

2018 Admissions Round Feedback

Economics & Management

Please note that this is admissions feedback from the 2018 selection round for 2019 (and deferred 2020) entry. There could be changes to selection criteria in subsequent years, and this feedback is designed to provide a general indication of process.

In the initial round, we had a field of 91 applicants for a total of six places. Two candidates applied for deferred entry in 2020, which we also considered. From the 91 applicants, 25 were called for interview. Prior to arriving at Keble, candidates were required to sit the Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA) provided by Cambridge Assessment. The TSA tests student thinking and critical skills, and the essay component tests writing ability. We considered candidates due to sit school leaving exams as well as those post-school leaving exams.

In order to be invited for an interview, we looked for strengths across the following dimensions.

1. A strong performance on the TSA. Most candidates invited for interview were in the top two bands.
2. Very strong results in official examinations, especially GCSE. Most candidates demonstrated strength in analytic subjects and presented robust evidence of high academic achievement.
3. Results predicted for A level, or other impending examinations, are generally at the highest level – candidates must have been predicted to secure A*AA one of which must be in mathematics to secure an interview. For non-A level candidates, we follow university guidelines. For instance, for International Baccalaureate candidates the minimum requirement is 39 (including core points) with 766 at HL, and for Advanced Highers the minimum requirement is AA/AAB. Those invited for interview often demonstrate stronger records than the minimum requirements.
4. A personal statement that demonstrated clear motivation for studying E&M.
5. A very strong school report.
6. Contextual information, including Widening Participation flags.

The general procedure after arrival at Keble for the interview was as follows. Each candidate had two twenty-minute interviews. Candidates selected for interview but outside of Europe were interviewed by video conference once for a joint economics and management interview. Interviews focused on establishing a candidate's ability to think critically, interpret and analyze data, and to synthesize when presented with unfamiliar material. Background reading materials were circulated prior to the interview and were used as a common basis for further discussion on related topics. As a quality and standard check, some candidates were selected for second college interviews on the third day of interviews.

The field of candidates was very strong. Students in general performed well on interview, demonstrating strong skills, suitable proficiencies, and a clear motivation to study E&M. Based on performance across all aspects of the application and performance we made seven offers for 2019 entry. When making final decisions, we looked particularly closely at the following factors: interview performance, TSA performance, TSA essay, performance in GCSE (raw and contextualized), and predicted (or completed) A-levels (or equivalent), personal statement, and school report. Due to the competitive nature of the admissions process and the small number of places available it is inevitable that strong candidates were not selected, and we have no doubt that these candidates will go on to have successful academic careers at other universities.