

Doing the MPhil in Advanced Computer Science (ACS)

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Why do the ACS?

- **Time:** traditional 3 years (or 10 terms) not enough time for many PhD students...
 - e.g. theorists need solid background in relevant theories (category theory, semantics, logic, ...)
 - e.g. systems people need hands-on practical experience plus knowledge of the state-of-the-art
- **Funding:** PhD funding increasingly competitive: a 1yr prep course allows better research proposal
- **Exit Strategy:** some students may not like (or may not be any good at) research

What is the ACS?

- **A “Year 0” for the PhD**
 - Focus is on preparing students for research (whether at Cambridge, or elsewhere)
- Applicants need a **1st class** honours under-graduate degree in CS or a related discipline
- The ACS is **modular**:
 - modules come in one of three formats (lecture series, reading groups, and practical courses)
 - spans the entire field (theory, systems, languages, ...)
- ~~Two~~ **Three** paths through:
 - **Option A**: 9 modules + research essay
 - **Option B**: 6 modules + research project
 - **Part III CST**: 6 modules + research essay