

OXBRIDGE CLUB:

**GUIDE FOR ALL COURSES AT OXFORD
AND CAMBRIDGE; MEDICINE AND
VETERINARY MEDICINE.**

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OXBRIDGE CLUB

School for Girls Oxbridge Tutor Team offers support to those students applying to Oxbridge or other top UK and international universities. All staff involved in this programme are experts on Oxbridge preparation and are highly qualified subject specialists and support students every step of the way.

Students can expect:

- A visit from an Oxford and Cambridge admissions tutor to give specialist advice
- Guidance from subject teachers and Oxbridge Tutor Team with suitable further reading, and monitoring to ensure that they are completing all additional work
- Advice from the Oxbridge Tutor Team on 'super-curricular' activities to ensure their application is competitive.
- Extra help with personal statement writing from graduates who have been through the process
- Advice on choosing a college.
- References written by tutors experienced in the Oxbridge process
- Guidance with entrance tests and help from Oxbridge Tutor Team who are specialist in their chosen areas
- Specialist interview training with teachers as FSG and partner schools such Kings.
- The Oxbridge Tutor Team and other academic staff are available throughout the year for consultations on all aspects of the university application process.

All students who wish to apply are considered and given an honest appraisal of their chances of success. It is important to appreciate that the Oxbridge application process is fiercely competitive. Those that can evidence or have been identified as having the potential to succeed at this highest academic level are closely mentor supported to maximise their chances of success.

We encourage all possible Oxbridge applicants to read widely and critically during their studies in Year 12 and during the summer holiday. Students can find support regarding Oxbridge on the school **Gateway** and on websites such as:

[Balliol College, Oxford](#)

[King's College, Cambridge](#)

[University College London](#)

Mock Interviews

At FSG we offer mock interviews with experts in their academic field. All teachers involved in the process will provide feedback on interviews, and offer advice on how to improve to help prepare students for the rigors of any university interview.

Application advice: UCAS and the Personal Statement.

Tutors are thoroughly familiar with the UCAS admissions service and uses their knowledge to help all of students successfully apply to top UK universities.

In order to make a successful application to a top UK university, students will need to produce an appropriate personal statement. **Guidance and worksheets** are available on the Gateway and Tutors and the Oxbridge Tutor Team offer guidance on an individual basis.

Preparation for Entrance Tests

To secure a place at UK top universities and competitive courses such as Law and Medicine, additional tests are required by some universities. To support students the Oxbridge Tutor Team who are specialist in their chosen areas offer support with material and practice papers.

Students are supported by the Oxbridge Teacher Team by linking them to staff with common academic interests promoting wider knowledge of the subject outside the examined specification

These include but are not limited to PAT, ELAT, LAT, HAT, Step Exams, TSA, BMAT, and LNAT

Visits, Masterclasses and Summer Schools

In year 12 students will attend the **Oxbridge Conference** which provides subject specific information on Oxford and Cambridge and gives students access to admissions tutors.

Students are informed and supported in their application to apply for subject specific masterclasses

Oxford: Apply for **Study day** on <http://www.pathways.ox.ac.uk>

Cambridge: Apply for **Subject Masterclass**
<https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/events/masterclasses>

Students are also informed of opportunities to visit to Oxbridge link colleges including a residential in the Easter holidays and support in their application to attend the **Sutton Trust** and **UNIQ Summer School**

FSG also offers a variety of subject specific clubs, run by teachers, helping extend students' subject knowledge to a deeper and wider understanding.

FSG also gives students the opportunity to create and run their own university style **SOCIETY**

In 2016/17 Students had established the following: **Law, STEM, Liberal Arts, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine** and one celebrating all things **Harry Potter**

OXBRIDGE APPLICATION TIMETABLE

YEAR 12		
Autumn term. Term 1	Identification of potential applicants	Overview and Entry Requirements Students should express their interest to Tutor and Mr Bates
Term 2		Students should express their interest to KS5 team Students look for opportunities to attend Seminars, Taster sessions, e.g. Uniq Summer Programme, Sutton Trust Programme. Apply for Study day on http://www.pathways.ox.ac.uk Cambridge: Apply for Subject Masterclass https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/events/masterclasses Students to research Assessment tests required e.g. BMAT, UKCAT, LNAT, TSA, ELAT. MAT
Term2/3		Use Unifrog to Investigate courses. Pick an academic book to read around your chosen subject matter. Visiting talk from Oxbridge graduate.
Term 3		Guidance on Personal statements. Visit to Oxbridge Conference. Subject Master Class/ Easter School experience
Summer term		Preparation/Study of a related MOOC Prepare Summer work experience around academic area Attend Oxford or Cambridge Open day . Details are on Website Work with Mentor to check any application materials which may be required and complete these (marked work, essays) Use Unifrog to select preferred college. Research and download past papers for Pre Entrance Tests
		Students to start drafting their Personal statements & submit copy to Tutor/ Mr Bates for feedback. Students to register for UCAS through Post 16
		Students begin focused background reading and/ or gain invaluable industry/ subject experience in the workplace Students to continue completing UCAS 'Apply' application
	Oxbridge Research	Cambridge or Oxford? Which college? Which course?
	Personal Statement	Finalise personal statement prior to returning to school. Students to research and REGISTER for Assessment tests required e.g. BMAT, UKCAT, LNAT, TSA, ELAT. MAT Attend Summer School

YEAR 13		
Autumn Term		<p>Applicants for October deadline to submit final copy of personal statement and completed UCAS form by end of week five to Tutor/ KS5 Team.</p> <p>Deadline 22 September</p> <p>Students to complete all sections of the 'Apply' application</p> <p>Pre Entrance Tests: Contact Oxbridge Teacher Team to work with staff with common academic interests – support with practice papers and wider knowledge of the subject outside the examined specification</p>
		<p>FOR OXFORD If you are applying to study Law, you are required to take the LNAT between 1 September and 20 October</p> <p>All Oxford's other admissions tests are organized by the Admissions Testing Service. The registration deadline will be 15 October and the tests will take place on beginning of November</p> <p>CAMBRIDGE</p> <p>pre-interview written assessments will be taken on beginning of November</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if you're applying for <u>Medicine (Standard Course, A100)</u> or <u>Veterinary Medicine</u>, the pre-interview assessment you're required to take is the <u>Biomedical Admission Test (BMAT)</u>, for which you must be registered by 5.00pm on 1 October 2017 • the registration deadline for the other pre-interview assessments is 6.00pm on 15 October 2017
October 15th deadline		UCAS Application + Cambridge Application form/ Oxford Application form
	Mock Interviews	Mock interview with Oxbridge Tutor Team
	Interviews	Universities begin interviewing
	Outcome	Oxbridge - notification over the Christmas/ New Year period
Spring Term		
	Cambridge Pool interviews	<p>Candidates for Cambridge may be called for second round interviews -held in January.</p> <p>Applicants begin receiving decisions from Universities. Student Finance - online application for loans/grants opens.</p>
	Outcome	

OXBRIDGE:



Q. IS IT FOR ME?

Why not? It rather depends on if you would like to study here. **Why would they NOT WANT YOU?**

In order to assess whether your application would be realistic, **ask yourself the following questions:**

- Have you got a top set of GCSE (and AS) grades behind you?
- Are you going to do well at AS- your first year of A LEVEL? Cambridge will ask for your AS unit scores (and will look for c. 270/300 for each AS)
- Are you going to perform sufficiently well in your A2 examinations (A*A*A* - AAA at A2)?
- What do your subject teachers and tutors think of your applying to Oxbridge?
- **Why do you want to go to Oxbridge?**
- Are you prepared for the level/ quantity of work that you will face? Don't suppose somewhere else will be easier.
- Are you willing to put that work in **wherever you go?**

The Oxbridge system and experience does not suit everyone and so it is better to ensure that you will be **happy** and will benefit from these universities if you do decide to apply. However, remember that there are many universities, particularly those within the Russell Group with similarly highly respected reputations and degrees.

USEFUL LINKS

Oxford website: www.ox.ac.uk

Cambridge website: www.cam.ac.uk

Cambridge Interview Advice: www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/interviews/

THE SUTTON TRUST:

The Sutton Trust Summer Schools are free, subject-specific residential courses for Year 12 students. The summer schools give academically-able students the opportunity to experience life at a leading university and to gain an insight into what it is like to live and study as a first-year undergraduate student. The summer schools balance busy academic days with enjoyable social activities, as well as provide attendees with the opportunity to meet current staff and students. The aim is to demystify elite universities and to equip students with the knowledge and insight to make high quality applications to top universities.

The summer schools are taking place at the following universities:

The University of Bristol; The University of Cambridge; Durham University; The University of Edinburgh; Imperial College London; King's College London; The University of Nottingham; Royal Veterinary College; University of St Andrews; University College London; The University of Warwick

Q. OXFORD OR CAMBRIDGE?

You can't apply to both, so you will need to choose between them.

Both have reputations for excellence, and it is generally easier to list the similarities between them than the differences.

SIMILARITIES

Age and Tradition – old buildings and often quirky procedures

Beautiful Colleges – most are historic buildings surrounded by beautiful gardens

Academic Excellence – professors are often leaders in their field; both universities can name some of the most exalted political, business and academic figures in history amongst their alumni

Social Composition – college system; teams and societies; events and competitions

Outstanding Facilities – well funded; cutting-edge research centres; closely associated with research bodies, companies and spin-offs, especially in the sciences

Tutorial / supervision Teaching System – small group teaching; intense but effective at maximising students' potential

Both Oxford and Cambridge are historic towns possessing:

- Well-regarded printing houses (Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press)
- Botanical gardens
- Museums (the Ashmolean and the Fitzwilliam)
- Legal deposit libraries (Bodleian and the Cambridge University Library)
- Debating societies (Oxford Union and Cambridge Union)

DIFFERENCES

Size – Oxford is a larger city, is busier and is more industrial. This also means that there is more to do outside of the university and it can feel less insular.

Architecture – the “dreaming spires” of Oxford give it a slightly different “feel” to that of Cambridge. Which you prefer is completely personal.

Course structures – Cambridge offers a “tripos” structure that allows you to study quite wide-ranging subjects over the three years, whereas Oxford offers more “joint honours” courses where two subjects can be studied together.

Unique subjects – both offer subjects not available at the other and both offer completely unique subjects not offered elsewhere at all (e.g. **Veterinary Science at Cambridge but not at Oxford**, PPE at Oxford, SPS at Cambridge).

Science – Oxford offers all **three sciences separately** (and also some variations, e.g. Human Sciences). At Cambridge, all scientists take Natural Sciences and choose modules within this which allows more flexibility if desired.

Exams – At Cambridge you have three sets of exams – at each stage of the tripos (end of each year – IA, IB and II). At Oxford you have two sets of exams – prelims or mods within the first 2 years, and finals at the end of the third.

Both universities have retained traditions that date back centuries. Both have unique names and terms, e.g.

SUB FUSC – formal academic dress worn for exams in Oxford

BATTELS – your bill for accommodation and food at Oxford

P'LODGE – Porters Lodge – gatehouse to the college

BEDDERS / SCOUTS – people who clean your room or empty your bins

MICHEALMAS / TRINITY / HILARY – 3 terms at Oxford

Unique Courses:

OXFORD	CAMBRIDGE
Psychology	Architecture
Human Sciences	Land Economy (Environment, Law & Economics)
Economics & Management	Economics
Maths & Philosophy	Philosophy
Classics & English	Anglo-Saxon, Norse & Celtic
	Veterinary Science

Q. What should I take into account when choosing which of the two to apply to?

Courses on offer

e.g. Architecture offered at Cambridge but not at Oxford.

Combinations of subjects (e.g. PPE, SPS, and Natural Sciences)

Joint courses offered at Oxford at Oxford (e.g. History with Economics/ Politics/ English)

Cambridge – less flexibility, but with the tripos system, you can move subject after the 1st year (e.g. Law / History of Art)

City

Oxford is larger so there is more on offer outside the university. Cambridge is more tranquil but can be more insular.

Location

Transport to London is cheaper and easier and easier from Oxford (coach service).

Cambridge can be more isolated.

Both are surrounded by beautiful countryside.

Family / friends

There may be a family tradition of attending one or the other (but check this suits you as well.)

CHOOSING A COLLEGE

Oxford and Cambridge are **collegiate systems**. The individual colleges enjoy a surprising degree of autonomy, controlling to some extent their own entrance policies, permanent staff, finances and disciplinary proceedings.

Each college employs a body of Fellows or Dons whose research and teaching largely defines its academic reputation. Each college also has a large number of non-academic staff who regulate the life of the buildings and students.

You will apply to and belong to a college in the University. This will be your home and your immediate social circle. Tutorial teaching is organised through the Director of Studies for your subject in your college, whilst lectures are organised by the University departments. Each college is like a mini-university with a canteen, bar, sports fields, chapel, music/ drama facilities etc. although all colleges vary in age, size and particular provision. You can therefore represent your college in a sport, and if particularly talented you may go on to represent the university (this is true of most activities).

The most significant non – academic staff for the undergraduates are the Porters and the Bedders / Scouts. The Porters are based at the college gatehouse (Porter’s Lodge) and are responsible for overseeing the comings and goings of tourists, students and visitors. Bedders at Cambridge and Scouts at Oxford clean the students’ rooms.

Each college has a dual function:

- it is the hub of pastoral life; the place where you live, eat and socialise
- it is the centre of academic life

The only areas affecting undergraduates where authority is centralised as a university-wide body are lectures and exams.

Colleges are also physically discrete: each has its own grounds and accommodation and, as a result of their physical and academic independence, each college has a strong character of its own, and a separate identity that its students are free either to embrace or ignore. The character of a college depends both on its make-up of students and fellows/dons, and its traditions and history, with records and stories that stretch back for centuries. Not only does this guarantee a unique experience for the members of each college, it creates tremendous diversity in the university as a whole: each friend you make in a new college opens up a new experience.

The colleges also provide a close, friendly, familiar environment. College life is inclusive and none of the activities that bind a given college are ever compulsory. Some people choose to participate mainly in university-wide or town activities. Broadly speaking, the collegiate system offers all the care and individual attention of a small establishment, with the resources and academic clout of a huge one.

There are over 60 Oxbridge colleges including some that are for mature students only. For undergraduates, there are **29 at Oxford and 25 at Cambridge to choose from**.

There are several factors you need to consider when choosing the correct college to apply to:

Subject

Does it cover your subject?

How likely am I to get in?

What is the application: place ratio for my subject?

What is the academic reputation for my subject?

- Don’t just look at overall academic rankings – rankings within your subjects are more important. Also, the number of applicants per place doesn’t give an idea of the quality of those applications.

Quality of teaching

- How many tutors are there for your subjects?
- What is their reputation?

- What do the current students think of the professors that teach them?

How academic?

- Will you be under great pressure to achieve?
- Does this type of environment suit you?
- Is the library well stocked for your subject?

Architecture / Feel

- Gothic? Renaissance? 1960's concrete? Historical or modern environment?
- Spacious gardens or compact? Are you allowed to sit and relax on the grass?
- Sleepy and quiet or bustling and active?
- "Personality" of the college – do you feel content here?

Facilities

- Gardens, accommodation, computer facilities, gym, sports facilities, theatre, choir, and, chapel, etc.
- How many meals in college per week? Formal Halls? Cost of these?
- Is accommodation available for all three years? How close is the accommodation to the college/town/faculty? (Some college housing may be away from the main college site)

Location

- Proximity to the town centre/your faculty
- Single-sex colleges
- Cambridge – Newnham and Murray Edwards (New Hall) are female only
- Does this environment suit you? It may cause you to interact more with other colleges
- In mixed colleges – what is the male: female ratio? Does this matter?

Size

- Anonymity or community?
- Small colleges can be more friendly but also insular and claustrophobic
- Large colleges can be intimidating or they can provide diversity
- Is the college one of the more famous (e.g. Trinity or St John's in Cambridge or Christ Church in Oxford) – will there be tourists walking through the college daily – will this be a problem?

Wealth

- Some colleges may provide subsidised food / accommodation
- Are there grants and scholarships available for my subject?

Library

- Is this well stocked?
- How big is it? (Will it become crowded / full in summer term?)
- Would it be a good environment for me to work in?

Bar and social life

- What is the bar like? How expensive is it?
- Are there regular events / parties?
- How often does the college hold formal dinners ("formal halls")?
- Are there sports facilities? (Sports ground / boathouse, etc.) Where are they?
- Does the college have a team for your sport? Is it competitive??
- Is there a choir / orchestra?

Open applications

It is also possible to make an "open application". If there is no college you would prefer not to attend, then this can be a wise move, as you will be allocated to the college with the fewest applications for your course.

Bear in mind that your choice of college doesn't necessarily need to be the defining feature of your Oxbridge experience. Lectures are university-wide and many students prefer to base their social life around pubs, clubs and societies within the city itself.

Pooling

This is the process where some students are put into a central “pool” and any college any college many pick them up (i.e. you may end up being interviewed at, or accepted by, a different college than the one to which you made your initial application).

The “pooling” system occurs in different forms at both universities. Colleges will pool candidates only if they have an exceptionally strong series of interviewees for a very limited number of places and they feel that another college could benefit from seeing someone who they haven’t been able to accept. At Oxford you are often interviewed by another college when you go down for interview. Cambridge, on the other hand, has a “Winter Pool”, which you may enter after your first interview and from which you may be subsequently called back for an interview at another college.

THE COLLEGES: It has been said that....

OXFORD:

Balliol – Well situated with an excellent academic reputation, grants available

Brasenose – Castle-like appearance with a deer park. Good reputation for Law and History

Christ Church – Largest, most prestigious, touristy, “dreaming spires” – Harry Potter was filmed here

Corpus Christi – Small, pretty, near the river, quite insular, low application rate

Exeter – Nice atmosphere, small and friendly, musical

Hertford – Friendly and central, good reputation for Geography

Jesus – Small and friendly, good social life and sports teams

Keble – Unique architecture (red brick), theatrical, large dining hall, good state school intake

Lady Margaret Hall – Away from the centre, large grounds, less daunting, tennis and football pitches on-site

Lincoln – Small and friendly, cosy and relaxed atmosphere, good food

Magdalen (pronounced ‘Maudlin’) – Very beautiful, spacious (deer park), May Day traditions, good funding, quite touristy, one of the best bars in Oxford apparently. Choir is world-renowned

Mansfield – Smallest College, can be insular

Merton – Oldest college, very academic, good reputation for history especially

New – Good accommodation, beautiful gardens, well equipped, good for sports

Oriel – Small, quite insular, sporty, only recently accepted women – can be intimidating, good drama and sports, the rowing college

Pembroke – Friendly. Lots of events organised

Queens – Good choir, sporty, croquet played on the lawn in the summer.

Somerville – Reputation for academic rigour

St Anne’s – Out of the centre, creative- arts / drama, relaxed

St Catharine’s (St Catz) – Large, modern, young, liberal environment, diverse and friendly, modern and architecture

St Edmund Hall (‘Teddy Hall’) – Popular Rugby College, good atmosphere, cosy and active bar, very sporty

St Hilda’s – Last all women’s college (began to admit men in 2008), has its own punt house

St Hugh’s – Extensive grounds, less traditional, out of the centre

St John’s – Wealthiest College – many grants, very academic, central, beautiful grounds

St Peter’s – Central, young college, sporty, small and compact, friendly

Trinity – Small insular, good food, large lawn to student ratio

University – traditional, central, good sports teams, can be touristy

Wadham – Down to earth, less traditional but beautiful buildings

Worcester – Beautiful grounds and a lake. Sporty

CAMBRIDGE:

Christ's – Quiet but central, strong academically, Strong Christian Union
Churchill – Friendly and unpretentious, slightly out of centre, sports-based social life
Clare – Strong musical side, less sporty, friendly
Corpus Christi – Very small sense of community intimate, not very sporty
Downing – Large grounds, peaceful, strong at sports and good reputation for Law
Emmanuel ('Emma') – Friendly, lovely gardens including a duck pond and an outdoor swimming pool.
Active societies, can be oversubscribed
Fitzwilliam – Non-elitist, sporty, slightly out of the centre, less traditional
Girton – A long way out of town, strong sense of community, extensive grounds, indoor swimming pool, fewer applicants per place
Gonville & Caius (pronounced 'Keys') – Traditional, sporty central, good music and drama
Homerton – PCGE students only, friendly and laid-back, facilities all on-site but out of the centre
Jesus – Excellent sports facilities, beautiful grounds, quite central, balance between traditional yet relaxed
King's – Large, central, touristy, world-renowned choir and carol service, less traditional
Magdalene (pronounced 'Maudlin') – Small but pretty, central and bustling, less academic
New Hall – Female only, friendly, unpretentious, less traditional buildings, slightly out of the centre
Newnham – Female only, good for sports, close to the arts faculties, less academic
Pembroke – Friendly, strong drama society, quiet gardens, close to the science faculty
Peterhouse – oldest College, small and traditional, can be insular, sports clubs are very active
Queens' – Medium-sized, central, academic, famous 'mathematical bridge' over the Cam, good drama society, sporty
Robinson – Less traditional, slightly out of the centre, good community spirit, supportive atmosphere, good film society
Selwyn – Next to the arts faculty, attractive and sociable, quiet good music society
Sydney Sussex – Small, close – knit community, sociable, active Students Union, central
St Catherine's ('Catz') – Well – balanced, central, friendly, very sporty, can be insular, good choir
St John's – Large, central, touristy, traditional, well renowned male choir, competitive, sporty, good facilities, lots of variety
Trinity Hall ('Tit Hall') – Small and friendly, strong musically, library quite small, good academically but a party reputation
Trinity – largest College, central, traditional, touristy, beautiful gardens on the backs', diverse range of students, facilities and grants excellent, less sporty, strong choir

UCAS AND OXBRIDGE FORMS

As well as completing the normal UCAS form (which will include Cambridge or Oxford as one of your choices), **you must also submit a separate form either to a specific Cambridge college or Oxford Admissions office.**

This form must be **submitted by the 2nd / 3rd week in October**, which is **earlier than the UCAS** deadline. You must therefore be **very organised** and put together your UCAS personal statement ahead of schedule. It is a good idea to complete both the UCAS form and the Cambridge/ Oxford form by the end of the summer holiday so you can get a tutor to check them at start of the autumn term.

Both university forms **also allocated space for a mini personal statement** just like the one on the UCAS form. It is a good idea to rewrite your UCAS statement **and to tailor it specifically to Oxbridge**. This gives you a great opportunity to explain why you specifically want to attend Oxbridge and why you think it would suit you. Some people choose to tailor their statement to

specific college they have applied to. This is often a good idea, but don't go overboard on this as you must bear in mind there is a chance you may be pooled.

As with the UCAS personal statement, assume you will be asked everything about it at the interview. Therefore, make sure it is truthful and that it reflects you and your personality.

There are generally **3 types of tutors** at the interview.

- **Those that read the statement thoroughly and ask about it.**
- **Those who read it during interview to check it reflects the person sitting in front of them.**
- **Those who read it after the interview because they don't want to be influenced by it – they use it to confirm the view they have made at interview.**

SUBMITTED WORK

Oxbridge often ask you to **submit some work** so that they can see evidence of your ability. You may be asked to send this in advance of your interview or take it along at the time. You need to check whether they want:

- a piece of school work that has already been assessed and marked
- a piece of work put together especially for the interview (they may provide a title or choice of titles)

With either of these scenarios **you will need to:**

- Provide GENUINE work – you will be easily found out in an interview
- Read any instructions carefully and stick rigidly within the constraints of the title and specifications (word counts, etc.)

Send or make photocopies – the work won't be sent back

Know the subject well and in further depths as you will have to expand on the topic at interview and explain any opinions put forward.

OTHER/ ADDITIONAL TESTS

At both Universities now it is **common that you are asked to take an extra test** when you go for interview. The details of this should be given in your invitation letter but the tables below give you an indication of what might be required. These requirements vary from college to college and course to course so check in advance.

For specific subjects you may also be asked to sit specific tests before the interview e.g. **HAT, LNAT**. Usually you do not have to receive a specific grade in these but they are used to compare candidates (as all those applying will be predicted A grades). It is sometimes the case that you will be asked to take additional exams when you sit your A-levels (e.g. STEP levels) and the results of these may form a part of your provisional offer.

1) Tests at Interview

You will usually be told beforehand that you will be asked to sit a test on attending the interview, but if not then it is safe to assume, especially at Oxford, that you may be asked to do so.

Don't worry if you don't finish the test – candidates often don't. The test will be used as a basis for a discussion in the interview so, regardless of your success on the test, you still have a chance to prove your potential.

F.A.Q

HOW DO I PREPARE?

There is no syllabus for these tests and they should be based on A-Level work, although they will be designed to push you slightly beyond this to see how you deal with it. There is officially no need to prepare for them, but it is advisable to revise your A-Level work well prior to the interview and check the college or faculty website for any example papers. Depending on your subject, extra reading may also help.

Top Tip:

The maths tests at both Oxford and Cambridge usually don't allow you to use a calculator so practise without

STEPS

STEPS (Sixth Term Examination Papers)

STEP is **used by the University of Cambridge as the basis for conditional offers**. Other universities sometimes ask candidates to take STEP as part of their offer – in such cases, the university can advise on which papers to take.

These are extra exams that you take at the same time as your A-levels. All Cambridge colleges except for King's require a STEP in Maths for their Mathematics course. Other courses such as Engineering and Computer Science *may* also ask for the Maths STEP paper as well. It is based on the A-Level syllabus, but tests students to take further level. Have a look at some past papers on the website. There are 5 grades: S (Outstanding), 1, 2, 3 and U (Ungraded). A typical offer for example may be AAA1.

Subject Exams

Some subjects may require you take extra exams specific to the course you wish to read (see the tables below). Usually you don't need to attain a certain grade but the results will be used as a comparison between students.

a) **BMAT – Biomedical Admission Test – www.bmat.org.uk**

This is required for Medicine and Veterinary Science at both universities. It is taken at a centre near you and the grade sent to the university. The test has 3 sections and tests both your background scientific knowledge as well as problem solving and data analysis skills. You register online and the registration number must be put on your UCAS form.

b) **LNAT – National Admissions Test for Law – www.lnat.ac.uk**

This is required for Law at both universities. It is an on-screen test taken at a centre near you and the grade is sent to the universities. The test is a mixture of multiple-choice questions and an essay and must be taken anytime between early September and early November (check exact dates). You register online and the registration number must be put on your UCAS form.

c) **HAT – History Aptitude Test – www.history.ox.ac.uk**

This is a test specifically for those applying for History at Oxford. It is a two-hour test in which you have to read two extracts and answer a total of four questions about them. It is a test of your comprehension of arguments and ideas and your capacity to apply those ideas to historical situations. You can usually take the test at your own college. Your invitation to interview will depend on the outcome of this test.

d) **ELAT – The English Literature Admissions Test – www.elat.org.uk**

This is a test specifically for those applying for any English courses at Oxford. It is a 90-minute test in which you must write one essay to compare two or three pieces of unseen poetry or prose. It is not a test of wider reading but you are expected to have read certain standard texts by this point. You take it at a centre near you and the grade is sent to Oxford.

CAMBRIDGE.

Most applicants are required to take a written admission assessment, either pre-interview or at interview.

In addition, some Colleges ask applicants for some courses to submit examples of their **written work** – one or two school essays – which may then be discussed at interview.

Information about the relevant admission assessment **and whether any Colleges typically require submitted work can be on** each individual course page.

The course-specific written assessments are designed to supplement the information in your application and provide a gauge of your abilities – to assess skills (such as comprehension and thinking skills) and, where appropriate, levels of current knowledge and understanding relevant to the course applied for.

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

YOU must CHECK on the relevant websites for your specific course.

Oxford.

For many courses, you need to take a test or tests as part of your application – **check your course page**.

You will need to **register separately for any tests, by a set date in October, and can may be able to sit them in school or at a centre near your home.**

Tests in 2018:

If you are applying to study Law in Sept 2019, you are required to take the LNAT between 1 September and 20 October 2018.

All Oxford's other admissions tests are organised by the Admissions Testing Service.

The registration deadline will be 15 October and the tests will take place on Wednesday 2 November 2018.

INTERVIEWS

The infamous “Oxbridge Interview” **is shrouded in myth and legend.**

Stories surrounding the Oxbridge interview have it as a surreal experience where students feel tricked or left wondering what the objective was. One of the most famous stories being:

“When you walk into the interview, the fellow throws you a rugby ball. If you drop it or it hits you in the face, you are out, if you catch it, you are in, and if you drop kick it back, you get a scholarship.”

But things such as this are **THE STUFF OF MYTH AND LEGEND.**

Interviews are a way for the interviewers to understand your thought processes and how you approach a challenge.

WHY INTERVIEW?

As more and more school leavers obtain the 3 or 4 A- A* grades that Oxbridge colleges demand so the universities must look elsewhere to differentiate candidates. They need to sift through an already highly impressive pool in order to narrow their choice in as fair and efficient a way as possible.

Ways to do this includes:

1. To set an extra test of their own either before or at interview
2. To use of the interview as a selection tool

If you have the grades, your application is well written and you successfully complete any pre interview tests you are very likely to be called to interview.

What type of questions will they ask?

Questions will be about **YOUR SUBJECT**. They may differ from an exam questions as they test **qualities** which are not necessarily revealed through A-levels or a UCAS form such as.

Whether you can:

- Reasoning: Can you think on your feet?
- Argumentation: Is the construction of your argument relevant and sustained? Does it read as a coherent and integrated whole?
- Defend your beliefs but understand when to adapt
- Through discussion advance a clear directed and analytical treatment of the issue
- Come up with new ideas follow point raised
- Respond well to ‘tutorial’ style teaching methods.

The interviewer needs to judge how “teachable” you are (i.e. how much you are likely to respond to their teaching methods and develop over the next 3 or 4 years). You need to be able to show that you are **committed, engaged, and keen to learn**. The kind of people who will benefit most from and contribute most to tutorials are those who are willing to expound their **own views** and to **listen constructively** to the views of others.

The interview system is looking for the people who offer themselves on the day. By ‘the people’ they don’t mean the people with the most crammed knowledge, **but for the people with all-round intellectual ability linked with academic curiosity and commitment.**

They look for commitment, good problem solving skills, the ability to discuss issues and concepts as well as their own interests, and evidence of an ability to balance work and leisure activities.

Nobody can obtain these things over the counter or learn them especially for the day; they can be developed and are intrinsic to **any individual who is prepared to stretch themselves to the limit and aim for the highest.- can you demonstrate this?**

Format

Unlike most other university interviews, Oxbridge interviews usually take **place over a few days**. Your food and accommodation during these days will usually be provided by the college. Despite seeming

intimidating this actually gives you a great opportunity to spend some time in the college/ Oxbridge environment in order to determine whether it really is right for you.

TIP: Meet some of the other interviewees, discuss your experiences, gain some useful advice, chat to the existing students, and see what the college / town is like.

You will be told where and when your interviews are. Make sure you leave plenty of time to find them, ask at the **porters' lodge** if you are unsure. **You will more than likely attend at least 2 or 3 interviews.** At Cambridge there should all be within the college you applied to, in Oxford you will more likely be sent for an interview at another college as well.

If you have **submitted work or taken a test** then **at least one of your interviews will be based around this.** This is often with a Professor or a Director of Studies. You **may** also have another **'subject-based'** interview (with a tutor/ graduate student) and additionally perhaps an interview based around your **personal statement** and UCAS form (often with a Senior Tutor Head of College).

The subject based interviews can often be 'practical' in nature i.e. you are given something to look at and think about e.g. a poem (English) or scan/x-ray (Medicine). These are **triggers for discussion** – don't be put off – you don't need to know all the answers straight away.

Top Tips

Unless specified there are no official dress requirements so wear something comfortable but smart.	Be on time.
Be yourself	Do not be afraid to say 'I don't know': the interviewer is not setting out to trap you they want to see how you think not what you know. Generally the interviewer should guide you through to an answer and give you clues as to whether you are heading in the right direction- listen

NOTE: Although interview may appear to you to be rather tough, the better it may actually be going. If the interviewer has to work hard to push you to the limits it demonstrates a good level of potential. An aggressive interview provides an opportunity for you to really show what you can do.

LISTENING to the interviewer and taking their point into account.	BALANCE	Maintaining and DEFENDING your own views.
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Try and back up your arguments with examples. Conversely don't dig yourself into a hole – if you can no longer defend your argument then back down, the interviewer knows their subject backwards and there is no shame in them proving you wrong.

Panel interviews are more common at **Oxford** than at Cambridge. Don't think of these as any more intimidating, be confident that a more subjective view may work in your favour.

Q. What are interviewers looking for?

Subject passion

You should be able to speak about your subject as if it really matters to you- **because it does.** Your enthusiasm should come **across in the extra (super) curricular knowledge** you can bring to the conversation and being able to discuss new ideas.

TIP: Read beyond A-level, volunteer information, enjoy it the discussion.

Logical, Critical and Analytical Ability

You are expected to develop a '**rigorous critical mind-set**'.

Oxbridge teaching aims to instil an '*enlightened scepticism*' and an ability to '*deconstruct*' problems in order to understand them fully. They are looking for a **measured and intelligent** approach to a question and the capacity to **appreciate different sides of an argument**. You will need to order your answers and not just say the first things that come into your head.

TIP: Take your time. Think. Break down questions, look for wider issues, don't answer directly, and structure your answers. Watch the news, read newspapers/ books critically, do you agree?

Practice some critical thinking exercises and practice constructing cogent argument- SEE GATEWAY

Independent thinking

Can you use questions as a stimulus to your imagination? – can you come up with new ideas? You need to be bold in offering new solutions – it doesn't ultimately matter if you are right or wrong but you need to be confident in what you say.

TIPS: Practice forming links between topics, thinking maps may help. **Make use of the questions stems and sequences we cover in the OXBRIDGE club**

Listening and "Teachability"

The interview is practice for the tutorial system. **Listen** to the question being put to you and answer that question not another one. Ask for clarification if you do not understand (this actually demonstrates confidence and humility). You need to remain flexible though – remain open to new facts and opinions which may make you revise your ideas.

TIPS: Discuss topics with teachers or friends. Get used to talking about your subject.

Tests at Interview

You will usually be told beforehand that you will be asked to sit a test on attending the interview, but if not then it is safe to assume, especially at Oxford, that you may be asked to do so- see their website. Do not worry if you do not finish the test – candidates often don't. The test will be used as a basis for a **discussion in the interview** so, regardless of your success on the test, you still have a chance to prove your potential.

F.A.Q

HOW DO I PREPARE?

There is no syllabus for these tests and they should be based on A-Level work, although they will be designed to push you slightly beyond this to see how you deal with it. There is no need to prepare for them as you will for A levels, but it is advisable to revise your A-Level work well prior to the interview and check the college or faculty website for any **example papers**. Depending on your subject, extra reading may also help.

It is also a good idea to practice some **critical thinking exercises** and practice **constructing cogent argument- SEE GATEWAY**

Knowledge:

Knowledge is important – it is an indicator of a candidate's commitment but it is not always a reliable indicator of academic potential. It is therefore not necessary to know absolutely everything about your subject.

TIP: Revise A-Level well. Back up points with an example or fact. Do not waffle on or directly avoid questions though- you would not do this in an exam. All answers need to be relevant.

Examples:

The followings are all genuine examples of questions asked in Oxbridge interviews:

ARCHAEOLOGY & ANTHROPOLOGY

Where do you think the Elgin Marbles should be, London or Athens?

How does studying History link with archaeology?

Why do we still celebrate Christmas? What do you think makes Christmas such a long-lasting and widely celebrated holiday? Why is it so special?

What are the roles of archaeologists and museums?

ARCHITECTURE

What is the importance of light in architecture?

How much do you think architecture changes views in society?

Who do you say is the most important architectural writer?

What is your favourite building?

Who is your favourite architect?

Questions about your portfolio (submitted at an earlier date).

ANGLOSAXON, NORSE & CELTIC

What is the difference between literature and history?

How can we date a source when we don't know when or by whom it was written?

Which ASNaC papers are you looking forward to studying most?

BIOCHEMISTRY, MOLECULAR AND CELLULAR

How do amino acids behave in both acidic and basic conditions?

What is the significance of the Human Genome Project?

How does DNA fingerprinting work? What is its use?

Why are there so many steps in the cascade of reactions?

What are the differences between a human enzyme and the enzymes of bacteria that live in a hot spring?

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Give me an example of how specialist biological knowledge has helped food production.

What is a mitochondrion? Why do you only inherit mitochondrial genes from your mother?

Why is carbon of such importance in living systems?

Why is there a higher probability of being killed by an asteroid collision than by a heart attack?

What kind of changes would occur to the environment if a large asteroid impacted Earth?

What are the arguments for preserving biodiversity?

CHEMISTRY

Why does the boiling point of water rise as salt is dissolved in it?

What makes drugs physiologically active?

Explain the bonding in benzene

How would you calculate the inter-atomic spacing of particles in this room?

You are shown a block of iron. You are asked to name the element, explain why it rusts and how to stop it rusting.

CLASSICS

Why do you think Ancient History is important?

How civilised was the Roman world?

When would you start a book about the history of England?

What is the difference between a debate and a philosophical conversation?

Do you think that Tacitus was biased in his writings, and if so, does that render them useless?

Are history and myth compatible?

What underlying messages are there in the Aeneid suggesting that Rome and its foundations were not very secure?

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Tell me about binary searches. What about their efficiency?

It is a fact that, apart from the peripherals, the whole of a computer can be made from NAND gates. The Egyptians created NAND gates using marbles rolling down chutes and then used them for booby-trapping pyramids. Did, then, the Egyptians invent the computer? If not, explain fundamentally why not.

“The game of chess will be played perfectly by the computers of 2020”. What is the meaning of the statement and is it likely to be true?

EARTH SCIENCES

Suggest a list of conditions necessary to sustain life on Earth.

What do you believe would be the major differences on Earth if:

No atmosphere had ever evolved?

There was no water?

Plate tectonics did not exist?

Why did the dinosaurs become extinct?

What would you expect to see at a compressional / extensional / passive margin?

List a number of possible different methods for dating a rock specimen.

How do mountains originate?

ECONOMICS

Should governments subsidise agriculture?

What are the consequences of charging interest rates?

What is the point of privatisation?

How would you make a hypothetical sandwich stall more profitable?

What is a monopoly? What are the advantages / disadvantages?

Relate Keynes' work to the dot.com boom.

What is the difference between a correlation and a cause and effect relationship?

ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

Consider a production line. What could be done to help the worker to get away from the routine?

Discuss the interaction between fiscal and monetary policy.

Are large or small companies more successful?

Why does Rolls Royce build cars by hand, and Toyota by machine?

What is the basis of performance-related pay?

EGYPTOLOGY

What first interested you in Egyptology?

How was Egyptian mythology recorded?

Describe how the Egyptians preserved their dead.

ENGINEERING

Show the forces acting on a ladder.

Explain the following to someone with no knowledge of physics: force, momentum, power and work.

What are the fundamental differences between engineering and physics?

If you had a cylinder, sealed at both ends, with the pressure rising inside, would it blow at the end or split along the side first?

If I am in a room with 5 people and guess all their birthdays, what is the probability of getting (only) one correct?

At what altitude h above the North Pole is the weight of an object reduced to one half its value on the Earth's surface? Assume the Earth to be a sphere radius R and express h as a fraction of R .

ENGLISH

Why do we read literature?

Read and date this short, anonymous poem. Who do you think wrote it?

Comment on the use of imagery used and its effect; does this poem remind you of anything you've read?

Do you think the ending of "The Mill on the Floss" is poor?

George Orwell's 1984 – is it still relevant? How does it relate to the media, politics and surveillance?

What is the difference between a simile and a comparison?

What is a tragedy?

EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

How would you design a scientific experiment to show that a certain substance is addictive?

How come a painting by a four year old of "a tiger amongst tulips" (as described by the child) doesn't look like a tiger despite the child studying a tiger at the zoo the day before and being satisfied with the outcome?

If a man has no hair (n) he is called bald. If we add hairs to his head using the formula $n+1$, he would still be called bald. Is this correct?

Discuss the origin of phobias (nature vs nurture)

GEOGRAPHY

Explain cliff formation after looking at a photograph. How can computers aid geographers in understanding such processes?

What is the relevance of physical geography to human geography?

Are there any articles you've read in the paper recently that are relevant to physical geography?

What are the advantages for retailers to concentrate their activities in malls rather than disperse through towns?

Do you have an interest in saving the environment? What evidence is there for human influences on climate?

If you could take a non-geographer anywhere in the world to convince them geography was important, where would you go and what would you say?

HISTORY

Do you think that all of history is a history is thought?

Would history be worth studying if it didn't repeat itself?

Is national character a useful concept in history?

How can one define a revolution?

How would you differentiate between power and authority?

How does a historian gather information?

How do today's interpretations of democratic values differ from those of the 19th century and how have they evolved?

HISTORY OF ART

Discuss restoration and conservation. Are they good or bad?

What is your opinion on the Turner Prize and Brit Art?

How does art reflect its society?

What work of art would you most likely to own?

Discuss restoration and conservation. Are they worthwhile investment?

LAND ECONOMY

What kind of transport policy could be implemented in Cambridge?

Why traffic is so bad in cities and what would you do about it?

Should fox-hunting have been banned?

Why are wages higher in London?

What do you think are the implications for shopping with the phenomenon of the internet?

LAW

If someone is acquitted in Criminal proceedings, can they, and should they, still be liable to be sued in Civil Law?

How do you think the House of Lords should be reformed?

Summarise an article of 1,300 words in 150-200 words.

What have you read in the papers recently that relates to the International Law?

What is the difference between intention and foresight?

Smith sees Jones walking towards the edge of a cliff. Smith knows Jones is blind, but doesn't like him, so allows him to walk off the edge. Is this murder?

Should judges have legislative roles?

MATHEMATICS

How many 0's has 30 factorial?

If X is odd, prove $X^2 - 1$ is always a multiple of 8

Draw a graph of $y = \frac{(x-3)(x-2)}{(x-2)(x-1)}$

A body with mass m is falling towards Earth with speed v. It has a drag force equal to kv. Set up a differential equation and solve it for v.

Prove that any number consists of prime factors or is a prime number.

MEDICINE

What makes a good doctor?

Can you describe and experiment to differentiate between a normal and a multi-resistant strain of bacteria?

How would you determine whether leukaemia patients have contracted the disease because of a nearby nuclear power station?

What would life be like without enzymes?

What interests you most about current advances in medical technology?

Why is it that cancer cells are more susceptible to destruction by radiation than normal cells?

What is the normal level of potassium? What is it used for? How does it move in and out of cells?

MODERN LANGUAGES

Why do you want to study a literature-based degree?

Do you notice any differences between English and English Literature? If so, why might these exist?

What do you think Voltaire meant by '*Il faut cultiver notre jardin*'?

What are the differences between Spain and Latin America?

How does Le Monde differ from British broadsheets?

Discuss current affairs issues relevant to the countries you hope to study.

NATURAL SCIENCES

Discuss ways in which plants are adapted to dry conditions.

Why are big, fierce animals so rare?

How does the immune system recognise invading pathogens as foreign cells?

Write down an organic reaction you have studied at school and explain its mechanism?

What makes some chemicals explosive?

When an ice cube melts in a glass of water, does the water level increase, decrease or stay the same?

Explain how we know centripetal force exists and how we can prove the presence of its forces.

Why is the sky blue?

How does depressing a piano key make a noise?

How is a rainbow formed?

How does the glass transmit light?

Why does metal expand when it's heated?

Which reached the bottom of the hill faster, a ball rolling down the hill or a ball sliding down the hill?

ORIENTAL STUDIES

Give me a brief case study of an area of Middle Eastern politics that has interested you.

How many cultures are grouped together under the label "China"?

Please construct a sentence using the word "up" as verb.

PHILOSOPHY, POLITICS AND ECONOMICS (PPE)

It is a matter of fact or knowledge that time travels in only one direction?

Would you agree that “if P is true and S believes P, then S knows P”?

Differentiate between power and authority.

Why do you think communism was unsuccessful in the Russian countryside?

What would you say to someone who claims women have equal opportunities already?

Why do we need government?

Discuss perfect and imperfect competition.

Would it be feasible to have an economy entirely based on the service sector?

Can faith in quantum physics and invisible forces tie in with the faith in an invisible God?

What are the origins of wage inflation?

Is profit maximisation the only objective of a business?

PHYSICS

Explain how we know centripetal force exists and how we can prove its presence.

Why is it not strictly true to say that one planet orbits another?

Why does metal expand when it is heated?

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCES

Does the welfare state trap people into poverty?

Distinguish between a society, a state and an economy.

Should museums be free?

Is there tension between British Nationalism and local patriotism?

Should children always be educated in a co-ed environment?

THEOLOGY

What is the best reason you can think of for believing in God? Do you think this course could be persuasive on the matter?

Do the Gods command it because it is great, or is it great because the Gods command it?

How valuable do you think the Bible is to us today?

What are the moral implications, if any, of voluntary euthanasia?

VETERINARY MEDICINE

Animal behaviour – Why do dogs behave badly?

Would you prefer a large or small animal practice?

How have vets lives changed in the last 30 years?

Is selective breeding tantamount to genetic modification?

Can you describe an experiment to differentiate between a normal and multi-resistant strain of bacteria?

Discuss the mechanisms underlying sensory adaptation.

And these

“Devise an equation to estimate the number of aeroplanes in the sky” Natural Sciences, Cam

“Compare these bottles of Tesco and Timotei shampoo” Law, Ox

“Do you think the Bavarian peasants of 1848 had an ideology?” History, Cam

“Define irony” Classics, Ox

“How many molecules are there in this room?” History, Cam

“If there was an omnipotent god, would he be able to create a stone that he couldn’t lift?”

How many atoms are there in a Brussels sprout?” Natural Sciences, Cam

“How would you measure the weight of your own head?” Medicine, Cam

“Is altruism dead?” SPS, Cam

“Don’t you agree that Shakespeare was a waste of time and totally irrelevant to today? Modern and Medieval Languages, Cam

“How would you define a book?” PPE, Ox

“What has been the most significant event of your life so far?” Geography, Cam

“Is the chair really there?” Philosophy, Cam

“Shipwrecked sailors are forced to eat a shipmate. Is this a crime?” Law, Cam
“What questions would you like us to ask you?” Medicine, Cam
“Why do seals exhale before they dive underwater?” Natural Sciences, Cam
“Why is this piece of string red”? Natural Sciences, Cam

Wherever you choose to study, be it Oxbridge or elsewhere, good luck.



Medical School:

All universities receive many more applications than there are places available.

It is a competitive process but all applications are considered extremely carefully.

According to **UCAS** there are **on average 10.5 applicants for every place**.

Realistically, to gain an offer your predicted grades must be **AAA at least**.

Medicine at OXFORD:

The standard course

Entry Requirements are A-levels: A*AA in three A-levels

Candidates are required to achieve at least a grade A in both Chemistry and at least one of Biology, Physics or Mathematics.

To study at Oxford, you need to apply by completing the online application form at www.ucas.com. Applications open in early September 2017, and the deadline is 6pm UK time on 15 October every year. Late applications are not accepted.

You have **four choices available for Medical School applications** and you should choose carefully on the **basis of the grades that you have obtained or are expected to obtain** and the **entry requirements of each university**.

Medical courses at **different universities are taught differently, and you should choose those institutions whose teaching style matches your learning preference**.

Your fifth choice may be left blank or used to apply for another degree course of your choice

There are generally no formal GCSE requirements for Medicine. However, in order to be adequately equipped for **the BMAT** (see www.bmat.org.uk) and for the academic demands of the course, and if Biology, Physics or Mathematics have not been taken to A-level (or equivalent), applicants will need a basic education in those subjects (for **example at least a grade C at GCSE, the GCSE Dual Award Combined Sciences is also appropriate**).

TESTs: There are **others** as well as the **BMAT and UKCAT** and you should read the information provided by **EACH university** to learn **what they require you to take**

However here are the **two most common TEST** asked for by Universities: **Either the:**

BMAT – Biomedical Admission Test – www.bmat.org.uk

This is required for Medicine and Veterinary Science at **OXFORD and CAMBRIDGE**. It is taken at the **beginning of November** at a centre near you and the grade sent to the university. The test has 3 sections and tests both your background scientific knowledge as well as problem solving and data analysis skills. **You register online and the registration number must be put on your UCAS form**

If you plan to commence study September 2019 the standard deadline for registration is 1 October 2018, and the final deadline for registration is 15 October 2018, it is YOUR responsibility to ensure you are registered for this test.

See www.bmat.org.uk for further details.

UKCAT aptitude tests

This too examines GCSE scientific knowledge and aptitude for medicine by **assessment of verbal reasoning, data analysis, abstract reasoning, decision-making and judgment in real-life situations.**

Universities that ask for UKAT include:

	University	UCAS Course Code
A20	University of Aberdeen	A100, A201
B32	University of Birmingham	A100, A200
B78	University of Bristol	A100, A108, A206, A208
C15	Cardiff University	A100, A104, A200, A204, B750, B752
D65	University of Dundee	A100, A104, A200, A204
E14	University of East Anglia	A100, A104
E56	University of Edinburgh	A100
E84	University of Exeter	A100
G28	University of Glasgow	A100, A200
H75	Hull York Medical School	A100
K12	Keele University	A100, A104
K60	King's College London	A100, A101, A102, A202, A205, A206
L34	University of Leicester	A100, A199
L41	University of Liverpool	A100, A200, A201
M20	University of Manchester	A104, A106, A204, A206, B840
N21	University of Newcastle	A100, A101, A206
N84	University of Nottingham	A100, A108
P60	Plymouth University	A100, A206
Q50	Queen Mary, University of London	A100, A101, A110, A200, B960
Q75	Queen's University Belfast	A100, A200*
S18	University of Sheffield	A100, A200
S27	University of Southampton	A100, A101, A102
S36	University of St Andrews	A100, A990
S49	St George's, University of London	A100, A900
W20	University of Warwick	A101

For information on UKCAT see ukcat.ac.uk

Universities will also be looking for evidence that you are genuinely interested in medicine and have read widely around the subject, gaining insight into the NHS and health care generally.

TIP: Keep a folder and collect anything in the general press or from medical journals such as the BMJ [formerly the British Medical Journal] that relates to medical advances, new treatments – anything that catches your interest

EXPERIENCE:

Nearly all medical schools **require applicants to have some sort of health-care-related work experience**

For example: **Volunteering in a hospice** as is anything that has clinical relevance- **Care homes, hospices, pharmacies.**

It's not about what you do; it's about how much you get out of it. You should have **done enough to be able to discuss and analyze your experiences** at interview and have a **realistic idea of what the career entails**. Perhaps a total of **two or more weeks** 'seeing practice' is sufficient. Quality is more important than quantity - and by quality it means the **ability discuss the scientific and professional aspects of what you have seen.**

For further advice on admissions, also see gmc-uk.org

INTRODUCTORY READING FOR MEDICINE

This list of suggested reading is not an exhaustive one, nor is it a list of material you must read.

There are countless good general texts, so do explore, and perhaps try a topic that is completely new to you and challenge yourself. As well as books, read the local and national press, browse for relevant podcasts, web-sites, lectures, events and museums/exhibitions in your local area. **This is not a list of books you should rush out and buy:**

First and foremost, **read what interests you the most**. Each student should, from early on, begin to develop their own particular area of expertise. S

Second, **consider what subjects or topics relevant to preclinical medicine you may not cover in your A-level studies.**

GENERAL/PREPARATORY

Ashcroft, F. Life at the Extremes. Univ California Press, 2002.

Black, J., Boyd, C.A.R. and Noble, D. (editors). The Logic of Life. Oxford University Press, 1993.

Calvin, W. H., and Ojamann, G. A. Conversations with Neil's Brain: The Natural Nature of Thought and Language. Basic Books, 1995. (Also available free of charge from <http://williamcalvin.com/bk7/bk7.htm>)

Dawkins, R. The Selfish Gene. Oxford University Press, 2006.

Dawkins, R. (editor). The Oxford Book of Modern Science Writing. Oxford University Press, 2009.

De Kruif, P. Microbe Hunters. Kessinger Publishing Co, 2005.

Glynn, I. Elegance in Science. Oxford University Press, 2010.

Goldacre, B. Bad Science. Harper Perennial, 2009. (Also, see Ben Goldacre's columns for the Guardian at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/profile/bengoldacre>)

Greenfield. S. The Human Brain: A Guided Tour. Orion Publishing Group, 1998.

Jones, S. The Language of the Genes. Harper Collins (Flamingo), 2000.

Medawar, P. Advice to a young scientist. Perseus Books, 1989.

Noble, N. The Music of Life: Biology beyond the Genome. Oxford University Press, 2006.

Sacks, O. The Man who mistook his Wife for a Hat. Pan Macmillan Picador, 1986.

Sykes, B. Blood of the Isles. Corgi Books, 2007.

Wishart, A. One in Three. Profile Books, 2007.

ANATOMY

MacKinnon, P. & Morris, J. Oxford Textbook of Functional Anatomy, Oxford University Press, 2005.

BIOCHEMISTRY

Stryer, L. Biochemistry. W.H.Freeman & Co Ltd, 2006.

PHARMACOLOGY

Rang, H. et al. Pharmacology. Elsevier Health Sciences (Churchill Livingstone), 2007.

PHYSIOLOGY

Aidley, D. The Physiology of Excitable Cells. Cambridge University Press, 1998.

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Start by looking for websites providing information on topics you might be interested in, or read the science sections of newspapers. There are plenty of useful resources out there so do explore.

Here is a list of websites offering podcasts and videos relevant to medical sciences:

Oxford Podcasts

iTunesU > Oxford University > Medical Sciences or <http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/>

BBC Science & Nature

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/sn/>

Radio 4 Science & Nature podcasts

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/programmes/genres/factual/scienceandnature>

Horizon (BBC archive)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/sn/tvradio/programmes/horizon/broadband/>

science.tv (Bristol-based group of filmmakers, scientists, educationalists)

<http://www.science.tv/videos/ben-goldacre-on-homeopathy.html>

Veterinary School CAMBRIDGE

All veterinary schools receive many more applications than there are places available.

It is a competitive process but all applications are considered extremely carefully.

At CAMBRIDGE the majority of applicants are interviewed which allows you to really show your passion for the subject and your broad scientific background.

COLLEGES

It is important to realize that it is the individual colleges, which conduct the admissions process, so you apply to them, not directly to the Vet School. Many applicants worry about the choice of college, but you should see it as a positive decision to allow you to pick the place where you may spend much of the next six years. Look at some college websites

<http://www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/colleges/>, maybe attend an open day, and pick the college you think looks the most supportive and best for you. Most colleges admit students to read vet medicine, but do check this in advance.

If you still cannot decide which college to apply to, you can make an ‘**open application**’, and will then be allocated to a college which will process your application. Do bear in mind that the collegiate system gives you access to individual college admissions offices, which are a mine of useful information – just e-mail or call them if you have a query. Detailed information can also be found at

<http://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/colleges/college-contacts>

The admissions process for veterinary medicine starts earlier than for other courses, so the deadline for submitting your online **application to UCAS is 15th October**. A detailed description of the admissions process can be found in the online prospectus at

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

When you complete your UCAS form, you will be asked to specify the college to which you’re applying, or you can decide not to pick a particular college and make an ‘open application’.

Please note that no one at Cambridge will know, nor would they care, where else you have applied to. Obviously it is likely that you will apply to other vet schools, but it is considered **extremely** important that you use the non-veterinary ‘backup’ spaces on your UCAS form. **No interviewer at any university should ask where else you have applied.**

What criteria does CAMBRIDGE use to make its decision?

It is important to know **all applicants must meet the University’s basic pre-medical requirements** - see the [admissions section](#) of the main university website.

It is generally accepted that the admissions process at Cambridge is more **science-oriented** than that for other veterinary courses. Because of this emphasis, **applicants with weak science/math’s GCSE grades or low science/math’s AS module scores will be at a considerable disadvantage**. Conversely, *applicants who are confident at science and good at dealing with novel scientific concepts may find Cambridge the easiest veterinary course on which to secure a place.*

1. GCSEs

GCSEs (or their equivalent) are not as A-levels (or their equivalent), but obviously it is encouraging if you have some A*’s at GCSE. Students wishing to study Veterinary Medicine must obtain:

- grade C or above in GCSE (or equivalent) Double Award Science and Mathematics

- two single awards in GCSE Biology and Physics may be substituted for Double Award Science

2. AS/A Levels, or Equivalent

Research shows that performance in **science/math's in the last two years of school is the best on-paper indicator of performance on courses at Cambridge.**

- Applicants must have AS or A Level passes in Chemistry and two of Biology/Human Biology, Physics, and Mathematics. CAMBRIDGE **does not** count Psychology.
- At least one pass must be at A Level, although most applicants for Veterinary Medicine at Cambridge **have at least three science/mathematics A Levels** and some Colleges require this or ask for particular A Level subject(s). See individual [College websites](#) for details. Applicants taking Further Math's should contact colleges to ask how they view this subject – some may consider it just as useful as Math's, Physics and Biology.
- The conditional offer for 2016 entry was A*AA. **The typical conditional offer for 2016 entry was A*A*A.**
- Although many Colleges consider applicants **offering only two science/mathematics subjects** at A Level, please note **that the success rate of such applicants is much lower.** In the past three admissions rounds, **95% of applicants for Veterinary Medicine offered three or more science/mathematics A Levels and, of these, 24 % were successful in obtaining a place. Of the 5% of applicants who offered only two science/mathematics A Levels, just 3% were successful in gaining a place.**

For more information, please go to the University's online prospectus at <http://www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/vetmed/>

3. The BMAT Test

All applicants to read veterinary medicine have to sit the 'BMAT' examination in the November of the year they apply, and the results of this are considered alongside all other information. Alternative arrangements may exceptionally be made for gap-year students unable to sit the Test at the usual time. The importance of the BMAT in veterinary admissions should not be over-emphasized - for example, performance at interview and in science/math's subjects in the last two years of school are considered more important. For details of the BMAT, click [here](#).

4. The Interview

The college interviews are a very important part of the applications process and usually take place in **early December**. Most applicants will have **two twenty-five minute interviews** on the same day, often in quick succession, and each with one or more people. They look for candidates with **commitment to a veterinary/scientific-related career, good problem solving skills and ability to discuss scientific and mathematical concepts, an ability to discuss veterinary cases they have seen, veterinary/scientific issues as well as their own interests, and evidence of an ability to balance work and leisure activities.** Although you may be asked some difficult questions, do not worry – this is how they see how far you can take new ideas and concepts. **They will do their best to help you perform to the best of your ability.**

Interviews are a way for the interviewers to understand your thought processes and how you approach a challenge.

5. Work Experience

Unlike other veterinary schools, Cambridge **does not stipulate that you should have completed specified amounts of particular types of animal care/veterinary experience** - merely that you should have **done enough to be able to discuss and analyze your experiences** at interview and have a **realistic idea of what a veterinary/scientific career entails**. Perhaps a total of **two or more weeks** 'seeing practice' with vets is sufficient. This limited requirement is very important as far as fair access to the course is concerned: not everyone has the time, money, contacts or parental availability to see remote hill sheep farming practice, but most people can arrange a few weeks with a local vet. Quality is more important than quantity - and by quality it means the **ability discuss the scientific and professional aspects of what you have seen**.

1 Personal Statement Pack

UCAS AND OXBRIDGE FORMS

As well as completing the normal UCAS form (which will include Cambridge or Oxford as one of your choices), **you must also submit a separate form either to a specific Cambridge college or Oxford Admissions office.**

This form must be **submitted by the 2nd / 3rd week in October**, which is **earlier than the UCAS deadline**. You must therefore be very organised and put together your UCAS personal statement ahead of schedule. **It is a good idea to complete both the UCAS form and the Cambridge/ Oxford form by the end of the summer holiday so you can get a tutor to check them at start of the autumn term.**

Both university forms **also allocated space for a mini personal statement** just like the one on the UCAS form. It is a good idea to rewrite your UCAS statement **and to tailor it specifically to Oxbridge**. This gives you a great opportunity to explain why you specifically want to attend Oxbridge and why you think it would suit you. Some people choose to tailor their statement to specific college they have applied to. This is often a good idea, but don't go overboard on this as you must bear in mind there is a chance you may be pooled.

As with the UCAS personal statement, assume you will be asked everything about it at the interview. Therefore, make sure it is truthful and that it reflects you and your personality.

SUBMITTED WORK

Oxbridge often ask you to **submit some work** so that they can see evidence of your ability. You may be asked to send this in advance of your interview or take it along at the time. You need to check whether they want:

- a piece of school work that has already been assessed and marked
- a piece of work put together especially for the interview (they may provide a title or choice of titles)

With either of these scenarios **you will need to:**

- Provide GENUINE work – you will be easily found out in an interview
- Read any instructions carefully and stick rigidly within the constraints of the title and specifications (word counts, etc.)

Send or make photocopies – the work won't be sent back

Know the subject well and in further depths as you will have to expand on the topic at interview and explain any opinions put forward.

OTHER/ ADDITIONAL TESTS

At both Universities now it is **common that you are asked to take an extra test** when you go for interview. The details of this should be given in your invitation letter but the tables below give you an indication of what might be required. These requirements vary from college to college and course to course so check in advance.

For specific subjects you may also be asked to sit specific tests before the interview e.g. **HAT, LNAT**. Usually you do not have to receive a specific grade in these but they are used to compare candidates (as all those applying will be predicted A grades). It is sometimes the case that you will be asked to take additional exams when you sit your A-levels (e.g. STEP levels) and the results of these may form a part of your provisional offer.

1) Tests at Interview

You will usually be told beforehand that you will be asked to sit a test on attending the interview, but if not then it is safe to assume, especially at Oxford, that you may be asked to do so. Don't worry if you don't finish the test – candidates often don't. The test will be used as a basis for a discussion in the interview so, regardless of your success on the test, you still have a chance to prove your potential.

F.A.Q

HOW DO I PREPARE?

There is no syllabus for these tests and they should be based on A-Level work, although they will be designed to push you slightly beyond this to see how you deal with it. There is officially no need to prepare for them, but it is advisable to revise your A-Level work well prior to the interview and check the college or faculty website for any example papers. Depending on your subject, extra reading may also help.

Top Tip:

The maths tests at both Oxford and Cambridge usually don't allow you to use a calculator so practise without

STEPS

STEPS (Sixth Term Examination Papers)

STEP is **used by the University of Cambridge as the basis for conditional offers**. Other universities sometimes ask candidates to take STEP as part of their offer – in such cases, the university can advise on which papers to take.

These are extra exams that you take at the same time as your A-levels. All Cambridge colleges except for King's require a STEP in Maths for their Mathematics course. Other courses such as Engineering and Computer Science *may* also ask for the Maths STEP paper as well. It is based on the A-Level syllabus, but tests students to take further level. Have a look at some past papers on the website. There are 5 grades: S (Outstanding), 1, 2, 3 and U (Ungraded). A typical offer for example may be AAA1.

Subject Exams

Some subjects may require you take extra exams specific to the course you wish to read (see the tables below). Usually you don't need to attain a certain grade but the results will be used as a comparison between students.

a) BMAT – Biomedical Admission Test – www.bmat.org.uk

This is required for Medicine and Veterinary Science at both universities. It is taken at a centre near you and the grade sent to the university. The test has 3 sections and tests both your background scientific knowledge as well as problem solving and data analysis skills. You register online and the registration number must be put on your UCAS form.

b) LNAT – National Admissions Test for Law – www.lnat.ac.uk

This is required for Law at both universities. It is an on-screen test taken at a centre near you and the grade is sent to the universities. The test is a mixture of multiple-choice questions and an essay and must be taken anytime between early September and early November (check exact dates). You register online and the registration number must be put on your UCAS form.

c) HAT – History Aptitude Test – www.history.ox.ac.uk

This is a test specifically for those applying for History at Oxford. It is a two-hour test in which you have to read two extracts and answer a total of four questions about them. It is a test of your comprehension of arguments and ideas and your capacity to apply those ideas to

historical situations. You can usually take the test at your own college. Your invitation to interview will depend on the outcome of this test.

d) ELAT – The English Literature Admissions Test – www.elat.org.uk

This is a test specifically for those applying for any English courses at Oxford. It is a 90-minute test in which you must write one essay to compare two or three pieces of unseen poetry or prose. It is not a test of wider reading but you are expected to have read certain standard texts by this point. You take it at a centre near you and the grade is sent to Oxford.

CAMBRIDGE.

Most applicants are required to take a written admission assessment, either pre-interview or at interview.

In addition, some Colleges ask applicants for some courses to submit examples of their **written work** – one or two school essays – which may then be discussed at interview. Information about the relevant admission assessment **and whether any Colleges typically require submitted work can be on** each individual course page.

The course-specific written assessments are designed to supplement the information in your application and provide a gauge of your abilities – to assess skills (such as comprehension and thinking skills) and, where appropriate, levels of current knowledge and understanding relevant to the course applied for.

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

YOU must CHECK on the relevant websites for your specific course.

Oxford.

For many courses, you need to take a test or tests as part of your application – **check your course page.**

You will need to **register separately for any tests, by a set date in October, and can may be able to sit them in school or at a centre near your home.**

The APPLICATION

FIRST THOUGHTS: Oxbridge Application Progress Sheet

Name:

Oxford or Cambridge?

Subject:

College:

This completed sheet must be submitted to the Sixth Form Office on _____
Submission of the document is a very important part of FSG Oxbridge applications. It is your opportunity to rehearse some of the points you will undoubtedly be making in your Personal Statement and will provide your tutor and the Sixth Form Office with additional evidence of your suitability and commitment to Oxbridge study which in turn we may be able to reflect in the important references we provide to Oxford and Cambridge. In short, it is very much in your best interests to complete this fully.

1. Commitment to academic excellence in YEAR 12/ your AS Levels: Use this section to detail academic achievements that show your suitability for Oxbridge. Include details of Yr12/ AS module performances which are 90% plus (provide appropriate details) and any other evidence about your academic performance that will strengthen your application.

2. Your development of wider knowledge and understanding in your chosen subject: Detail here the ways in which you are extending your knowledge and understanding in preparation for your application. Do not JUST say you read around the subject, visit galleries, attend lectures, travel EVALUATE these. Evaluate your experiences, to show what you have learned from them and how they have helped develop your understanding of your subject. Include details of books and articles you have read that have proved very influential in your thinking; details of additional workshops and other experiences you have attended that are directly connected to your preferred course of study. If you are studying for any additional qualification, also include details.

3. Your contribution to FSG- Clubs/ Prefect/ Societies: Provide a resume of your contribution to the school and groups such as a debating society. What have you learned? What are your plans for future sessions ?

4. Entrance requirements: What are the specific entrance requirements for your chosen course? Is a pre-interview test required? If so, what does this involvement and what preparation have you undertaken?

5. **Why you feel best suited to Oxbridge Study:** Explain here why you are attracted to studying at Oxford/Cambridge? Why do you believe it would suit you?

6. **Your subject:** Explain why you are passionate about your chosen subject/course of study.

7. Any other information that we should be aware of when writing your references

Personal Statement Activity

Also see: UCAS website. www.ucas.com

THIS PACK IS TO HELP STRUCTURE PERSONAL STATEMENT FOR ALL UNIVERSITIES: PLEASE SEE NOTES BELOW THAT APPLY TO OXBRIDGE

For 2018 entry, the typical conditional A Level offer at Oxford and Cambridge will be A*AA or A*A*A depending on the course – please refer to the relevant course information online

Academic qualities that OXBRIDGE Admissions Tutors look for.

- **Ability and potential** – in addition to your academic record, selectors are assessing your potential for study there (how well you can explore and discuss ideas and opinions, whether you're capable of logical and independent thought, and whether you show intellectual flexibility and willingness to engage with new ideas).
- **Motivation and suitability for the chosen course** – you should show enthusiasm for your chosen course, and the desire and potential to go beyond what's required for your studies. This could be demonstrated, for example, by the exploration of your subject beyond the school curriculum and by wider reading (your '**super-curricular**' activities, see below).
- **Commitment and self-discipline**
– successful applicants are self-motivated, self-disciplined and academically committed. This could be shown, for instance, by good time management in the balance of your various academic and personal commitments.

All admissions decisions at Oxford and Cambridge are based solely on academic criteria (ability and potential). Therefore, in your personal statement, they're looking for you to:

- explain your reasons for wanting to study the subject at university
- demonstrate enthusiasm for and commitment to your chosen course
- express any particular interests within the field
- outline how you have pursued your subject interest in their own time

This information is often used as a basis for discussion **at interview.**

As admissions decisions are based on academic criteria, they expect to see evidence of students' '**super-curricular**' activities – your **wider engagement with your area(s) of academic interest**, such as reading and other exploration relevant to the course you've applied for.

Participation (or not) in specific extra-curricular activities that aren't relevant to the course applied for won't be taken into account or affect your chances of being made an offer of a place at Cambridge or Oxford. However, when composing your personal statement you should consider [the importance that your other university choices may place on extra-curricular activities.](#)

YOU can make additional comments particularly relevant to their Cambridge Oxford application in the **SAQ** (eg to highlight particular features of the course that attracted them). This additional personal **statement is optional**. You won't be disadvantaged if you have nothing to add in this section of the SAQ and shouldn't repeat information provided in your UCAS personal statement here as they will have already have received a copy of this.

What are Universities looking for when they read the Personal Statement?

They wish to find out more about why you are applying for the course you have chosen: this is particularly important when applying for a subject that you have not studied before, such as Medicine.

The personal statement should tell the tutor the reasons why that subject genuinely interests you and should **evidence** that you understand what is required to study the course. For example if applying for Computer Science you should demonstrate that you know maths is integral to the subject

Tutors are also looking to find out about your skills and experience which may demonstrate the **potential to succeed** on the course. However, unless a course asks for it work experience is not a formal requirement for undergraduate courses and you can make reference to skills or experience acquired **in any context** to illustrate compatibility with your chosen course. If you do discuss work experience it is important that you are able to **reflect** on your experience and what you have learned as a result-; what matters is that you have thought critically about it.

Further reading beyond the curriculum. Universities are not looking for a list of authors and texts; they want to know what you thought of what you have read.

TIP: Whether it is further reading, visits to exhibitions, performances, lectures, work experience, **try to engage critically with everything you include in the personal statement.**

Personal Statement - Introduction

You will need to provide a brief but convincing explanation as to why you want to study your subject at university.

Your Personal Statement and UCAS application process is not like an X factor talent show where you have a few moments to make an impression and separate yourself from the crowd. Universities will consider each application on its individual merits, looking for evidence of your commitment and ability.

TIP: your personal statement should demonstrate your **academic abilities** and your **engagement** with and **motivation** for your subject or subjects.

Universities want to see that you are committed to the subject or subjects you want to study at university **but it's not enough just to say that you have a passion for something:** you need to **show** how you have engaged with your subject, above and beyond whatever you have studied at school or college. This can for example include any relevant extracurricular activities.

TIP: Do not JUST say you read around the subject, visit galleries, attend lectures, travel **EVALUATE** these. Say how they have **affected you**, how **you have benefited**, and what **you'd like to learn next**

Try to avoid writing your personal statement as though you are ticking things off a list. There is no checklist of required achievements, and Universities will not just scan what you have written to look for key words or phrases. Tutors will read your personal statement to try to understand what has **motivated you** to apply for their course. It's a good idea to **evaluate your experiences**, to show what you have learned from them and how they have helped develop your understanding of your subject

Personal Trigger - What was it that got you interested in the subject in the first place? book, trip, documentary, childhood experience, teacher, work experience etc. What motivates you to take this course at a university level? Mention how your interest developed, what you have done to pursue it or how you've drawn inspiration from your current studies. Or, just demonstrate your enthusiasm for it.

TIP: 'Be specific from line one

Wider - Continue to develop why this subject is important and inspiring to you. **Evaluate your experiences**, to show **what you have learned from them and how they have helped develop your understanding** of your subject.

Talk about your achievements but show how they have affected you, how you have benefited, and what you'd like to learn next. Perhaps say why is this subject significant in society. **TIP** do not just say "always wanted to study.."

Having given an account of why you love your subject, focus on specific areas of interest and how the degree course will develop your interest and passion further.

What was my personal trigger?

Wider: 1

Wider 2: Which aspect am I really looking forward to studying in more detail? Why?

Your interest in the Subject

Use this next page to help focus on the types of activities you may have done and how it is **relevant to the course you have chosen**. This is not an exhaustive list and you are not expected to cover everything on the list. It is merely a way of getting you to think about all the activities you may do which will contribute to your personal statement by supporting your interest in your chosen course.

Activity	Tick	Description	Why has it made you more suitable?
Outside reading	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading the Economist regularly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding economic concepts • Keeping up to date with current affairs
Outside reading			
Theatre trips			
Exhibitions			
School Clubs			
Clubs outside of School			
Voluntary work			
Museum visits			
Historical sites			
Trips abroad			

Community activities			
Documentaries			
Articles			
Hobbies			
Work experience			
Competitions/prizes/awards			
Published work			
Workshops/programmes			
Summer School			
Career aspirations			
OTHER			

Transferable Skills

Try to use this table to give **examples** of how you have demonstrated some key skills.

ALSO think about your **Hobbies, interests and social activities**. Then think about how they demonstrate your **personality, skills and abilities**. Try to link them to the skills and experience required for your course(s). NOTE: OXBRIDGE are less interested in these skills

Work experience Include details of jobs, placements, work experience or voluntary work, particularly if it's relevant to your chosen course(s). Try to link any experience to skills or qualities related to the course.

TIP: Do not simply list off the skills you think you have – think about which ones relate most readily to the course you're applying to, then demonstrate how **you've developed, used and improved** these. Admissions tutors want to hear about *specific* examples.

<u>Skill</u>	<u>Activity</u>
Communication	
Commitment	
Time Management	
Teamwork	
Initiative	
Public Speaking	
Sense of responsibility	

Adaptability	
Organisation	
Leadership	
Research & Analysis	

How long should I spend talking about my academic interest?

Universities typically suggest that you focus around 70-**80%** (80%+ Oxbridge) of your personal statement on your academic **interests, abilities and achievements**. This can include discussion of any relevant extracurricular activities. The remaining **20%**- 30% can then cover any unrelated extracurricular activities

How do I begin?

What would you say to your friends/ family about what you want to study at university?

TIP: Think about:

What have you read or watched or seen that has inspired you? (This might have been anyway not just as school- at home, on TV, in a book, on YouTube, a gallery, anywhere.)

Why was it interesting? What do you want to find out next? What did you do?

First draft – some pointers to get you started

Introduction
Your interest in the subject (in School)
Your interest in the subject (out of School)
Personal
Summary