The Cathays Park Campus
A self-guided tour

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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, and has achieved outstanding results in recent external assessments.

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 1.5 hours if you make one of the optional detours to either Talybont student residences or the Queen’s Buildings (home to the Schools of Computer Science, Physics and Engineering).

Please note that, 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 our open days.

If you are visiting the University during office hours (Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm) you may wish to come and see us at Deri House (map ref 60) where we can provide you with information such as prospectuses and brochures, and answer any questions you may have. Copies of our prospectus and brochures can also be downloaded from the 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, Nursing and Midwifery and Healthcare Studies) should contact the relevant academic schools for further advice before travelling as this is a large working hospital site.

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 their visit.

For further information, please contact the Student Support Centre (map ref 31)
Tel: 029 2087 5363
Email: disability@cardiff.ac.uk
Your tour begins at the Main Building on Park Place. 

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 2* 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 and 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 Tatem Laboratories in 1930, he caused an international press sensation by travelling from London to Cardiff and back by air in a single day.

Improvements continue, and in recent years, more than £14 million has been invested in new and improved chemistry facilities. Today the School’s notable staff members include Professor Robert Huber, a Nobel Prize Winner and Professor Graham Hutchings, a Fellow of the Royal Society.

Opposite, in the South Wing (on your left hand side) is Cardiff 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.

The historic-looking architecture houses the latest 21st century scientific equipment, with facilities including new geomicrobiology and geochemical laboratories, microscopy, stable isotope laboratory and 3D semi-immersive visualisation laboratory. Major new equipment includes a high performance parallel computing cluster and state-of-the-art upgrades for the 3D seismic laboratories.

The car park, in which you are standing, was originally envisaged as a courtyard with lawns and fountains in Caroe’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. It was transformed into Smithfield Market for the BBC historical drama Drovers’ Gold in the 1990s and the building has become a Nazi HQ for a film and has been used as a location for the Dr Who spin-off The Sarah-Jane Adventures.

You may notice pock-marks in the stone-work 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. Students formed chains of buckets to help put out the fire.

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

The central part of the building is home to the Science Library and part of Cardiff 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 has more than 250 staff, including Professor Sir Martin Evans who 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 Viriamu Jones Gallery after John Viriamu 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 into 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.

If you look closely at the stained glass windows, you will see that one of them includes the symbol adopted by the new University College - an angel carrying a book.

There is a restaurant and a coffee shop located down the corridor on your right hand side as you look at the reception desk. Feel free to stop for a coffee or something to eat. There are other cafes/restaurants in our academic buildings around the campus and in the Students’ Union. Toilets are located in the corridor as you entered the Main Building.

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

This is the grand front entrance to Main Building. Many graduation parties are held in marquees on the lawn following the formal ceremony at St David’s Hall.

If you look back at this front entrance, you will see a Welsh inscription in the stone: ‘Nerth gwlad ei gwybodaeth - 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 Prince of Wales.

To your right you can see the Biomedical Sciences Building and, beyond it, the Life Sciences Building, both part of Cardiff School of Biosciences.

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

Walk left out of the Horseshoe drive onto Museum Avenue.

Beyond these buildings to your left is the main shopping centre of Cardiff - the pedestrianised city centre offers designer shops, department stores (including the largest John Lewis outside London) and all the High Street favourites, while the city’s glass-canopied Victorian 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 to 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 Millennium Stadium is also close to the city centre. It hosts major sporting events including international rugby and soccer, as well as concerts by the world’s biggest acts.

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 1928 and is now itself a Grade 2 listed building.

Walk straight across the gardens to King Edward VII Avenue. On the opposite side of the road is the Glamorgan Building. This Grade 1 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 Schools of City and Regional Planning and Social Sciences. The magnificent circular Council Chamber remains, and is now used as a lecture theatre. The School of City and Regional Planning is the UK's premier town planning school and the School of Social Sciences has attracted over £18 million of research funding since it was officially opened by the Queen in 2000.

Dr Who fans may recognise the building as Cardiff's council offices in an episode in which the Mayor of Cardiff turned out to be an alien.

To the left of Glamorgan Building is the University of Wales Registry, headquarters of the federal University of Wales. Cardiff University was a constituent member of the University of Wales for many years but withdrew its full membership some years ago after gaining its own degree awarding powers.

Walk towards the building to the right of the Glamorgan Building - the Bute Building.

This Grade 2 listed building - the one with the red dragon on its roof - was the home of Cardiff Technical College from 1916, and became the main building of UWIST (University of Wales Institute of Science and Technology) in 1968.

Designed by Sir Percy Thomas and Ivor Jones, its frontage features six Roman Doric columns and it now houses the Welsh School of Architecture and the School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies.

The Welsh School of Architecture has in fact been based in this building since it was formed in 1919 - originally as part of the Technical College. Today it is one of the largest schools of its kind in the UK and the course has been ranked as the top in the UK by The Times. Its facilities include a Sky Dome, which can recreate the light for any location around the world.

The School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies has produced many award-winning journalists, and the School boasts professional-standard broadcast studios and newsrooms, where students produce their own newspapers, bulletins and online services.

Continue up King Edward VII Avenue past the Bute Building. Located on the corner of King Edward VII Avenue and Corbett Road is the Redwood Building. Opened by the Duke of Edinburgh in 1961, its entrance is dominated by a vast relief sculpture by Bainbridge Copnall, showing a toga-clad figure, surrounded by books and a globe, reaching out protectively over a young scientist and a nurse.
This building is home to the Welsh School of Pharmacy and was named after Theophilus Redwood, a founding father of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, who hailed from Boverton, near Llantwit Major.

It is the only School of its kind in Wales and several major internationally-recognised research centres are based wholly or partially in the School, including the Tenovus Centre for Cancer Research.

Alumni include Sir Roger Jones, founder of Penn Pharmaceuticals, who was named a Knight Bachelor in the 2005 New Year’s Honours List for services to business and training in Wales.

Cross Corbett Road, turn right and walk along the road; on your left is Aberdare Hall. Map ref E

This hall of residence is exclusively for female students. The Hall was founded by Lady Aberdare 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. Cardiff has a strong tradition of encouraging women in education - it was the first in Britain to appoint a female professor, and the first student to receive a degree from Cardiff in 1896 was a woman.

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 lettings agency at the crossroads. Map ref F

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 lettings agency in Colum Road.

Even in its single-building structure, this is our largest library - one of 16 libraries in the University which has, in total, more than 1.5 million books. The lower ground floor is home to the Special Collections and Archives, containing rare books, original manuscripts and other archive materials.

Continue walking along the path and in front of you is the Humanities 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.

There is a restaurant and toilets on the ground floor to the right as you enter the building.

The schools in the Humanities building enjoy international reputations for the quality of their work, and like our other schools they attract renowned guest speakers. Recent visitors to English, Communication and Philosophy, for example, have included Ian Rankin, Hélène Cixous and Paul Muldoon.
Follow the path around the side of the Humanities Building to the right, towards the railway line, on the other side of the railway line you will see our Optometry Building. [Map ref G]

Opened in 2007, this £16 million building is the largest single investment 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. Students are encouraged to participate in research, and in 2006 two Optometry undergraduates, Amy Carew and Richard Davies, developed a Welsh language vision test which has since been adopted by opticians across Wales. In some parts of Wales, many Welsh-speaking children do not learn to read English until the age of nine and this new test is helping to identify sight problems in young people at a much earlier stage.

The School 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.

Follow the road alongside the railway line. In front of you, is the Julian Hodge Building which forms part of the Cardiff Business School. [Map ref H]

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.

On the opposite side of the railway line is a former railway works. The land has been bought by the University and a number of major new buildings will be constructed in the coming years. These will form the new Maindy Park Campus. Building will commence with the Hadyn Ellis Building, a prestigious new home for some of the University's research centres which will also provide additional facilities for postgraduate students.

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.

Above its main entrance are the arms of the Aberconway family, and among the facilities here is a newly-opened Trading Room which aims to train the financial leaders of the future in the workings of the Stock Exchange.

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. [Map ref I]

About five minutes north on Colum Road (to your right) are the Talybont student residences. The University’s largest accommodation site, it is home to 2,500 students, has its own social centre, laundrette facilities and convenience store. 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.

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. Cross the road at the traffic lights heading onto Park Place. [Map ref F]
As you walk down Park Place, you will see the impressive Edwardian houses on your left. These were built for upper-middle class families and included servants' quarters above. These houses - many of them extended and linked internally - are now part of the University estate.

Numbers 65-68 are home to the School of European Studies, an inter-disciplinary centre of excellence and one of the largest and most dynamic schools of its type in the UK.

Many students spend time in other European universities as part of their studies, and the School has close links with universities in Europe including Bordeaux, Paris, Milan, Berlin, Frankfurt, Barcelona and Granada.

On the right hand side of the road you will see Cardiff Law School. This building, with its curious 'bull-nosed' end, was opened in 1963, originally 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.

Now it is home to the Law School, one of the largest and most successful ‘old’ law schools in the UK. It offers a range of undergraduate, postgraduate and professional courses. A number of law journals are based and edited in the School and it is home to a range of highly-regarded research centres.

**Continue to walk down Park Place.**

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

The Cardiff University Brain Research Imaging Centre (CUBRIC) is one of the first facilities to combine Structural and Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging and Magnetoencephalography and is devoted to pioneering advanced brain-scanning techniques capable of mapping the structure and function of the healthy and impaired brain. Researchers here are looking into the link between the physical structures of our brain and the thoughts, emotions and memories which go through our minds.

Writer and actor Stephen Fry visited the University recently to find out more about the world-leading research being conducted by Professor Nick Craddock from the Neuropsychiatric Genetics Unit into bipolar disorder which aims to improve diagnosis and treatment.

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.

**Continuing down Park Place on the left hand side of the road is the Park Place Fitness & Racquet Centre.**

This is one of the three major sports centre and offers exercise classes, a large fitness suite, free weights room, squash courts and the well-being clinic which provides alternative health and beauty therapies including manipulative therapy and sports massage.

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, for example on visa renewals and immigration. They also offer a confidential counselling service.

Our disability and dyslexia service, also housed here, provides help and support for prospective and current students with disabilities, those with long-term medical conditions, and those with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. Also on this side of the road is the University Health Centre.
Continue down Park Place passing (on the left) the entrance to Cathays Railway Station. The next large building is the Students’ Union. [Map ref L]

The Students’ Union has occupied this large complex since 1974.

The building straddles the main Cardiff to Merthyr Tydfil railway line and boasts superb facilities, including nine bars, a 1,900 capacity nightclub and a concert venue that has welcomed acts such as Kate Nash, Amy Winehouse, Bloc Party, Motorhead, The Thrills and The Enemy.

The Union also houses an Advice and Representation Centre which offers hundreds of employment, professional development and work experience opportunities.

The Union is also home to the award winning student newspaper Gair Rhydd (Free Word), continuing a long-tradition of such publications in the university, dating back to a hand-written magazine in 1885.

Feel free to go in and have a look around. The main reception is located at the top of the steps on the 1st floor and staff will be happy to point you in the right direction.

Also within the Students’ Union complex is the Graduate Centre. Cardiff is among the few universities in Britain to offer a dedicated facility for its postgraduate students. The Centre 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.

Student Accommodation: This area of Cathays 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 Sherman Theatre Company produces a wide range of productions each year, including theatre for young people, inventive adaptations of classic dramas and new writing projects.

Continue along Senghenydd Road. Next door to the Sherman Theatre is the Mathematics Building. [Map ref M]

The School of Mathematics is based in this purpose-built Mathematics Institute which includes computing laboratories, the University Mathematics Library, and a cyber café. This building is also home to the Centre for Lifelong Learning which offers part-time courses in a range of subjects.
Turn right down the path on the left hand side of the Mathematics building, signposted ‘Senghennydd Court Reception’. 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. Cardiff 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. 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.

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 4839 or enquiry@cardiff.ac.uk or the Postgraduate Recruitment Team on 029 2087 0084 or postgradenquiries@cardiff.ac.uk.