



Keble Access and Admissions Report

June 2021

This is our third annual report to Fellows, college staff, students and alumni on our access and outreach activity in academic year 2019-20, as well as undergraduate admissions in the last round, December 2020. During this period, our activities were obviously constrained by the pandemic. Nonetheless, we were able to continue interacting with schools and potential applicants online, especially through the new Ambassador Platform and our YouTube channel.

Highlights:

- In April we launched Keble's partnership with the digital Ambassador Platform to allow school students to interact with Keble undergraduates directly online
- In June we launched Keble's Outreach YouTube Channel which currently counts 144 subscribers and around 12,500 views
- The basis was set for Keble to undertake a second school partnership with the Access Project, after a successful partnership with Colmers school
- In September we launched our Hub Schools initiatives, by supporting schools financially to become hosts for multi-school events organized by Keble in our link areas
- In September, we provided teaching space for 60 students on the Opportunity Oxford Programme
- We hosted 6 year 13 in-person Admissions Tests & Interviews Sessions with more than 200 participating students in total as part of our Hub School Initiative in the West Midlands
- We supported travel expenses for attendance at September Open Days
- We organized a Teachers' Evening with the West Midlands Consortium, which consists of Oriel, University and Keble, exclusively aimed at teachers working in the state sector, predominantly in the West Midlands
- We launched the Oxford for West Midlands consortium webpage with Oriel and University colleges
- 60% of our undergraduate offers to UK applicants were to applicants from state schools
- We made 7 offers under the new Opportunity Oxford Programme
- Our offers to applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds and areas were well above target

Access and Outreach

Our activities in 2019-20: summary information

We participated in 43 outreach in-person events in 2019-20 of which:

- 41 were organised and run mainly by Keble
- 33 took place mainly at Keble (Key Stages 3-5)
- 7 were at schools in our link area (mainly Key Stages 4-5), two were at other venues in our link area (mainly Key Stage 5) (Higher Education Fair and Access Project event) and one at another Oxford College (Teachers Information Day)

Around 250 schools were involved in these events. Our potential reach was more than 7,000 prospective applicants, including attendees at Higher Education fairs.

We ran 27 full day programmes of which 22 were for individual schools; around three quarters of those have above national average pupils eligible for Free School Meals.

Six events involved years 12 and/or 13

- 14 events involved years 10 and/ or 11
- 7 events were with primary and/or years 7, 8, and 9

Our activities included:

- 29 inbound school visits to the College
- 6 outbound visits for Year 13 Admissions and Interviews multi-school events hosted by our Hub schools (around 40-60 students at a time)
- 8 events involving students from multiple schools, organised either with the Brilliant Club or the Pathways programme (these generally engage 80-100 students at a time) and the Access Project (around 30-40 students at a time).

We also participated in the three University Virtual Open Days (2 in July and 1 in September) which featured rerecorded and edited videos about college life, as well as live Q&As with Keble Tutors and more than 40 student ambassadors live on the day.

Key activities in 2019-20

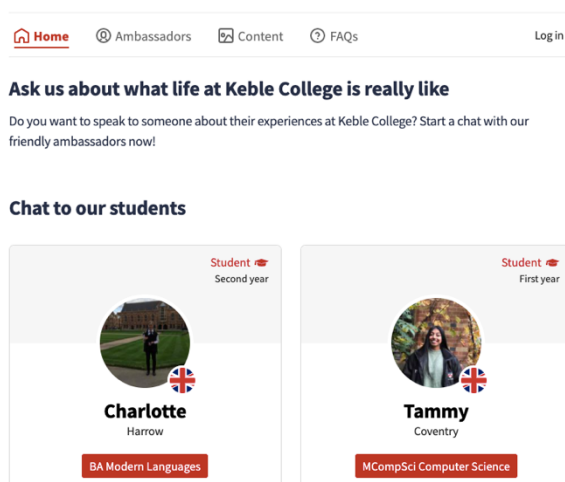
The Ambassador Platform



The Ambassador Platform allows prospective applicants to directly interact with Keble students through a chat popcard that is embedded in the Keble website (see image below). 39 trained Keble ambassadors currently have profiles on the platform, across different subjects. Between 22 April 2020 and 28 May 2021:

- 232 prospective students were reached, with 1 signing up on average per day
- 72% of them were from the UK
- Prospective applicants came from 26 different countries
- 43% of the UK students came through as a result of the Link School Bulletin campaign
- 88% of UK students were from state schools
 - 40 students from selective state schools
 - 66 students from non-selective state schools (55%)
- 46% of UK students were from POLAR4 Q1-3
- 23% of UK students were from POLAR4 Q1-2
- 39% of UK students were from POLAR4 Q5

Keble Chat



Breakdown of UK regions engaged (where known):

- East - 4
- East Midlands - 4
- London - 19
- North West - 3
- South East - 18
- South West - 9
- Wales - 1
- West Midlands - 52
- Yorkshire & Humber - 5

Out of the 232 prospects who signed up on the Platform:

- 51 applied to Oxford (33 were state school, 10 independent, 8 overseas)
- 13 applied to Keble (3 were made offers)

Hub School Initiative

Our Hub School initiative was launched to achieve better coordination and impact from our visits to schools in the West Midlands. Schools signed up to offer their space and resources for multi-school

events, with the financial and administrative support of Keble. We organised six Year 13 Oxford and Cambridge Admissions Test and Interview Evenings for students in early autumn.

The main purpose of these events was to inform applicants about how best to prepare for admissions tests/written work/interviews at Oxford and Cambridge Universities. Experience suggests that of all the hurdles faced by applicants, these are the most problematic.

200 prospective applicants from state schools in year 13 attended one of six separate after school sessions (each lasting 2.5 hours) hosted at various hub schools in Keble’s link region.

Opportunity Oxford at Keble September 2020

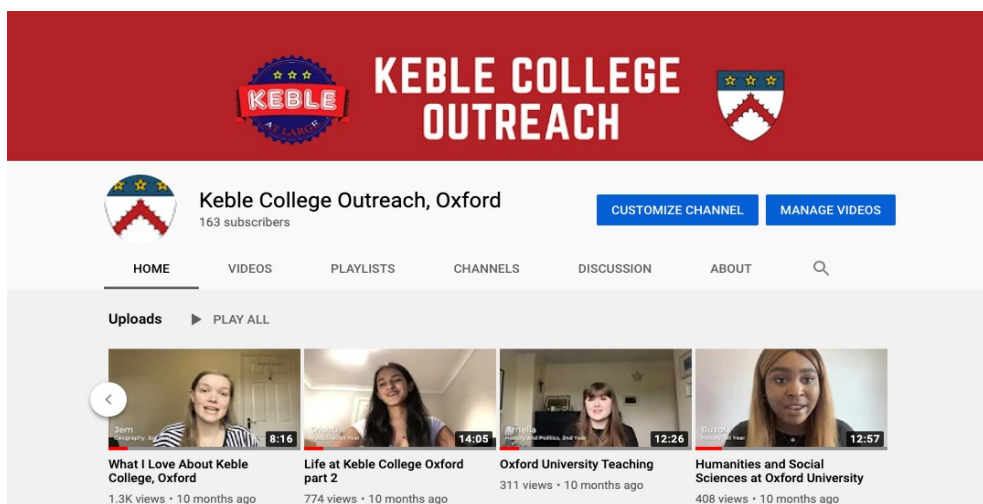
Opportunity Oxford is an academic bridging programme which supports students in their transition from school or college to Oxford. It helps students from under-represented backgrounds to build confidence and prepare to start their degrees when term starts. Part of the initiative involves a two-week residential programme in Oxford. Keble provided teaching space for 60 Opportunity Oxford students in September.

West Midlands Consortium Teacher Conference

In January 2020 we ran an event for teachers predominantly from state schools in the West Midlands (with some participation outside our link regions), in collaboration with Oriel and University Colleges. We offered subject lectures delivered by tutors, and advice on writing teacher references and helping students get ready for admissions tests and interviews. We also invited three undergraduate students to present their own admissions test and interview case-studies. The feedback from the representatives of 45 schools that attended was highly positive, and we will continue running this collaborative event in future years.

Online Open Days & Creation of YouTube Outreach Channel

We moved our entire Open Days online, and created a [YouTube Outreach Channel](#) for this purpose. The channel features guided virtual tours of college and accommodation, videos on student life and admissions, and more recently videos created by our student ambassadors and college outreach professionals with interview advice in different subjects. The channel has been very successful in terms of visitors and subscriptions (144 subscribers, around 12,500 views) and we will continue enhancing content and utilizing it for online and face-to-face school visits.



The Access Project – Update

After a successful partnership with the Access Project and Colmers School and Sixth Form College in Rednal, Birmingham, Keble set the foundations for a second partnership with Waverley school in Birmingham (starting September 2020). Waverley school is high on disadvantage metrics with 36.3 students on Free School Meals and 60% students speaking a language other than English as their first language. According to a 2017 Ofstead report the school “requires improvement”.

Participants at both Colmers and Waverley (as well as other TAP schools) are selected by their school to get support and one-to-one meetings with a University Access Officer, as well as individual tuition in their chosen subject from volunteer mentors, many of whom are Keble alumni and students. This helps student populations that are underrepresented in higher education build independence and confidence.

Over two full years of provision at Colmers, we can report

- student feedback was amongst the highest of TAP schools
- 1000 hours of tutorials have been delivered to students since 2018
- In 2019-20 80% of tutored TAP students either achieved or exceeded their target grade at GCSE and averaged half a grade more than they had been targeted
- across all TAP-supported schools 40% have been placed at so-called Russell group Universities since 2018, with one student reading Archaeology and Anthropology at Keble since October 2020.

In 2020-21 the aim will be to try to broaden the horizons of university destinations for Colmers and Waverley students, including the intensification of our Oxford and Cambridge programme.

Evaluation of our activities

Although there are many logistical difficulties with evaluating our activities (as well as data privacy issues) it is important for us to find out how effective they are. Do we make a difference?

Over the three years 2016-19 we collate feedback surveys from school visits to the College. This is what they are telling us:

96% strongly or slightly agreed with the statement ‘I now know more about university’ (234 respondents)

94% Strongly or slightly agreed with the statement ‘I now better understand what the interview at Oxford might involve and how to prepare for it’ (69 respondents)

86% strongly or slightly agreed with the statement ‘I now have a better idea overall of how I can prepare for applying to Oxford University’ (80 respondents)

83% strongly or slightly agreed with the statement ‘I now know more about the Oxford University admissions tests and how to prepare’ (80 respondents)

From now on we’ll be starting to use pre and post-event online forms in the hope that we’ll get more reliable responses in higher numbers.

Numbers don’t tell the whole story so here are a couple of written comments received from current Keble students who participated in Target Oxbridge and UNIQ before gaining a place:

How did Target Oxbridge help you on your journey to Oxford?

Target Oxbridge surrounded me with others from the same background as me. That, in itself, made me feel more comfortable with the application process because I knew that I was not alone: the proportion of black students at Oxford is significantly lower than that of my secondary school. Sometimes you just need a physical reminder that you are not alone and, for me, Target Oxbridge was that. I received support throughout my application process from others like me - including personal statement and interview workshops.

What did you get out of participating in UNIQ?

By re-enacting a week in the life of a medical undergraduate student, I was able to gain my own feel for what Oxford would really be like. It helped to break stereotypes I had read about because I was able to form my own opinions first-hand, rather than based off of other people's opinions. I realised that I really liked the concept of tutorials when I sat through a sample one because they offered a more intimate way of learning and a way to push students to think more deeply. I saw that Oxford would stimulate students to reach their academic potential by experiencing it myself - which is what I had hoped for in a university. UNIQ was definitely a confidence-booster as it reassured me about my application.

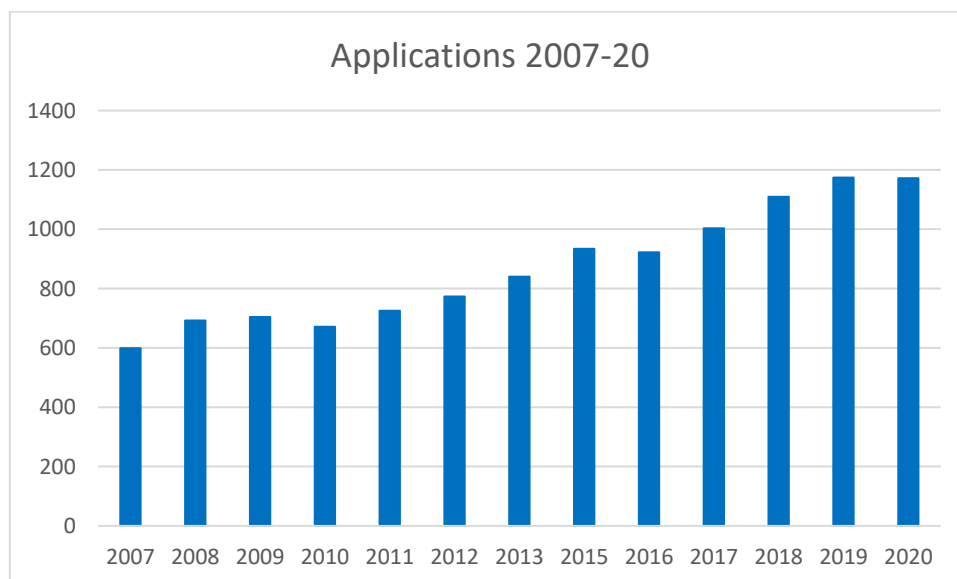
We interacted with the following schools:

Turves Green School for Girls KS3 Oxford Visit Day
 Archbishop Ilsley School KS4 Oxford Visit Day
 Sidney Stringer Academy
 Abingdon School German Exchange Tour Only
 Jewellery Quarter Academy
 Alcester Grammar School
 Handsworth Grammar School for Boys
 King Edward VI Fiveways
 Ernesford Grange Community Academy
 The Brilliant Club Launch
 Kings Norton Girls School
 Stockland Green
 Lyndon School
 Barr's Hill
 Stratford Girls Grammar
 Erdington Academy KS3 Visit
 Ninestiles
 Q3 Tipton
 Alcester Grammar School
 Plantsbrook Academy
 Bristnall Hall Academy
 Central Academy
 Jewellery Quarter Academy
 Cockshut Hill School
 Bournville School
 Q3 Academy Tipton
 Alderbrook School

Applications

Our outreach and access activities are designed to enable students to make good, informed decisions about their future and to encourage them to aim high. By providing support and guidance on the admissions process, we also try to enable students to make the best applications they can. If that leads to an offer at Keble we are understandably pleased, but we also encourage students to apply to whatever course, college, or University they think suits them best. Keble is only one college at Oxford, and we work in concert with our colleagues across the University to achieve our common goals.

Keble has a lot of applicants and is one of the most popular colleges in Oxford. In the last admissions round we received around 1170 applications, continuing the upwards trend of the past decade or more. The number of people applying to the College has doubled since 2007, although the number of places available has stayed more or less the same.



We are not able to interview all applicants and only around 33 per cent are shortlisted, based on criteria that are shared in common across the University. This means that over 770 applicants are disappointed at this early stage, the vast majority of whom have achieved good grades at school and are predicted to do well in their end-of-school examinations. Shortlisting now takes more account of the individual circumstances of each student. In line with the University's [Access and Participation Plan](#), more detailed information is available on applicants and their schools, enabling tutors to make better judgements about their relative ability and potential. More information on how we use contextual data can be found [here](#) on the University's website.

Some subjects are consistently more popular than others and they attract high numbers of applicants relative to the number of places available. For Keble, 47% of all applications were in just 5 subjects (Computer Science, Economics & Management, Engineering Science, Medicine, and Physics). There is some reallocation of applicant between colleges before interviews to ensure as far as possible, that the ratio of candidates to places is about the same across all the colleges. It's worth remembering that about one third of undergraduates in Oxford attend a college to which they did not actually apply.

This year we made 131 offers for 2021 entry compared with 157 the year before. This drop requires some explanation. Following the chaos of 2020 examination results, Keble decided to honour all UK offers, resulting in a higher-than-normal intake of 150 students in October 2020. We did not think it was right to penalise students who had not been given a chance to show how well they could do in examinations. Entering this year, we anticipated further disruption and have again planned on the basis that all offer-holders may be arriving. Our target is 134 new undergraduates a year, and we may be above that number again.

Admissions

This year's undergraduate admissions round was the second to be carried out under the University's new [Access and Participation Plan](#) agreed with the Office for Students.

Part of this plan ('participation') is about improving the performance of key groups while on course, notably by reducing or eliminating gaps in attainment. Part concerns access, how Oxford is going to address its well-known inequalities in admissions. A key element of this plan was the setting of new and more demanding targets for admitting students from areas of lower participation in higher education (POLAR4) and/or socio-economic disadvantage (ACORN), as well as from under-represented groups. The three main targets are:

- Target 1: to reduce the gap in participation rates for disadvantaged students (ACORN) to 3:1 by 2024-25.
- Target 2: to reduce the gap in participation rates for under-represented students (POLAR4) to 8:1 by 2024-25.
- Target 3: to eliminate the gap in offer rates for Asian applicants by 2021-22.

To this end, more and better information on applicants was made available and admissions processes were reformed to take full account of contextual data. Tutors received new and refresher training in admissions to help them make more informed decisions.

The University publishes an annual [Admissions Statistical Report](#) which is accessible from its website. This report contains statistics about socio-economic disadvantage, gender and ethnicity, and school type for each subject and college. These figures are retrospective and they concern 'accepts', i.e. students who take up their places at the start of the year, rather than 'offers', i.e. students to whom offers have been made.

The following sections report on Keble's performance on some of the key access measures, with a focus on the most recent admissions round (which is not included in the University's report).

Socio-economic disadvantage

We made seven offers under the new Opportunity Oxford Programme. This is designed for applicants from under-represented backgrounds and areas who would otherwise just miss out on an offer. They will have the chance to undertake a part-residential course before taking up their place in order to bridge the gap between school and University. This year there were around 200 places available on this programme across all the colleges.

The access targets agreed across the University are expressed as ratios between the most and least advantaged or represented quintiles of POLAR and ACORN classifications. The lower the ratio, the closer the College or University is to the target. On both counts our initial progress is very good and well in advance of the targets set, largely due to the introduction of the Oxford Opportunity Programme (Table 2).

| Year | ACORN Target | Keble offers | Oxford offers |
|------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| 2020 | 4.7:1 | 2.5:1 | 2.9:1 |
| 2021 | 4.3:1 | 2.9:1 | 2.7:1 |
| 2022 | 3.7:1 | | |
| 2023 | 3.3:1 | | |
| 2024 | 3.0:1 | | |

| Year | POLAR target | Keble offers | Oxford offers |
|------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| 2020 | 14.5:1 | 7.9:1 | 7.6:1 |
| 2021 | 13.1:1 | 7.5:1 | 6.3:1 |
| 2022 | 10.8:1 | | |
| 2023 | 9.4:1 | | |
| 2024 | 8.1:1 | | |

Our performance on these measures, which are central to the University’s access targets, was considerably better than in some previous years. On both counts, POLAR and ACORN, Keble’s accepts had been below the University’s average for 2017-19.

School type

None of the University’s access targets refer to the type of school applicants attend, i.e. state or independent. But there is, understandably, intense public scrutiny in this measure as a proxy for inequality. Last year, 67% of our final UK admissions were to applicants from state schools. This was notably higher than in the preceding five years, during which Keble was generally below the University average on this particular count.

Of offers made to applicants from the UK in the most recent round, 60 per cent were to students from state schools. This was below the figure for the whole University (69%) after two years when it had been well above. The admissions data we get do not enable us to fully distinguish between selective and non-selective state schools.

Other data

In the 2020 admission round: 53% of offers were to female applicants; 9% were to applicants with a disability flag; 87% were to Home (UK) students. Only one offer was made to an applicant from the EU; applications from this part of the world were very much lower than in the recent past.

In the past five completed rounds combined, the acceptance rate for students with a declared disability was higher than for those without (14.5% to 12.7%).

Detailed figures by ethnicity are published in the University’s annual report on admissions data. In the most recent completed round for which data are available (December 2019 interviews), 32% of applications and 24% of accepts were classified as BME. The number of applications from BME

students has risen considerably, from 112 in 2010 to 283 in 2020. The number of accepts has roughly doubled, from an average of 15 a year in 2010-14 to 29 a year in 2018-20.

Keble has a relatively high proportion of UK-domiciled undergraduates who self-identify as BME: 22.5% in 2017-19, compared with 19.4% for the University overall. The designation 'BME' masks considerable diversity. The share of Asian students (2017-19) was 10.7%; of students of Black African and/or Black Caribbean heritage was 2.9%; and mixed heritage students 8.1%. In all cases these are well above average for the University. Information on the diversity of our student population can be found in a report on our website [here](#).

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