

Applying to Oxford or Cambridge: Supporting students to apply



Contents

- What do you know about Oxford and Cambridge Admissions?
- Studying at Oxford or Cambridge
- What we're looking for
- Overview of admissions process
- Understanding each stage of the application process
- Learning beyond the curriculum
- Updates from both institutions
- Q&A



What do you know about Oxford and Cambridge Admissions?

What have you heard about interviews?....

Oxford and Cambridge have a 'type' of applicant they are looking for

There is no point applying with a B/7 at GCSE

Ox / Cam want to see 'well rounded' applicants with lots of extra-curricular achievements

The student experience

- Challenging, stimulating courses
- Supportive teaching, through supervisions/tutorials and a Director of Studies/Tutor
- College membership
- Varied student societies
- A good work life balance is encouraged
- Excellent employment prospects



The Application Process



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What information do we use to assess applicants?

Every application is considered individually and holistically. All available information is looked at together before decisions are made.

- Academic record
- Personal statement
- School reference
- Submitted written work (where required)
- Performance in any written assessment
- Performance at interview (if interviewed)



What do we look for?

- Genuine subject interest
- Good 'fit' between applicant and course
- Potential
 - Core knowledge and technical fluency
 - Focus and determination
 - Ability to learn independently
- Vocational commitment (where appropriate)

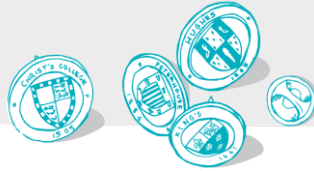


The application process

- 1 Choose your course**



- 2 Choose a College or open application**



- 3 Check admission assessment arrangements**



- 4 UCAS application**



- 5 Additional forms – Cambridge Only**



- 6 Take admissions test/assessment and/or submit written work***



- 7 Interview (December)**

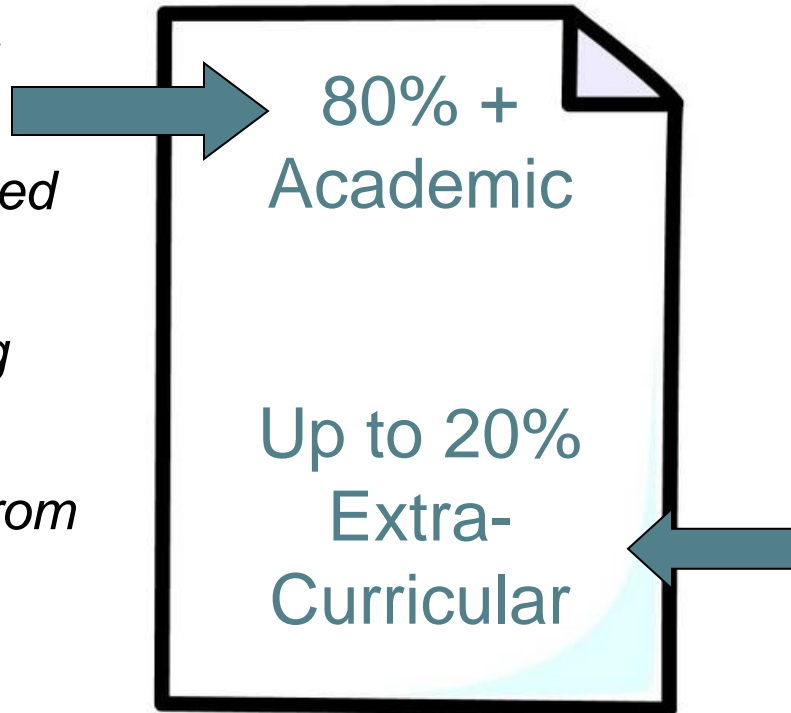


- 8 Decision (January)**



Structuring the personal statement

- *I want to study...*
- *I have read/watched/visited ...*
- *It was interesting because...*
- *What I learned from this was....*
- *What was challenging was...*



- *In my spare time I play...*
- *I had some work experience at...*
- *I enjoy...*

Producing a supportive reference



- Highlight areas of particular strength relative to cohort
- Relate back to the relevant subject selection criteria where possible
- Contextualise achievement
- Remember Cambridge's Extenuating Circumstances Form (online from this year)
- Provide additional information if there is a change of circumstances post-application
- Multiple contributors, single voice

What to include on a Teacher reference

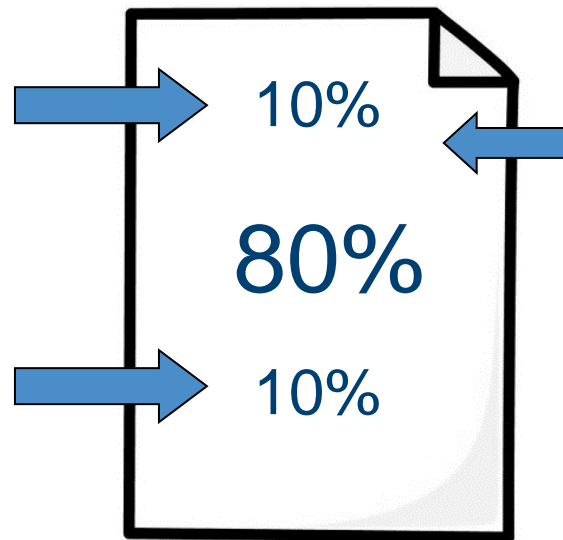
School or college information

(particularly regarding qualification reform)

Any mitigating circumstances

(including nature and length of impact)

Concluding statement



▪ **Subject-specific information and aptitude for degree**

- Focus on subject choice
- Contextual achievement
- Areas of particular strength

What is the purpose of admissions tests/assessments?



- Differentiate between candidates
- A common set of data
- To stretch and challenge applicants
- Assess the aptitude and potential of candidates
- If appropriate, assess subject knowledge and understanding

How should students prepare?



Specimen and past papers are available for many of the assessments, offering applicants the opportunity to:

- familiarise themselves with the assessment content, level and format
- get to know the different types of questions they may be asked
- test themselves under timed conditions
- review answers

Interviews: what to expect

- Focused and challenging questions
- New approaches to existing knowledge
- Prompting from interviewers and questions from you
- Interviews usually cover
 - Academic work
 - Reading and other super-curricular exploration
 - Subject-related wider awareness
 - 'Prompt' material

No hidden agenda, no trick questions, not the final hurdle



Learning beyond the curriculum

Is extra-curricular important?



Extra curricular activities include non-academic activities, such as taking part in sport, music and volunteering.

- When we assess applicants we are first and foremost interested in their academic potential
- As students here there are plenty of opportunities to get involved with extra-curricular activities
- Won't increase chances of being made an offer, but can show transferable skills and help to contextualise the application.

Is super-curricular important?

- Going above & beyond the school curriculum
- Driven by a genuine passion for a subject and can take many forms
- Will be a step into academic working
- Can be enabled, encouraged and supported
- For everyone and needn't cost a penny

Super-curricular activities

help to:

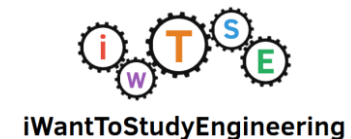
- Demonstrate subject interest and develop research skills
- Show the student can work independently and be self-motivated
- Broaden the student's subject knowledge

Super-curricular ideas

Project work; such as an EPQ or an Extended Essay

In school Activity; Discussion groups, webinars, competitions

Work Experience; Virtual Work Experience or Virtual workplace events



Cambridge updates



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Foundation Year - Cambridge

- Free and fully-funded one year course in Arts and Humanities designed to offer a stepping stone to Cambridge for those who have experienced educational disadvantage.
- We've opened for applications for this course for the first time this year and we're looking forward to welcoming our first cohort.
- We want students who meet the eligibility criteria to think about applying so if you have students who this course might suit, please mention it to them.
- The Foundation Year team will be taking part in the Oxford and Cambridge student conferences – find out more from them there.



Visit cam.ac.uk/foundationyear for further information on eligibility and applications and contact the team on foundation.year@admin.cam.ac.uk if you have any questions

August Reconsideration Pool - Cambridge

Those who meet three of the following five [contextual flags](#):

- Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) flag
- Output Area Classification (OAC2011) flag
- Participation of Local Areas (POLAR) flag
- Attended a school/college for post-16 education where fewer than five students have been made an offer by the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge over the past five years
- Attended a maintained sector school/college post-16.

Or

When an applicant declares on their UCAS application that they have spent time **in local authority care**

Or

When an applicant declares that they are eligible, or have been eligible during the last 6 years, for **Free School Meals**

Applicant Webinars

- From September – November
- Designed to assist applicants and those supporting applicants through the process of applying to Cambridge
- Covering advice about filling in the UCAS application and additional application forms, admissions assessments and interviews at key points to support students
- Virtual sessions available to all applicants



Cambridge Open Days



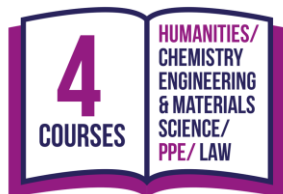
- Hybrid
- Warm Up Webinars covering key topics
- All departments and Colleges taking part
- In person days – 7 and 8 July
- Bookings open now

Oxford updates

Foundation Year



Our free subject-specific foundation year is for UK state school students who have high academic potential, but have experienced severe personal disadvantage or disrupted education.



- For up to 50 students per year starting in autumn 2023
- Free for students, including tuition, accommodation and a non-repayable bursary
- Four courses available, leading to 22 undergraduate courses at Oxford
- Offers will range from AAB to BBB and you will need to meet the eligibility criteria
- One year course with CertHE certificate and/or entry undergraduate courses on successful completion
- Please see our website for more information

www.ox.ac.uk/foundationyear



Updates from Oxford

We are reducing the amount of printed materials we produce, the 2023 prospectus is now online - ox.ac.uk/digital-prospectus

All potential applicants and their supporters are encouraged to sign up for our *Choosing Oxford* newsletter available from ox.ac.uk/apply

Oxford Open Days are in person and will take place on 29 & 30 June – ox.ac.uk/opendays

Questions?

For the most up-to-date information and advice about anything covered in the presentation, please refer to our websites:

www.cam.ac.uk/apply

www.ox.ac.uk/apply