

Oxford and Cambridge - Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of resources • Quality of teaching • Support for students 	Problems of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early application • Interviews • Course availability • Course structure • Qualifications • Very high demand 	
Your UCAS application will need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An appropriate range of FIVE choices • A well-structured and persuasive personal statement • A carefully completed application 	Focus on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The skills required for the course – to be a successful historian, chemist, etc and how this can be demonstrated • Choices in A levels, etc and how they reflect aspirations and meet the university's requirements. This may include an EPQ • Reading and pursuit of academic topics. How students go beyond the syllabus? 	
Oxford Entry – Some Specifics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers from AAA to A*AA or A*A*A at A level • The UCAS form plus tests screen students – removing applicants before interview week • They expect top grades in your GCSEs and any AS subjects (flagged against school averages) • Emphasis on GCSE grades • Tests in various subjects taken in College including subject specific tests and TSA Oxford • LNAT test for Law taken with Pearson Vue (as with the Driving Theory test) • Examples of completed work – usually requested • Interview “week” (2-3 days?) including possible pool 	Cambridge Entry – Some Specifics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers A*AA to A*A*A • Additional Supplementary Application Questionnaire (SAQ) to be completed online • Cambridge has now adopted tests for most subjects, they have their own Law test and use BMAT for Medicine – TSA Cambridge is rarely used – these increasingly screen applicants • Examples of completed work • Interviews spread through December • Possible pool to mid/late January, one second interview requested then 	
They are looking for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enthusiasm for the subject • Knowledge of the subject • Intellectual interest and initiative • The confidence and capacity to respond to demands of tutorial/supervision systems • Evidence of forethought and research • Relevant work experience where necessary • Above all they want a “self-motivated learner” – someone keen enough to be able to show this degree of motivation 	We will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt to support applications and applicants • Attempt to provide realistic guidance • Administer forms etc. 	BUT WE CANNOT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow or forbid an application • Provide everything needed • Tell students where to go, what to do • Liaise with <u>everyone</u>
TO WORK TOWARD AN APPLICATION APPLICANTS NEED TO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read around the subject – undergraduate students are primarily readers (in Arts and Humanities especially) • Consider college choices – although open applications are fine • Gather information from websites, Open Days, etc – KNOW WHAT THE COURSE IS ABOUT – structure, content, etc • Take some advantage of public lectures, courses, summer schools, Masterclasses, MOOCs etc. where available • Consider work experience (especially Law, Teaching, Medicine, etc), and other related supercurricular activities 	Some essential websites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.ox.ac.uk – Oxford University • www.cam.ac.uk – Cambridge University • www.admissionstests.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/adt – for potential BMAT and TSA entries • www.lnat.ac.uk – for potential law students • www.ucas.com – for all applicants • www.godalming.ac.uk <p>And see the Careers GOL site specifically for “Aim High”</p>	

Questions from Students

- **Can I apply to both Oxford and Cambridge at the same time?**
 - *No – only one application to one of these universities in any given year is allowed.*
- **Do I have to have all A* at GCSE?**
 - *No – GCSE performance will be assessed against the school's overall success rate. However, if there is a more specific reason for underperformance in GCSE then this needs to be explained elsewhere on the application. More important by far is progress over this year and next. However, with uncertainties at A level, GCSEs may be becoming more important to both universities.*
- **Did I have to go on the Epsom Trip to apply?**
 - *No – but...*
 - *The trip should have been useful, particularly if deciding between related disciplines or to chat with students and admissions tutors.*
 - *It could be an excellent starting point for planning open days and other activities.*
 - *The same applies to trips to Reigate or even the Aim High programme itself.*
- **As AS exams do not form part of the final A level grade (in linear A level courses we no longer use them) do they matter?**
 - *They matter. There is less trust in grade predictions than ever before. All evidence of academic attainment will be used.*
 - *You need the highest possible grades at AS.*
- **Should I apply for an easier course and then transfer to a popular one?**
 - *A terrible idea – the tutors who interview will be able to tell pretty quickly whether or not they have a serious candidate for their course.*
 - *However, there is no reason not to give consideration for so-called minority subjects – and if they really do appeal, then make an application.*
- **Will the DofE scheme help?**
 - *Not here specifically, unless it can be used in the personal statement to demonstrate other things – e.g., the ability to cope under pressure (useful in Medicine, less so in English Literature). The Personal Statement needs evidence not just assertion.*
 - *BUT other universities value this sort of activity far more – and you will be applying elsewhere as well.*
- **Is a gap year a good idea?**
 - *Possibly. Oxford and Cambridge prefer deferred entry candidates to **apply in the year off**. However, Maths should be considered a **completely off-limits** subject for a gap year.*
 - *Gap years can be of immense benefit for you to grow as a person. It's not (or should not be) all about ticking boxes on a university application.*
- **Are some Colleges easier to get into than others?**
 - *This might be so, but statistics will give no indication – what may be a less popular college becomes an easier one another year (especially among candidates who spend too much time reading statistics!).*
 - *Consider entry routes though. Is the college that does not ask for an extra essay or test likely to be the least popular? And might not the test/essay give an extra chance to prove your worth?*
 - *Both universities claim that pooling systems should mean that every candidate has an equal chance of entry – and many do not end up in their first choice. Oxford's pooling system may be slightly more efficient than Cambridge's.*
 - *AND overseas student will be applying for the colleges they've seen on the postcards...*
- **Do I need 4 A levels?**
 - *Except for Maths (when including Further Maths) generally not. But other universities may require more than three. There is increasing pressure from a few Cambridge Colleges to change this situation. And maths presents other problems...*