ‘Kiri sings Karl’. He also wrote a fanfare for the University’s 125th anniversary celebrations, while Professor Alan Hoddinott, former head of the School of Music wrote the fanfare for the wedding of Prince Charles and Camilla Parker Bowles.

In 2007, the School’s Professor Judith Weir became the first composer to be awarded the Queen’s Medal for Music.

Walk past the Music Building towards the traffic lights. Cross the road and walk through the red gates next to the coffee shop at the crossroads.

This is the University’s Colum Road site. On your right is the Arts and Social Studies Library.

This is former railway land, acquired by the University in the 1970s. It was originally envisaged that the library complex would have had a second building, replacing many of the houses and the coffee shop in Colum Road.

Even in its single-building structure, this is our largest library, and it now boasts the new Wolfson Floor - a spacious wireless-enabled eLounge with flexible seating, alongside a bank of fixed PCs. In all, our libraries hold more than 1.4 million books.

Continue walking along the path, and in front of you is the John Percival Building.

This building was opened in 1976, and a substantial extension was added in the mid-1990s, providing enhanced facilities for students and staff. It is home to three academic schools: English, Communication and Philosophy; History, Archaeology and Religion; and Welsh.

If you are ready for a break, there is a restaurant and toilets on the ground floor to the right as you enter the building.

The Schools in this building enjoy international reputations for the quality of their work, and like our other Schools they attract renowned guest speakers.
Follow the path around the side of the John Percival Building to the right, towards the railway line. On the other side of the railway line you will see our Optometry Building and the Hadyn Ellis Building as well as CUBRIC and a number of other new buildings. You will have the chance to take a closer look at these impressive recent additions to the University’s estate during a brief optional detour, a little later.

The £13.5M Postgraduate Teaching Centre, opened in 2014, and includes lecture theatres, seminar rooms, and other impressive facilities, including a ‘trading room’ which provides our students with the practical skills for life at the stock exchange. The Julian Hodge Building was built with money left to the University by Sir Julian Hodge, the London-born entrepreneur and banker who spent most of his life in Wales. This building is a teaching resource centre with a 450-seat lecture theatre and a computer suite with 200+ computers. Attached to it is a restaurant which provides hot and cold meals throughout the year.

Sir Julian Hodge, the London-born entrepreneur and banker who spent most of his life in Wales and one of the largest in the UK, and also offers a valuable service to the public, staff and students. In particular, students at the University can benefit from free eyesight tests in the School’s Eye Clinic. Alumni of the School include Mary Perkins, founder of Specsavers.

Walking past the Julian Hodge Building, you come to the Aberconway Building. Built in stages between 1981 and 1983, Aberconway is home to Cardiff Business School - the largest single academic school in the University. It includes the Aberconway Library dedicated to business disciplines and home to more than 60,000 books.

Turn left down the road and walk towards the barriers. As you exit the site on to COLUM Road, on your right are the Aberconway Halls of Residence and on the other side of COLUM Road is COLUM Hall. About five minutes north on COLUM Road (to your right) are Talybont student residences. The University’s largest accommodation site, it is home to 2,500 students. It is also home to one of the University’s sports centres, with all weather pitches, a fully equipped gym and a rugby training pitch. Among the accommodation here is Talybont Gate, a 1,787-bed, six-storey student accommodation building, completed in 2014 at a cost of £66M. You are welcome to visit the site yourself. However, please note it will not be possible to see inside the halls themselves.

To continue your tour, retrace your steps through the Humanities site to the red gates on the crossroads. If you like to take a 15-minute detour to see some of our new buildings, turn left here. If not, cross the road at the traffic lights and continue down Park Place.

The Hadyn Ellis Building is home to a number of internationally-renowned research centres. This £30M building also includes impressive spaces where research work can be showcased to the public.

As with many of our buildings, this is a favourite for TV and film companies seeking striking locations. You may have seen this building on Sherlock and Doctor Who. Indeed, students have referred to it as “Sherlock’s Mind Palace”.

Pictures and artist impressions can be found at: www.cardiff.ac.uk/campus-developments

Beyond this building is CUBRIC – the Cardiff University Brain Research Imaging Centre which was opened by the Queen in 2016. Constructed at a cost of £44M it houses a combination of neuroimaging equipment unique in Europe and is now home to some of the world’s leading experts in brain mapping, neuroscience, clinical research and genetics.

Also part of the Mandy Park site two further construction projects are underway. Innovation Central will bring academics, students, business leaders, entrepreneurs together to create, test and incubate new ideas. Meanwhile, the Translational Research Facility will be home to two institutes with expertise needed to transform industry.

To resume your tour, retrace your steps to the gates at the crossroads outside the Humanities site, and cross the road at the traffic lights.

If taking the detour, walk along Cathays Terrace, over the railway bridge and past the coffee shop. Turn left into Mandy Road, past the supermarket, and here is the Optometry Building.

Opened in 2007, this £16M building represents one of the largest single investments in eye-care anywhere in the UK for many years and includes clinics, laboratories and teaching rooms with the latest state-of-the-art equipment.

The School is the only one of its kind in Wales and one of the largest in the UK, and also offers a valuable service to the public.

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For the arts departments. It was a significant development because it meant, for the first time, every academic staff member had a private room in which to study and conduct tutorials.

Next door to the Law School is the Tower Building, home to the School of Psychology. The Tower, opened in 1967, was built for the emerging social sciences, but is now exclusively occupied by the School of Psychology - one of the largest departments of psychology in the UK.

Above the entrance to the School you can see the artwork Mind’s Eye by Peter Randall Page. The work aims to capture the dynamic interplay between science and art, particularly where this relates to characterising the mental structure of the human mind.

Park Place is also home to the “Student High Street” - with a wealth of services including the Student Support Centre; the IT Service Desk; the Chaplaincies; the University Health Centre; the Students’ Union; The Graduate Centre as well as a 24-hour security office.
Continuing down Park Place on the left hand side of the road is the Fitness & Conditioning Centre.

This centre provides an impressive facility, offering exercise classes, a large fitness suite, and free weights room.

Next on the left hand side is the Student Support Centre at 50 Park Place. The advice centre offers advice on areas including finance, housing issues and academic problems as well as specialist advice for international students and those with disabilities and dyslexia. It also offers a confidential counseling service.

Continue down Park Place passing (on the left) the entrance to Cathays Railway Station.

Architect’s impression of the new Centre for Student Life

This £50M iconic building will become the University’s Centre for Student Life. It will become home to our student support services and offer additional social study spaces, consultation rooms, a 550 seat lecture theatre and quiet contemplation spaces. It will help transform the way in which support services are delivered to our students.

Behind the construction site is the Students’ Union which has occupied a large complex straddling the main Cardiff to Merthyr Tydfil railway line, since 1974. The Building boasts superb facilities, including a nightclub and a 1,600 capacity concert venue that has welcomed acts such as Ellie Goulding, Jake Bugg, London Grammar, Bombay Bicycle Club, Professor Green and many more. The venue has undergone major refurbishment in the last few years, creating a modern, multi-functional space for both day and night.

The Union also houses an Advice and Representation Centre, Jobshop and Student Development Unit, as well as cafes, bars and shops.

It is also home to the award-winning student newspaper ‘Gair Rhydd’ (Free Word), lifestyle magazine, Quench, and the student TV and radio stations, continuing a long tradition of journalism in the University, dating back to a hand-written magazine in 1885.

Feel free to go in and have a look around.

Also within the Students’ Union complex is the Graduate Centre, which provides year-round social and study facilities and highly-acclaimed training for taught and research students. (Prospective postgraduate students are welcome to visit the centre where staff will be happy to show you around and answer any questions.)

If you are ending your tour here, exit the Students’ Union onto Park Place opposite the Main Building.

If you would like to carry on a little further down Park Place, you will see house number 42.

This was the home of the University’s first Principal, Viriamu Jones and his wife Katherine. It was from here that he would have looked across the near-empty Cathays Park and envisaged the great university which would be built there.

Alternatively, if you would like to visit the Schools of Mathematics, Computer Science, Physics or Engineering, exit the Students’ Union, via the back entrance onto Senghennydd Road.

The houses you can see form part of Cathays which is almost exclusively made up of student accommodation and is well-served by local shops, takeaways and pubs. It is sometimes referred to as the “Student Village”. Many students also live in Roath, Canton and the Heath which are all within easy walking distance of the University.

Turn right out of the Students’ Union. Next door to the Students’ Union on Senghennydd Road is the Sherman Theatre.

The Theatre is home to the Sherman Theatre Company, which produces a wide range of productions each year, including theatre for young people, inventive adaptations of classic dramas and new writing projects.

Continue along Senghennydd Road. Next door to the Sherman Theatre is the Mathematics Building.

The School of Mathematics is based in this purpose-built Mathematics Institute which includes computing laboratories, the University Mathematics Library, and a cyber cafe.

Turn right down the path at the side of the Mathematics building. Follow the road alongside the railway line, passing Senghennydd Court student residences to the pedestrian bridge across the railway line. Cross the bridge and follow the path down a small set of steps to the Queen’s Buildings.

Opened by the Queen in 1993, after six years of demolition, construction and refurbishment, this complex includes buildings from the 1920s to the 1990s, providing superb premises for engineering, computing and physics. The Trevithick Building, completed in 1989, provides the lynchpin for this complex, with social and library facilities, as well as teaching rooms.

There is a restaurant and toilets in this building.

The School of Engineering boasts top-class facilities and many leading research centres. It even has its own successful motor racing team. The School of Physics and Astronomy has its own observatory, and astrophysicists here have helped to develop some of the world’s most powerful telescopes, revealing startling new aspects of the cosmos.

The School of Computer Science is home to the Welsh e-Science Centre, one of eight regional “Grid” centres established across the UK and the only one in Wales.

Tour Ends.

Retrace your steps back through the Students’ Union to Main Building.

Alternatively, if you leave the Trevithick site through the gates to the right of the main reception and turn right, you will be a short walk from Queen Street, one of Cardiff’s main shopping areas.

We hope you enjoyed this tour, if you have any further questions please contact the Undergraduate Recruitment Team on: 029 2087 4455 or email: enquiry@cardiff.ac.uk or the Postgraduate Recruitment Team on: 029 2087 0084 or email: postgradenquiries@cardiff.ac.uk

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Cathays Park
Campus

Key

Self-Guided Tour Route

Optional Route

Detour (Optional Route)

Tour note references

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Abertay Court  56
Aberconway Hall  58
Colum Hall  59
Julian Hodge Building  29
Optometry and Vision Sciences  32
John Percival Building  27
Arts and Social Studies Library  26
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Modern Languages  8
Politics and International Relations  4
Chaplaincy  10
Psychology  3
Law  4
Welsh Government Offices  104
CUBRIC  33
Redwood Building  9
Sports Centre  15
Security Centre  2
Student Support Centre  11
Students’ Union  14
Main Building  1
Mathematics  18
Bute Building  6
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