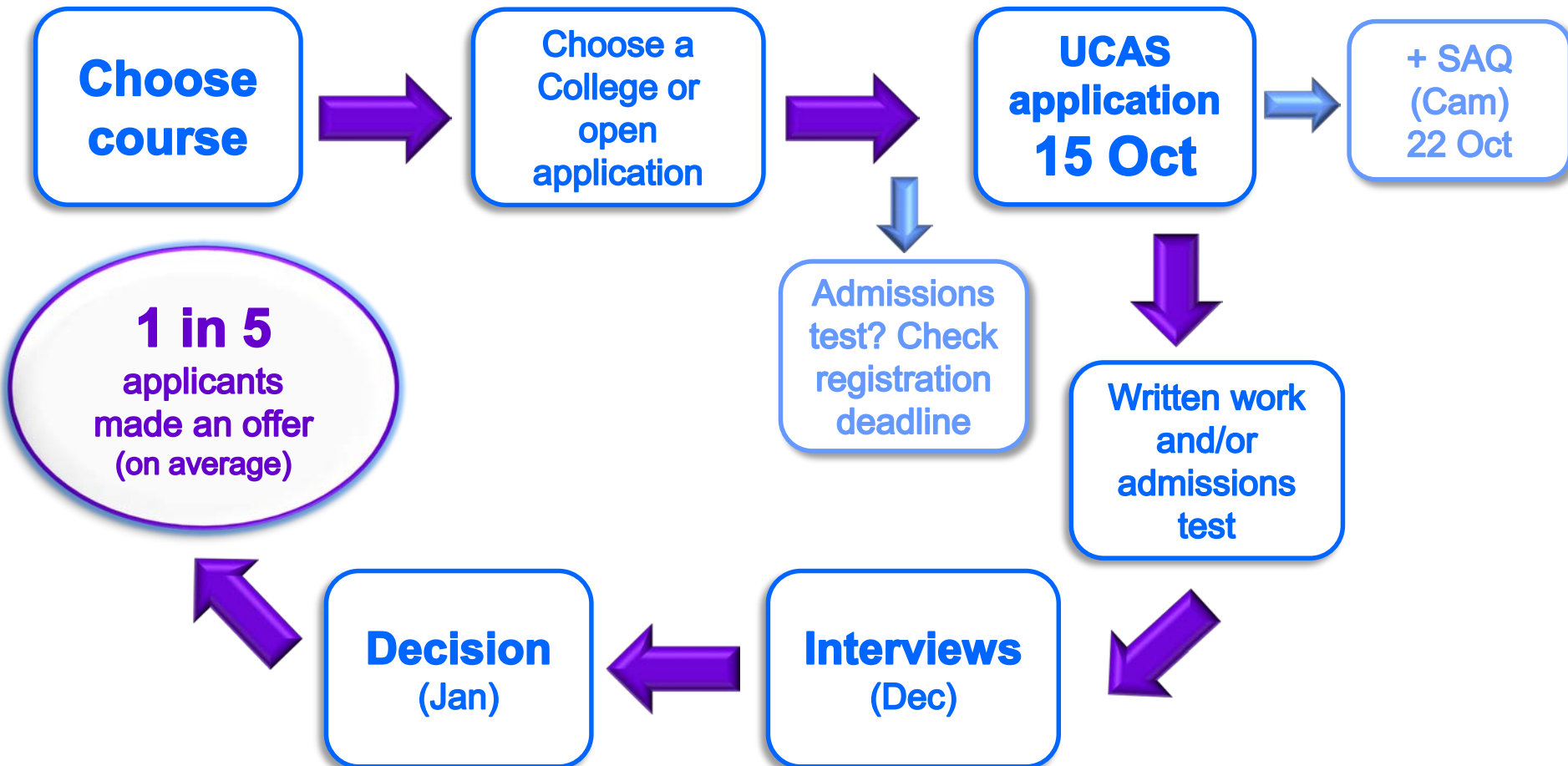


Oxbridge Admissions

Fergus Powell: Schools Liaison Officer, Homerton College, Cambridge

(Adapted from an earlier version created by Ms Emma Smith)

The Admissions Process



The UCAS application

- Deadline of 15 October for Oxbridge (+ certain courses); mid-January for most other courses
 - Personal details
 - Employment history (paid jobs)
 - Course choices: up to five courses
 - Academic record (e.g. GCSEs, AS Levels and A Levels)
 - Personal statement
 - School or college reference and predictions

What do tutors consider?

We consider every application individually, taking all aspects into account:

- Academic record
- Personal statement
- Teacher's reference
- Admissions test results (where required)
- Written work (where required)
- Contextual data



No part of an application is considered in isolation – all available information is looked at together before decisions are made.

The Personal Statement

The Personal Statement

Why should you get a place on this course(s)?

Introduction

Why do you want to study this course(s)?

What interests you about the subject?

Interests and achievements

What have you done to explore your subject?

...in school

...**beyond the curriculum**

...through relevant work experience

...through relevant hobbies

What did you think about it? What did you gain from it?

How has it prepared you for the course/for university?

Conclusion

Why should you be made an offer for this course(s)?

What are we looking for?

Interest in and
aptitude for
your chosen
subject

Enthusiasm for
complex and
challenging
ideas

Vocational or
professional
commitment,
where
appropriate

Motivation,
commitment
and
organisation

Ability to think
independently,
critically and
analytically

Some Universities want more breadth than others

Top Tips

- Be specific
- Keep it personal
- Show, don't tell
- Discuss, don't list
- Try to avoid clichés
- Avoid repetition
- Get it checked
- Don't lie or plagiarise

Personal Statement Exercise

Think of **5** things you have done to explore your subject.

1. What was the activity?

E.g. reading a book, watching a TV programme, listening to a podcast, going to a lecture, visiting a museum or gallery, watching a video online, reading an article, work experience, hobbies, etc...

2. What did you think about it?

What did you find interesting about it? How did it relate to other things you know about? What did you gain from it? What did you do next?

3. How did it make you a better candidate for the course?

Check selection criteria – which point(s) does it show evidence of? What skills does it demonstrate?

If you are interviewed:

- Keep a copy and re-read it, take it to interview
- Anything in the Personal Statement may be discussed
- Try to move on after September
- Follow through on claims:
 - ‘I have read’ ‘This was very interesting’
 - “I shall read” “I plan to visit”

Admissions Assessments



Why use admissions assessments?

- Differentiate between well-qualified candidates
- A common set of data with which to compare applicants to a specific course
- Stretch and challenge applicants
- Assess the aptitude and potential of candidates
- If appropriate, assess subject knowledge and understanding

www.cam.ac.uk/assessment

University of Cambridge assessments

Pre-interview assessment	At-interview assessment
Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic	Archaeology
Asian and Middle Eastern Studies	Architecture
Economics	Classics (3 year and 4 year)
Engineering (incl. Chemical Engineering via Engineering)	Computer Science
English	Education
Geography	History and Modern Languages
History	History of Art
History and Modern Languages	Land Economy
History and Politics	Law
Human, Social, and Political Sciences	Linguistics
Medicine	Modern and Medieval Languages
Natural Sciences (incl. Chemical Engineering via Natural Sciences)	Philosophy
Psychological and Behavioural Sciences	Theology, Religion, and Philosophy of Religion
Veterinary Medicine	



How to prepare

Science/language tests – require a level of knowledge

Humanities (English, History) – practice of similar exercises from teachers may be helpful

Specimen and/or past papers available for all the assessments, offering applicants the opportunity to:

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

The Interview

Interviews: An overview

- **The last piece in the jigsaw rather than the final hurdle**
- Normally two or more interviews, each usually lasting 20–30 minutes
- Conducted by lecturers and predominantly academic and subject-focused
- Discussion-based and intellectually challenging
- Detailed and focused probing and discussion
- Check websites for videos and further information

Why do we interview?

- Discussion as a key part of our supervision teaching
- To distinguish amongst excellent applicants by probing your academic qualities – in a nutshell, how do you *think*?
- To assess the skills and aptitudes essential for successful study in higher education. In particular,
 - **Academic potential**
 - **Motivation**
 - **Suitability for chosen course**

Interviews: What are we looking for?

Academic
Ability and
Potential

Commitment
and genuine
interest in
chosen course

Ability to work
through difficult
issues in
dialogue

Use of existing
knowledge to
solve new
problems

Ability to think
independently
and critically

Interviews: What interviews are NOT

- Full of trick questions with obscure answers
- A public speaking or debating contest
- A test of how you speak, dress, sit, or shake hands
- A cultural or social test of what type of person you are
- Scripted and identical for all applicants

Beware scare stories and rumours!

Interviews: What to expect

- Applicants are usually asked to talk about:
 - Academic work completed in the last year or two
 - Relevant wider reading or work experience
 - Subject-related issues that are very readily visible in the wider world
 - ‘Prompt’ material
 - Their submitted written work, where requested
- Questions that cross boundaries between subjects/modules
- Questions to which they do not know the answer

Interviews: How to prepare

- Refresh your memory about:
 - The course for which you applied
 - Recent school/college work
 - UCAS personal statement
 - Submitted work
- Wider reading
- Practise discussing academic work and ideas



Interviews: Some tips

- Listening carefully is important
- Thinking ‘out loud’ – explaining your thinking process
- Asking questions is fine
- Expect to get some answers wrong
- Don’t worry if corrected or prompted
- Rehearsed speeches are risky
- Pause, think, reflect, analyse
- Be yourself

Finding out more

Cambridge films, podcasts, publications:

<http://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/applying/interviews>

If you have any remaining questions, do not hesitate to ask a College Admissions Tutor or Admissions Officer.

Cambridge University



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Why consider Cambridge?

- World-class education
- Supportive collegiate system
- Fantastic employment prospects
- Awesome student experience

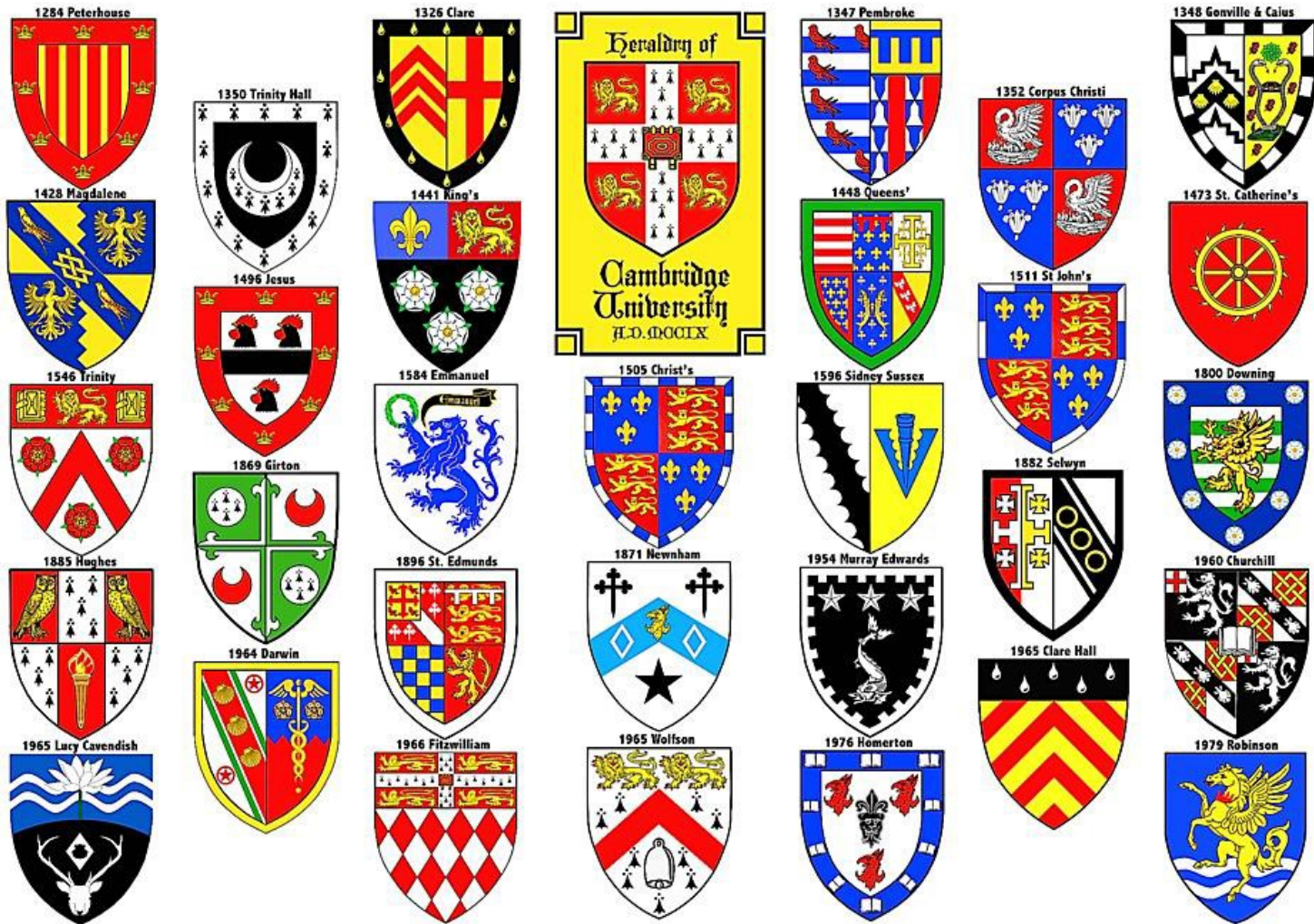


World-class education

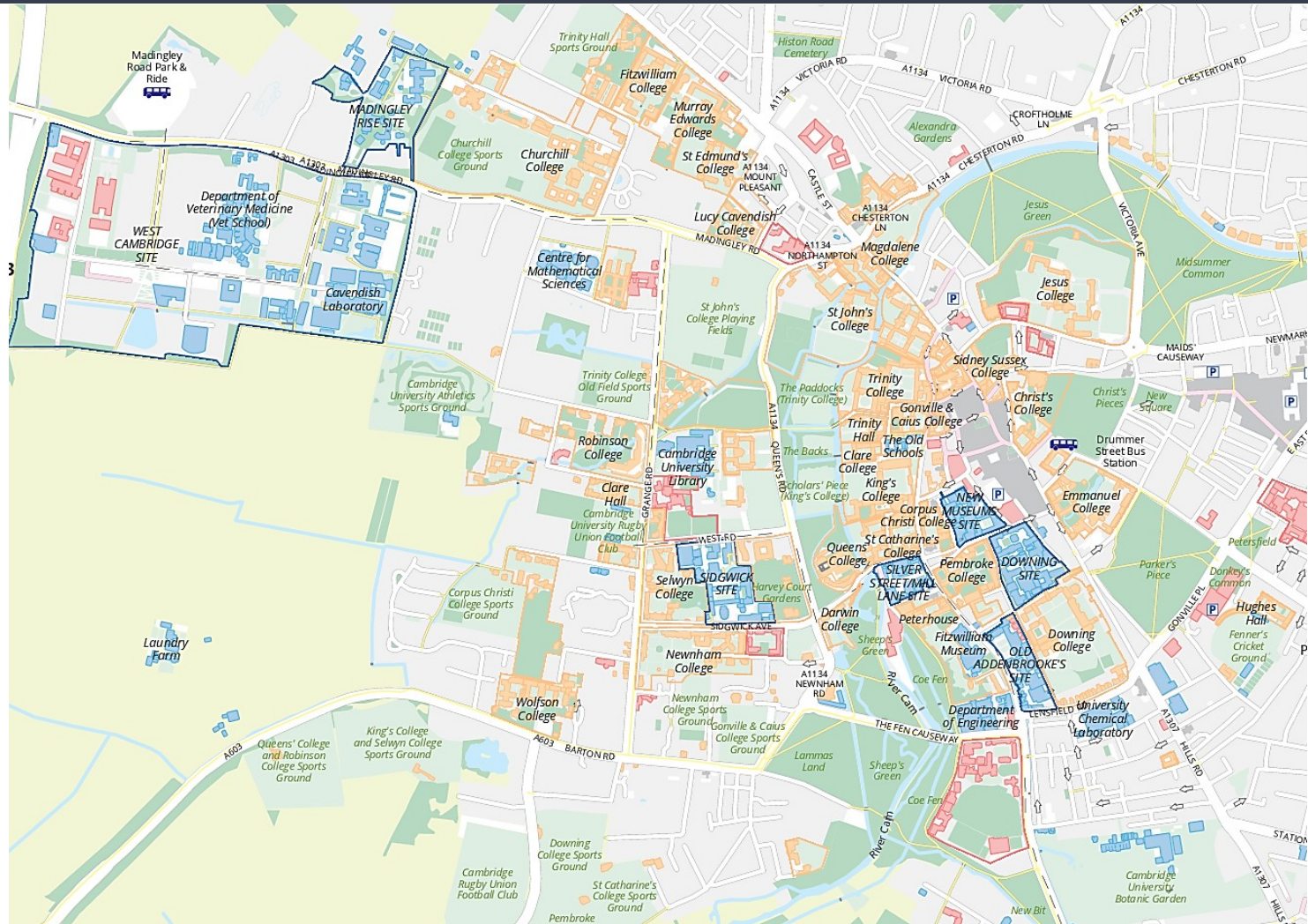
- Supervisions - top-rated, small-group teaching
- Superb facilities



Supportive collegiate system



Supportive collegiate system



Cambridge colleges may look old (C14th)...



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CAMBRIDGE

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CAMBRIDGE

...or new (C21st)...



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...but they provide the same things: accommodation;



a dining hall;



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a library;



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Home!



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Churchill College

- Top 6 results (avg) since 2010
- Largest college site in Cambridge
- 10 mins from everywhere by bike
- Guaranteed on-site accommodation
- People from all backgrounds
 - ~ 2:1 UK state to UK independent
 - ~ 3:1 UK to outside UK
 - ~ 2:1 male to female
 - 7:3 STEM to arts and humanities



Fantastic employment prospects



- Highly sought-after graduates
- ~ 95% graduate employment rate
- Excellent Careers Service

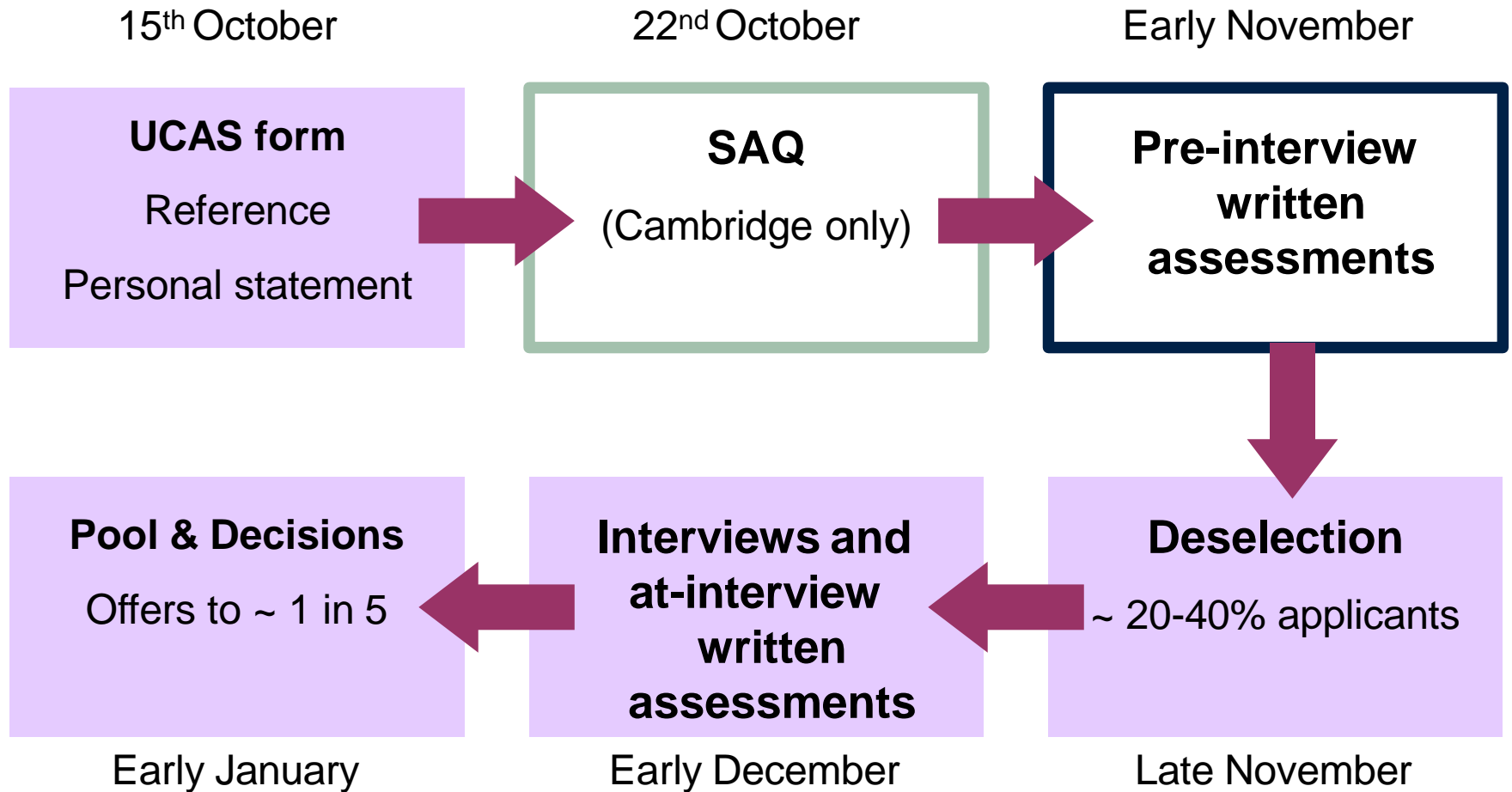


Awesome student experience

- Loads of cultural facilities
- Even more uni societies
- Safe, relaxed city
- Close to London
- Relatively cheap to be a student



Admissions overview



We look for students who...

- Are passionate about their chosen course
- Have an outstanding exam record
- Are motivated, hard-working, and organised



We find these students by considering their...

- Exam record, especially after GCSE
- School or college reference
- Submitted written work (arts and humanities)
- Admission assessments
- Performance at interview



Interviews

- Typically 1 or 2, 20 to 30 mins each, with academic and subject-related focus
- Wider reading and/or experience will likely be explored
- Interviewers may use prompts, articles, etc.
- Be yourself (and don't stress about what to wear!)



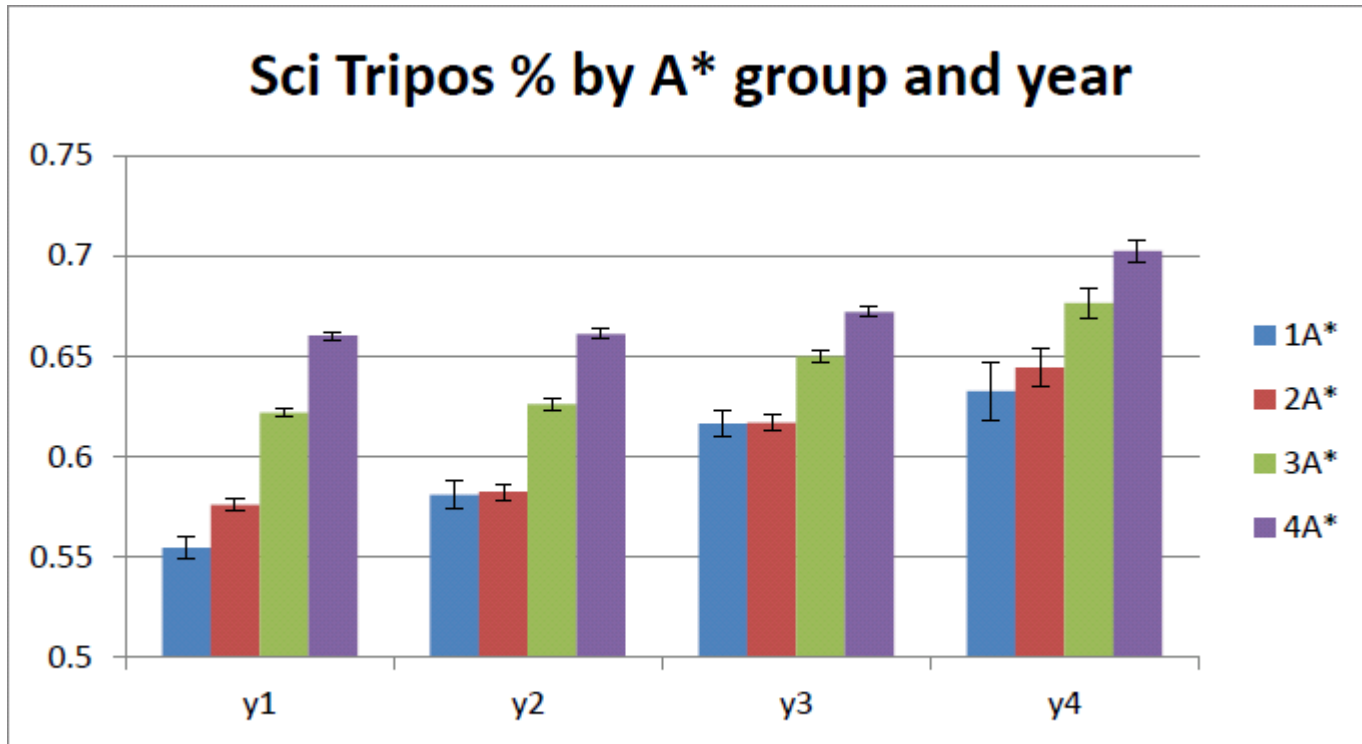
Typical offers

- A Level A*AA (Arts and Humanities) or A*A*A (Sciences)
- IB 40-42 with 776 or 777
- Pre-U D2D3D3 (Arts and Humanities) or D2D2D3 (Sciences)
- Offers vary by course and circumstances
- Most successful applicants exceed our normal offers
- Students admitted to Cambridge in October 2015

Achieved A-Levels	% of A-Level entrants
A*A*A*	61.6
A*A*A	23.5



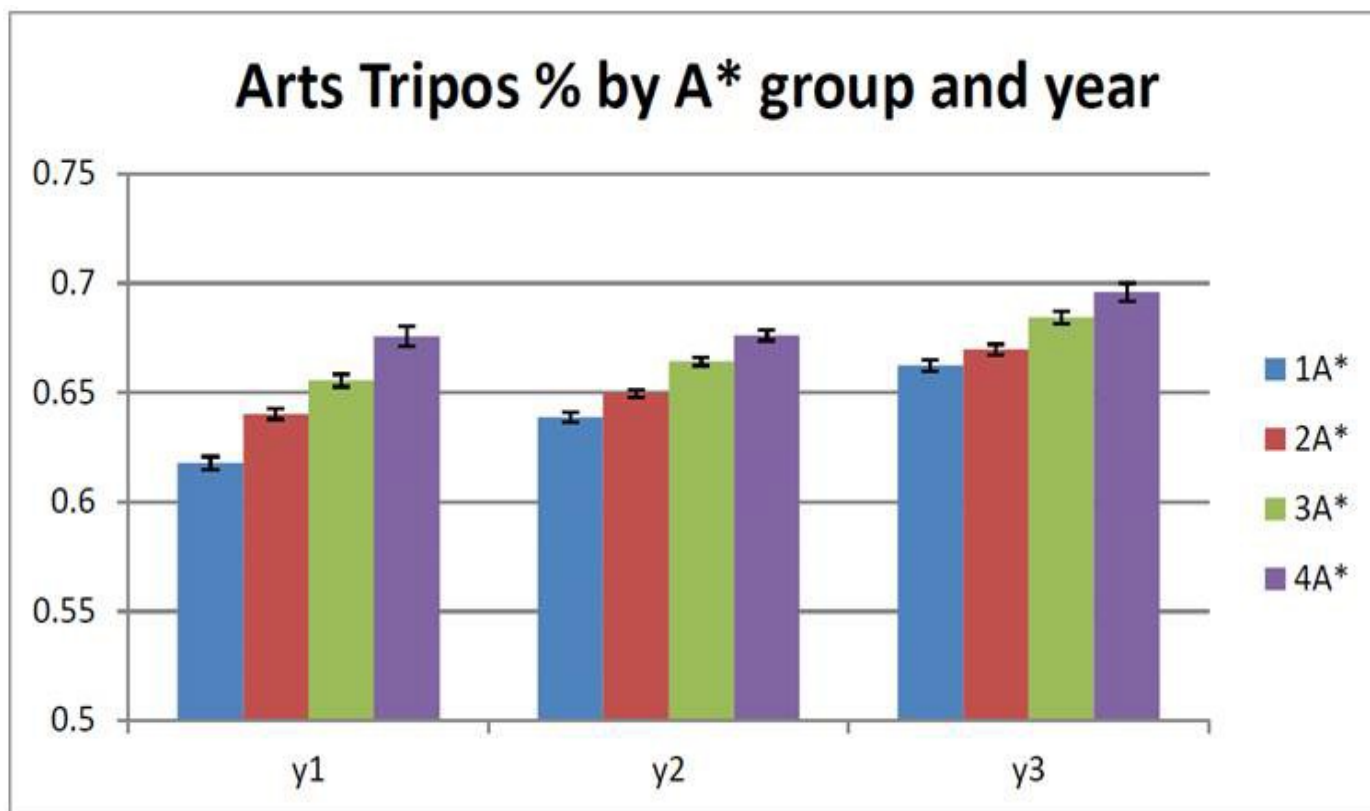
Why the focus on topgrades?



Error bars based on calculated standard error



Why the focus on topgrades?



Summary and things to do

- Decide what you want to study at university
 - Make sure it's something that really interests you!
- See if Cambridge is the right place to study it
 - Don't worry if it isn't – there are loads of superb unis out there!
- Do really well in your exams!
- Explore, especially by reading
- Useful resources
 - www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk
 - www.cam.ac.uk/assessment
 - www.chu.cam.ac.uk/admissions
 - www.chu.cam.ac.uk/opendays
 - schools.liaison@chu.cam.ac.uk – Jonathan Padley





<p>Oxford Explained</p>	 <p>UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD</p>
	<p>YOUR NAME</p>



NO.1

in the
World

(Times Higher Education
World Rankings 2018)

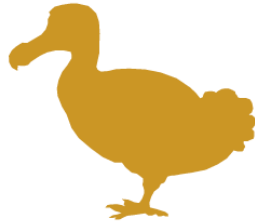


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26 Nobel Prize winners

26 UK Prime Ministers

International leaders including Bill Clinton and Benazir Bhutto

Scientists like Edwin Hubble, Dorothy Hodgkin and Stephen Hawking

Poets and writers including John Donne, Oscar Wilde and Iris Murdoch

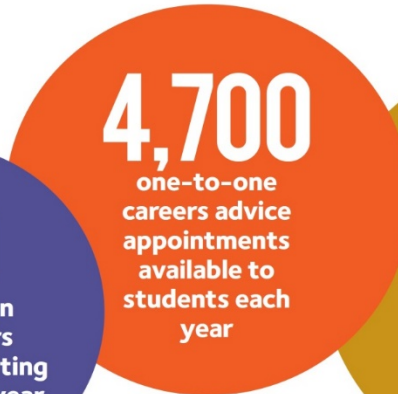
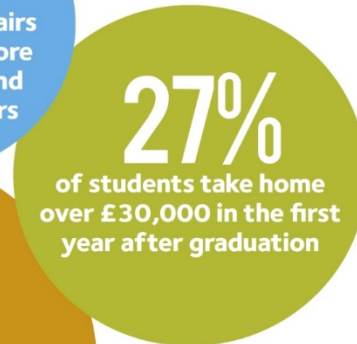
Actors and film-makers including Kate Beckinsale, Hugh Grant and Ken Loach



www.alumni.ox.ac.uk



After Oxford...





Do we offer a course YOU would enjoy?	Would YOU find our teaching style engaging?
Are YOU predicted for the right grades?	Are YOU ready for the academic challenge?



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Archaeology and Anthropology
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Geography
Politics & Economics
Law
Human Sciences

Classics
English Language and Literature
History
History of Art
Fine Art
Linguistics
Modern Languages
Music
Oriental Studies
Philosophy
Theology & Religion



Biochemistry
Biomedical Sciences
Experimental
Psychology
Medicine

Physics
Materials Science
Mathematics
Biological Sciences
Computer Science
Earth Sciences
Engineering Science
Chemistry



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100+
libraries



70,000
e-journals



Every
21
seconds someone
borrows a
book



12 MILLION+
printed items



on
117 MILES
of shelves



www.ox.ac.uk/oxfords-resources



Tutorials

'At the heart of
the Oxford
learning
experience'



www.ox.ac.uk/tutorials



www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation

OVER
11,000
UNDERGRADUATES
÷
35 COLLEGES
=
=

All the benefits of a small local community, with all the resources of a big international university. It's like having a campus in the middle of a city.



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OXFORD

www.ox.ac.uk/ugcolls



YOUNGEST CITY

Oxford is the youngest city in England and Wales. **35%** of people who live here are aged 15-29, and **24%** (30,000) are university students.

OLDEST UNIVERSITY

Oxford is the oldest university in the English-speaking world – **over 900 years old.**



www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation/history



www.ox.ac.uk/100faces



Home/EU students:

A loan to cover **all your fees**

Home students:

A Maintenance Loan to cover some of your living costs

Home students from lower-income households:

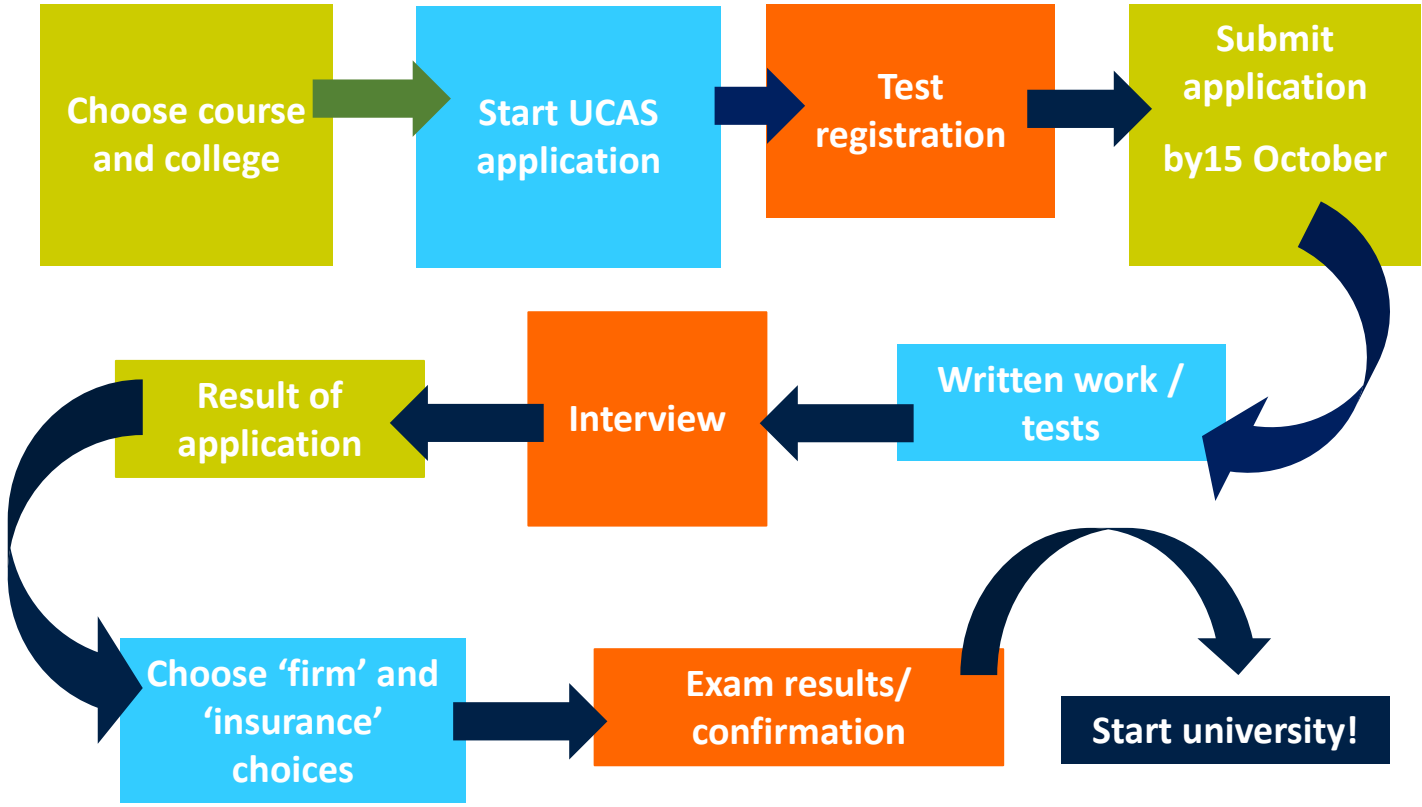
Additional maintenance support to cover more of your living costs

“our world–class resources , extensive bursaries and college provision actually keep living costs down”



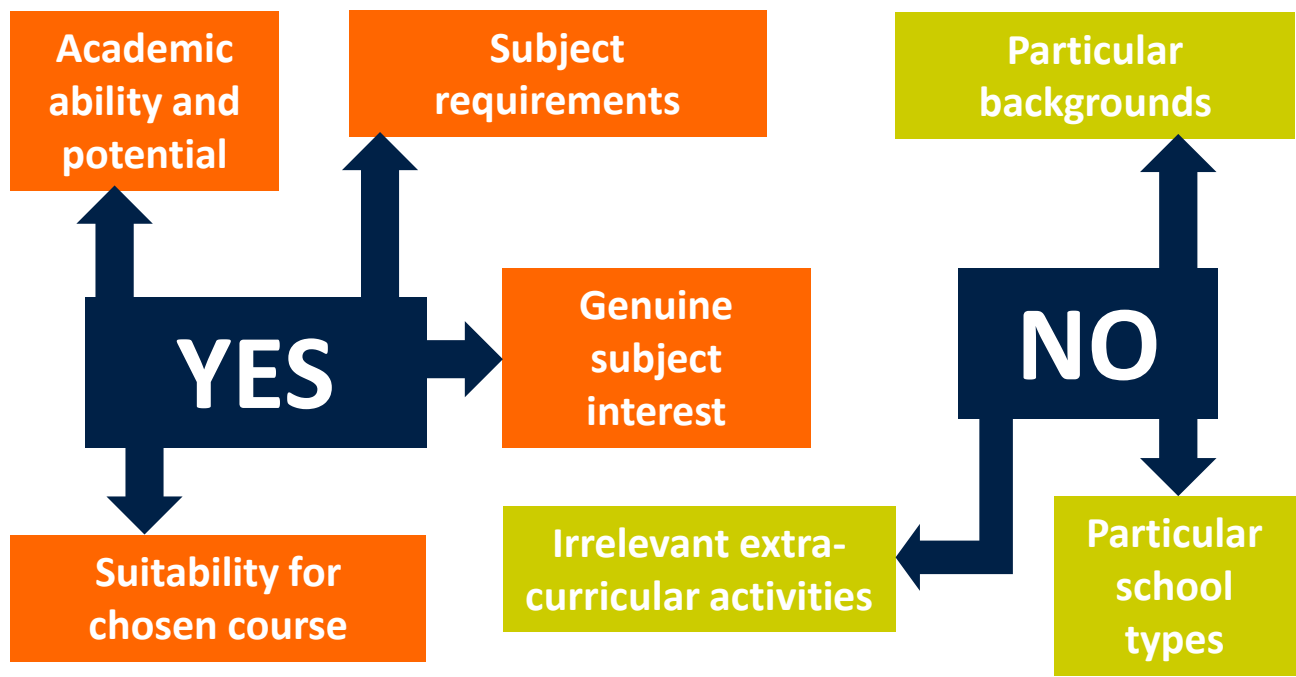
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www.ox.ac.uk/funding



www.ucas.com

www.ox.ac.uk/apply





A-level

AAA / A*AA / A*A*A

**International
Baccalaureate**

**38 / 39 / 40 with 6/7 in higher
level subjects**

Pre-U

**D3, D3, D3 / D2, D3, D3
/ D2, D2, D3**

Scottish Highers

**AAAAB / AAAAA Highers
supplemented by AA / AAB
Advanced Highers**

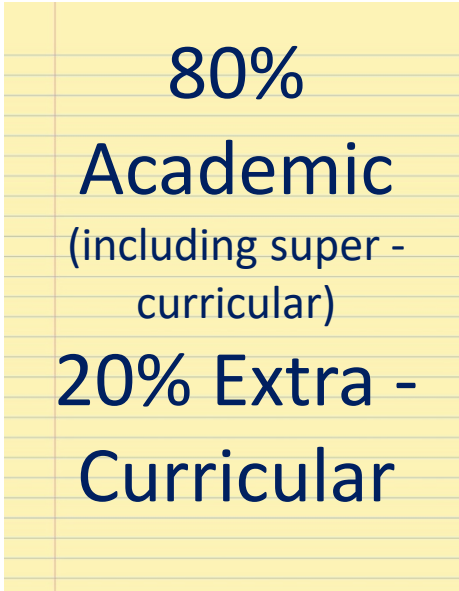


[ox.ac.uk/enreqs](https://www.ox.ac.uk/enreqs) or [/criteria](https://www.ox.ac.uk/criteria)



Personal Statement

- Plan it first
- Sell yourself
- Check spelling
- Check grammar
- Be honest



- Why do I want to study this course?
- Current studies
- Outside reading
- I have watched/ listened/visited

- Work Experience
- Future plans
- Extra - curricular activities should focus on transferable skills

'Tests stretch and challenge you. We want to see your potential.'

- Most courses require you to take a test
- Designed to stretch and challenge
- Looking for potential
- Subject specific
- Practice is helpful preparation

www.ox.ac.uk/tests

www.ox.ac.uk/writework



'We might want to see some of
your written work too!'



www.admissionstestingservice.org

'The interview is designed to emulate the tutorial system.'

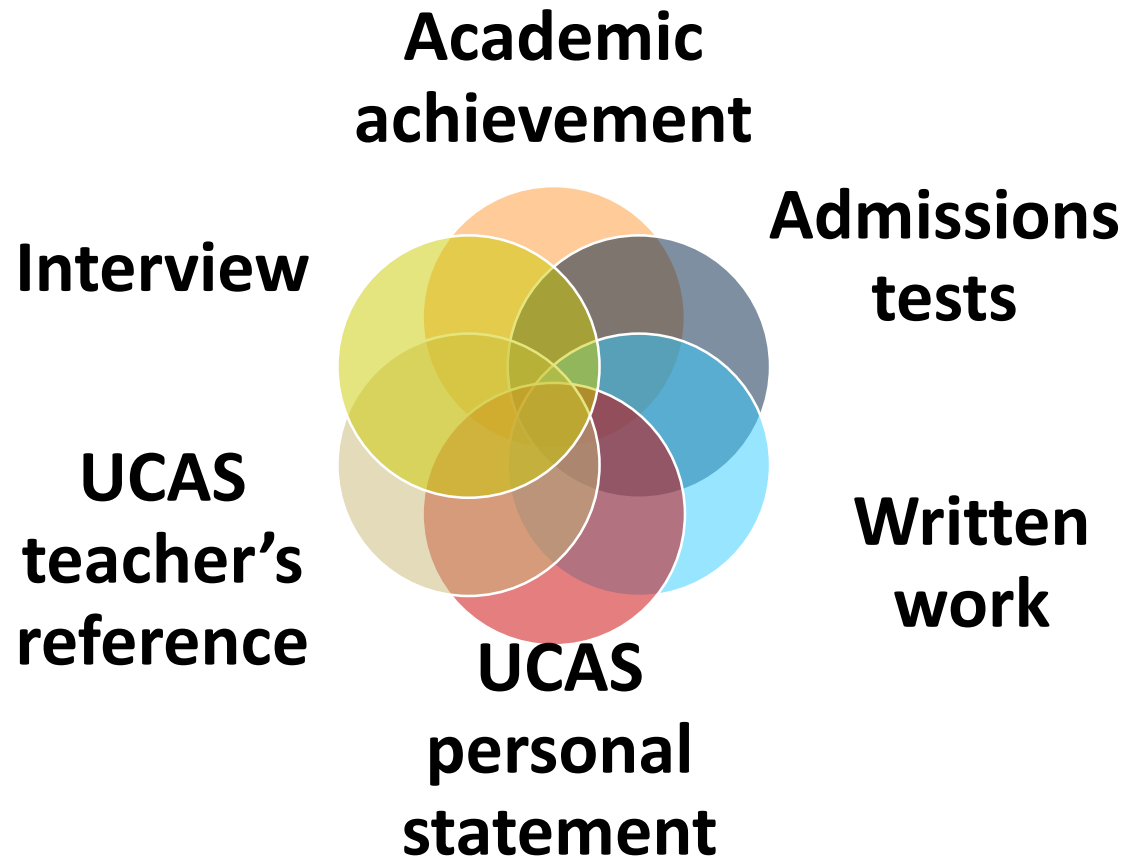
- Academic ability and potential to be a successful student
- Self-motivation, commitment and passion for the chosen course
- Ability to think independently and critically
- Engagement with new ideas



**There are no trick questions and it's not the
'final hurdle'**

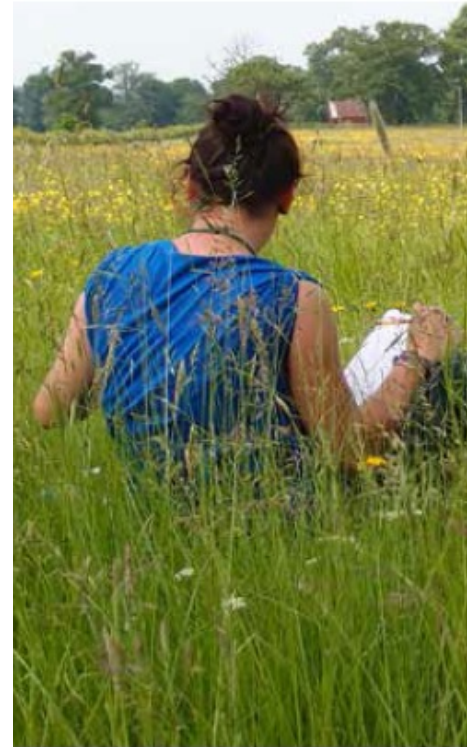


www.ox.ac.uk/interview



“What can I do now?”

- ✓ Programme of study
- ✓ Results – work hard!
- ✓ Engage and explore
- ✓ Practise





Thank you!

www.ox.ac.uk/study



For the most recent information and advice about anything in the presentation, please refer to our website above.



email : study@ox.ac.uk