

APPLYING TO OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE



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**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**

WHAT ARE OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE LIKE?

- Consistently top-ranked in world university surveys
- Stand out in several ways:
 - Collegiate – around 30 interdisciplinary Colleges in each University
 - International and residential
 - Unrivalled access to professors and lecturers via tutorial/supervision – Oxbridge's small-group teaching system
 - Exceptional academic resources and support: contact-time and group-size; direction of studies; library and laboratory facilities; IT

OUR COURSES

- Integrative not modular
- Characterised by exceptional depth and breadth from the very beginning
- Academic and theoretical – even where they have practical applications
- Increasing opportunity for specialisation as they progress
- Some are ‘single subject’ (e.g. History)
- Others are structured around subject combinations (e.g. PPE, Natural Sciences, HSPS)
- Joint honours: e.g. History and Politics, History and MML
- Involve compulsory elements but also provide choice
- Suit very interested, hard-working, curious and questioning independent-learners

CAREERS

- Top international employers are overwhelmingly interested in quality, not subject, of degree
- Oxbridge courses foster the generic skills that characterise top global employees, researchers and leaders
- Cambridge and Oxford are ranked first in the world for employee recruitment by the top 27,000 international companies
- Recent graduate outcomes:
 - Employed/further study: Oxbridge: 93%; UK nationally: 87%
 - Gap year: Oxbridge: 4%; UK nationally: 5%
 - Seeking employment: Oxbridge: 3%; UK nationally: 8%

FINANCIAL AND OTHER SUPPORT

- Annual EU tuition fee is £9,250
- EU students can currently borrow this sum on favourable terms from the UK government, with easy repayment once you are in employment
- Position on fees for EU students after the UK leaves the EU (2019?) is currently uncertain
- Actual cost of degree to Oxford or Cambridge is ~ £17,000 p.a., so our courses provide outstanding value for money
- Significant bursaries for lower income European Union and some other overseas students
- College awards: e.g. scholarships, book grants and travel grants
- Low living and studying costs (~£7,500 or less) and excellent accommodation
- Pastoral support via personal Tutor and other support services

WHAT DO WE LOOK FOR IN APPLICANTS?

- Genuine subject interest
- A good 'fit' between applicant and course applied for
- A very strong record in examinations
- Very positive references from school/college
- Core knowledge and technical fluency – including written English
- Willingness to work hard (~45 hours per week)
- Ability to learn independently
- Potential for future development
- Vocational commitment (where appropriate)

SELECTION CRITERIA

Admissions decisions are based on:

- A Level, IB or equivalent grades or predictions, and subject combinations
- GCSE grades (or equivalent), or school/college transcript
- UCAS school/college reference
- UCAS personal statement
- Results in written assessments (aptitude tests)
- Submitted work (where requested)
- Interview performance

APPLICATION

- Students apply via UCAS by 15 October
- Most applicants choose a College but you don't have to
- Cambridge applicants also fill in an online questionnaire
- Most applicants complete a written assessment or aptitude test in school (in early November); some Cambridge applicants complete an assessment at time of interview
- Written work (where requested) is submitted in November
- Most applicants are called for interview in December
- Typical Cambridge offers: A*AA-A*A*A; IB 776/41-2; SSC 80% overall with 90% in relevant subjects; EB 85% overall with 90% in relevant subjects
- Typical Oxford offers: A level: AAA-A*A*A; IB 766-776/38-40

UCAS REFERENCE AND PERSONAL STATEMENT

- REFERENCES should ideally tell us about:
 - Where an applicant lies in relation to his/her peers
 - Academic and subject-related issues
 - Organisation and focus
- We use PERSONAL STATEMENTS chiefly as a starting-point for discussion at interview
- Write about:
 - Your interest in your subject
 - Reading and other wider exploration
 - Work experience – where relevant
- Extra-curricular activities/positions of responsibility: some universities take these into account, but Oxbridge tend not to

TESTS AND SUBMITTED WORK

- Written assessments and tests in advance of interview: **know the format** and complete some **practice against the clock** in advance via websites; revise your science content if you are a STEM applicant
- Cambridge tests at time of interview: most require no preparation but revising your school or college work is likely to be helpful
- If you are asked to submit an essay or essays, send in something recently completed that you would be happy to discuss at interview, take a copy, and look over it again in advance of interview

INTERVIEWS: FORMAT

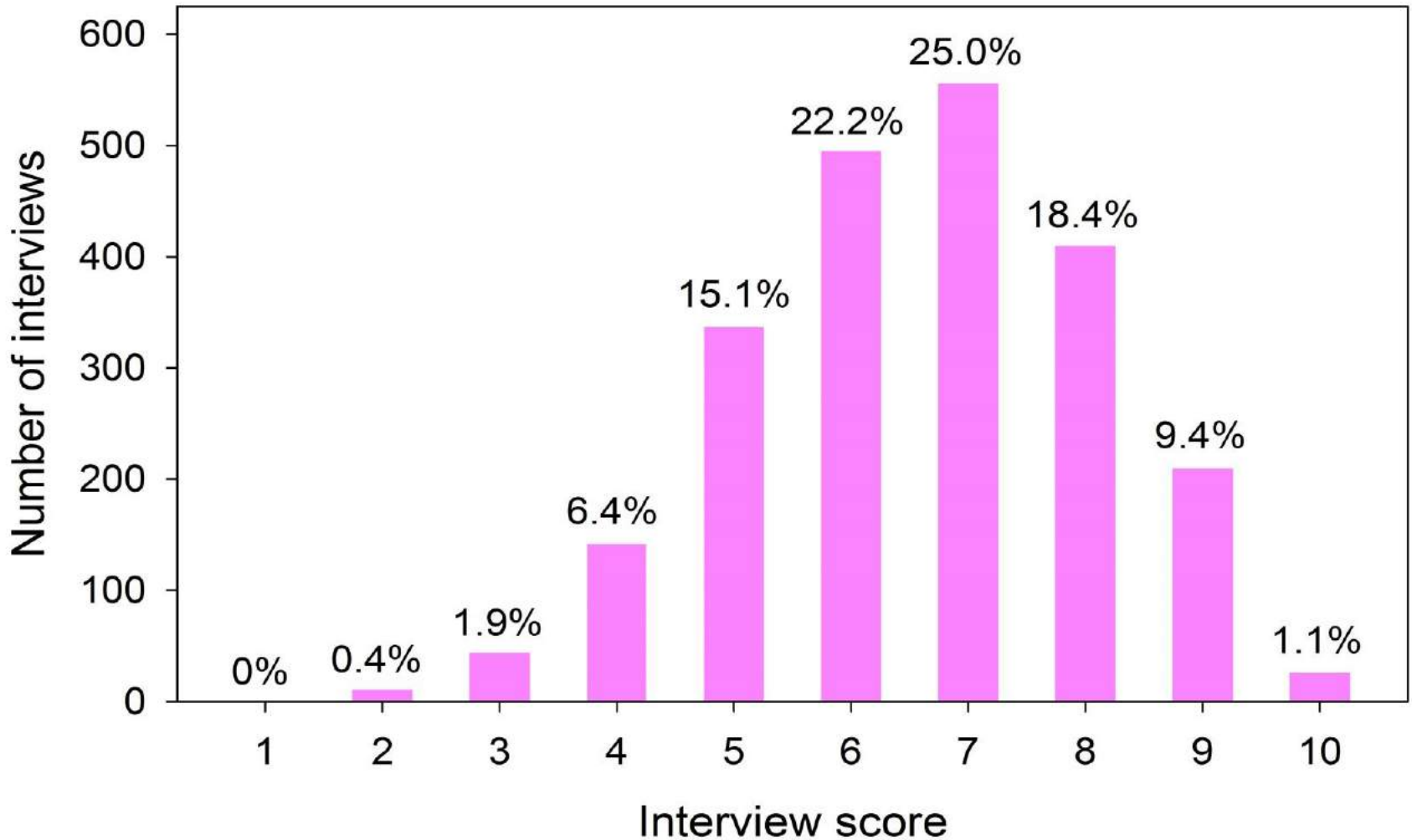
- 70-80% of applicants are called for interview
- Interviews usually take place in December
- Applicants usually have 2 interviews at Cambridge and up to 4 at Oxford, each lasting 20-30 minutes
- Subject-based
- Interactive tests of:
 - Interest
 - Aptitude
 - Core knowledge
- Problem-solving scenarios and discussion
- We have no hidden agenda, and applicants are not asked 'trick' questions



INTERVIEWS: IN MORE DETAIL

- Focused and challenging questions, typical of teaching and learning at Oxford and Cambridge
- 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
- New approaches to existing knowledge; problem-solving questions; some technical work; some debate
- Questions **to** interviewers from you
- Prompting from interviewers

MOST INTERVIEWEES DO WELL



MAKING A STRONG APPLICATION

- Choose the right subject/course
- Maximise public examination grades
- Read – and complete other wider subject exploration
- Complete a practice test, if a test forms part of your assessment
- In advance of interview, refresh your memory about:
 - The Oxford or Cambridge course for which you have applied
 - UCAS personal statement
- And revise:
 - School/college work
 - Any submitted work
- Practise discussing academic work and ideas
- Critical factors: **right subject; results; reading; revision**

QUESTIONS

Useful additional information is available in our prospectus and on our websites at:

- www.cam.ac.uk/study-at-cambridge
- www.chu.cam.ac.uk
- www.pem.cam.ac.uk
- www.ox.ac.uk
- www.ccc.ox.ac.uk
- www.ucas.com
- www.ukcisa.com