

Models of Consciousness 2022



University of Stanford, CA

A conference for researchers whose scientific activities relate to mathematical approaches in the scientific study of consciousness.

Co-organised by the Oxford Mathematics of Consciousness and Applications Network, and the Centre for Mathematical Philosophy at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich among others

Mathematics MMath Second Year UG

After completing my mathematics degree, one direction of research I am considering is consciousness science. This year, with the help of a £500 bursary from Warwick's short term mobility fund, I was able to explore this possibility more deeply by attending the field's foremost conference for mathematicians, Models of Consciousness, hosted by the University of Stanford.

Bringing together over 80 researchers at various stages of their careers working chiefly in mathematics, neuroscience and philosophy, the conference comprised four days of talks, discussion sessions and informal gatherings.

As an undergraduate, I was unclear prior to the conference to what extent I would be able to participate, but fortunately there was more than enough to get involved in. Indeed, one of the most valuable parts of the conference for me was engaging with other individuals during discussion sessions and personal conversations. It was enlightening to hear about the motivations and backgrounds of experienced researchers, along with some of their less fully developed ideas, gaining nuance and context that can be absent in research papers.

Meeting researchers from a range of disciplines also suggested to me some alternative pathways into this field, besides improving my understanding of present funding opportunities and constraints. Indeed, I made several new contacts that offered to help me with future academic applications.

In summary, this was an immensely rewarding academic and personal experience. I feel very privileged to have been awarded funding for my application and thank my personal tutor, along with the mobility scheme enablers and funders for their generous support.

I comment here that for any undergraduate also considering a career in an emerging and multidisciplinary field of research, I would highly recommend attending a conference like this one at the earliest opportunity. For undergraduates interested in more established and specialised fields of research, conferences might not offer so many opportunities for participation.

