

Oxford and Cambridge



Why consider Oxbridge?

- Study at one of the most prestigious universities in the world?
- Learn from brilliant minds?
- Meet like-minded people?
- Study a subject you love in further detail?
- Enjoy the architecture and history of the city?
- Become the next Prime Minister

Oxford or Cambridge?

- Different subjects and different colleges (over 60 colleges between them!)
- Cambridge requires individual A Level module marks
- Different admission tests
- Cambridge interview most candidates despite admissions test results
- Geography & location....

How tough is competition for places?

- Applications to Oxford and Cambridge increased in 2012 and 2013 - and continue to rise year-on-year. The number of places available remain static.
- The average success rate for applications to Oxford and Cambridge is approximately 20%
- The 2 universities want to recruit the best of the best
- Students from schools who do not traditionally send people to Oxbridge are encouraged to apply

Do you have what it takes?

- The average GCSE results of the applicant's school
- The applicant's GCSE results (A*)
- Their personal statement - extra curricular activities & long standing excellence in any field . Something different?
- Their school/tutor reference
- Module marks at AS/A2 (Cambridge only)
- Grades predicted in examinations in upper sixth form
- The applicant's score in the university/college admissions test (if relevant)
- Their performance at interview

Assess yourself against this criteria...

What do they look for in applicants?

- Passion for their chosen subject and appropriate choice of course
- Very strong examinations record
- Enquiring and questioning mindset
- Potential to succeed academically in Oxbridge, meaning:
 - Enthusiasm for complex and challenging ideas
 - Self Motivation
 - Clarity of thought and analytical ability
 - Real intellectual flexibility
- Vocational commitment (where appropriate)



Application

- Students apply via UCAS to Oxford **OR** Cambridge by 15 October
- Cambridge applicants also fill in an online questionnaire after they have submitted their UCAS form; this essentially gathers AS scores
- Many Oxford applicants sit an aptitude test in early November; so do Medics and Vets for Cambridge
- Most applicants choose a College but many take the 'open' application route; choice of College has no impact upon likelihood of success



Tests

- ~70% of Oxford applicants will be asked to take an aptitude test
- Some of these are multiple-choice tests of critical thinking and problem-solving, whereas others are text- and essay-based; some combine both elements
- All Oxford tests, plus the BMAT used by both universities, have associated websites with past papers and sample questions
- The tests are not generally content-based, though some of those that include essays will reward knowledge to a degree
- It is a good idea to do some practice, via the available past papers, in advance of taking a test

Interviews

- The vast majority of applicants are called for interview
- Interviews usually take place in December, and are conducted principally by the 'preference' College; Oxford applicants may well be interviewed by more than one College
- Applicants usually have 2-4 interviews, each lasting 20-30 minutes
- Interviews are academic, subject-focused discussions in which lecturers hope to see applicants thinking problems through for themselves
- No hidden agenda; no 'trick' questions!



Outcomes

- Offer from your preference College
- Offer from another College (Oxford)
- Application placed in the 'pool' (Cambridge), for consideration by another College
- Rejection
- Every year, well over 10,000 unsuccessful Oxbridge applicants go on to achieve grades AAA at A Level or better
- In the end, competition is immensely stiff and their decisions are hugely difficult



What should you do now?

- Look into it! Research.....

<http://www.oxbridgeapplications.com/>

- Consider subjects and Colleges
- Study hard!
- Get involved in your community or school life
- Strive for excellence

Finding out more

- Undergraduate Prospectuses
- Useful website: <http://www.oxbridgeapplications.com/>
- University websites:
 - <http://www.ox.ac.uk>
 - <http://www.cam.ac.uk>
- Main Open Days
- Summer Schools
- Taster days
- **Local university talks in September**
- Contact the Oxford or Cambridge central Admissions Office, or any College Admissions Office

