

Archaeology & Anthropology Admissions 2025

This year 104 candidates applied to read Archaeology & Anthropology, a small decrease from 107 in 2024. The number of applicants shortlisted increased from 64 to 69. The number of offers made increased from 26 to 28. Of these, 1 Opportunity Oxford offer have been made, an increase from last year (0). All applications were for admission in October 2026.

A total of 28 offers were made for October 2026 (Table 1 & 2), an increase from last year (26). Six offers were made on behalf of the subject as a whole (excluding Harris Manchester College) by Hertford, Keble, St Hugh's (2 pool places), St John's and St Peter's.

Table 1. Archaeology & Anthropology Applications 2025

	<i>Applied</i>	<i>Desummoned/ Withdrew</i>	<i>Rejected</i>	<i>Places</i>
<i>School type/domicile</i>				
UK State	27	6	7	14
UK Independent	9	1	0	8
UK Other	3	2	0	1
EU/EEA	1	1		0
Non-EU/ International	64	25	34	5
<i>Gender</i>				
men	25	5	12	8
women	77	29	29	19
IUAT or PNTS	2	1	1	1
total	104	35	41	28

*IUAT – I use another term; PNTS – prefer not to say [These are new UCAS gender identifications used in this admissions round] Numbers have been aggregated due to low values to prevent identification of individuals

Table 2. Applications and places by College

	<i>Applications</i>	<i>Places</i>
Harris Manchester	3	1
Hertford	24	5
Keble	22	6
St Hugh's	25	8
St John's	15	3
St Peter's	15	5
Total	104	28

NB – One each of the places offered by Hertford, Keble, St John's and St Peter's is a pool offer made on behalf of all the Colleges, except Harris Manchester and St Hugh's (offering two pool places).

Number and quality of applicants

The number of applicants was slightly down on last year. Several of those applying had attended our Open Days. The overall success rate for all applicants was 27%, slightly higher than last year (25%). Of those applying, 69 (66%) were called for interview, an increase from last year where the figure was 59 (57%). Three candidates withdrew before decisions were taken about desummoning or were deemed to have withdrawn because they failed to submit the written work required of them. All shortlisted candidates were interviewed online and all those interviewed were seen by two Colleges.

There was a marked shift in the geographic profile of applicants. In the 2024 cycle, applicants permanently resident in the UK formed a small majority at 51.4% (55 applicants). This proportion declined substantially in 2025 to 37.1% (39 applicants), representing a decrease of 14.3 percentage points. In contrast, applicants from non-EU countries increased significantly, rising from 47.7% in 2024 (51 applicants) to 61.9% in 2025 (65 applicants), an increase of 14.2 percentage points. This reflects a continuing strong interest in the degree from non-UK applicants. Sadly, however, the number and proportion of applicants from the EU remained very small.

In the previous cycle, UK-based applicants accounted for over two-thirds of shortlisted candidates (67.2%), while non-EU applicants made up 32.8%. In 2025, this balance shifted, with non-EU applicants forming the majority of shortlisted candidates (56.5%) and UK-based applicants accounting for 43.5%. No EU applicants were shortlisted in either cycle. However, UK-based applicants continued to receive the majority of offers. In 2024, 73.1% of offers were made to UK-resident applicants, increasing further to 82.1% in 2025. Conversely, the proportion of offers made to non-EU applicants declined from 26.9% in 2024 to 17.9% in 2025. No offers were made to EU-resident applicants.

Overall, in the 2025 cycle we see a substantial increase in applications from non-EU residents alongside a corresponding decline in UK-resident applicants. Despite this, UK-based applicants continued to be more likely to progress to offers, while non-EU applicants, although more numerous at application and shortlisting stages, accounted for a smaller share of final offers.

Gender

Women remained the majority of applicants and their representation increased in 2025, rising from 69.2% of applicants in 2024 to 74.3% in 2025. The proportion of applicants identifying as men declined from 27.1% in 2024 to 23.8% in 2025. Applicants who preferred not to state their gender or who used another term made up a very small proportion of applicants in both cycles, with a slight decrease in 2025. At the shortlisting stage, women continued to represent around 70% of shortlisted candidates in both years, while the proportion of men shortlisted increased slightly in 2025. Women received the majority of offers, with their share increasing from 61.5% in 2024 to 67.9% in 2025. The proportion of offers made to men decreased in 2025 compared with the previous cycle. Overall, the 2025 cycle saw increased applications from women and stronger representation of women through to offers, alongside a reduction in applications and offers for men.

School type and social disadvantage summary scores (United Kingdom only)

Applicants from state schools formed the largest group and increased their representation in the 2025 cycle. State-educated applicants rose from 67.3% of UK applicants in 2024 (37 applicants) to 75.0% in 2025 (27 applicants), an increase of 7.7 percentage points. Applicants from independent schools also increased slightly in proportional terms, from 21.8% (12 applicants) in 2024 to 25.0% (9 applicants) in 2025. In contrast, applicants categorised as “other” declined markedly, falling from 10.9% (6 applicants) in 2024 to no applicants in 2025. There were no UK-domiciled applicants from overseas schools in either cycle. Overall, the 2026 applicant pool was more concentrated among applicants from state and independent schools, particularly state schools.

Among shortlisted applicants state-educated applicants remained the largest group in both years, although their proportional share decreased from 42.2% in 2024 to 30.4% in 2025. The proportion of shortlisted applicants from independent schools also fell slightly, from 23.4% to 18.8%. By contrast, the share of shortlisted applicants from overseas schools increased notably, rising from 20.3% in 2024 to 31.9% in 2025. No applicants from the other category were shortlisted in 2025. A new NA category appeared in 2025, accounting for 18.8% of shortlisted applicants, indicating missing or unclassified school type data. State-educated applicants accounted for the largest proportion of offers and increased their share substantially in 2025, from 38.5% in 2024 to 50.0%. Offers to applicants from independent schools also rose proportionally, from 26.9% to 32.1%. The proportion of offers to applicants from overseas schools remained relatively stable at just over one in ten across both cycles. A small proportion of offers in 2025 (7.1%) were made to applicants recorded as NA. Overall, the data show increased representation and success for state-educated UK applicants in 2025.

Oxford priority applicants maintained a small but increasing presence in the applicant pool and demonstrated strong progression through the selection process. At the application stage, priority applicants accounted for 17.9% of UK applications in 2025, up slightly from 16.4% in 2024, despite a small decrease in absolute numbers. In contrast, applicants who were eligible but not classified as priority declined both in proportion and absolute terms, falling from 12.7% of UK applicants in 2024 to 7.7% in 2025. Priority applicants improved their relative representation, forming 20.0% of shortlisted candidates in 2025 compared with 14.0% in 2024, while eligible (non-priority) applicants declined to 10.0%. At the offer stage, priority applicants are receiving 21.7% of offers in 2025, up from 15.8% in 2024. Overall, these data suggest that Opportunity Oxford priority applicants are increasingly well represented in offers relative to their application numbers, highlighting the scheme’s effectiveness in supporting underrepresented applicants, while eligible but non-priority applicants face reduced progression.

Deferred entry

No applications were received for deferred entry in 2027.

Distribution of applicants between Colleges

The distribution of applicants between Colleges showed a significant number of applicants for St Hugh’s and Hertford with 25 and 24 applicants followed by Keble with 22 applicants.

Selection procedures

Tutors remain committed to providing interviews at two Colleges for all candidates interviewed in Oxford. A slight degree of reassignment of second choice candidates was necessary in order to achieve an equitable balance of workload between Colleges and was arranged by the Organising Secretary. Candidates were desummoned where appropriate, using the agreed selection criteria (see below). Following the conclusion of all interviews (marked on a 1-10 scale), candidates were discussed and ranked on an ABC system before places were confirmed.

Written work for all candidates was made available and interview scores were also recorded. All those deemed of high quality were designated for a place. All candidates were interviewed online using Microsoft Teams. In a very small number of cases, minor technical difficulties – candidates being unable to fully maintain a high-quality video as well as an audio link – led to an interview's length being slightly extended. In no instance, however, did this interfere with the successful conduct of the interview.

Aptitude testing

No pre-interview tests were used. In deference to interviewing all candidates online again this year, none were asked to read, and then answer questions on, an appropriate archaeological or anthropological passage as part of their interview. Some slight modification of other questions was required due to the inability of candidates to physically handle objects, but this did not prove difficult.

Short-listing criteria

Tutors employed the following criteria when selecting which candidates to interview: 1) A-level grades or equivalent (unless convincing extenuating circumstances could be demonstrated, AAA or 38 at IB as a minimum prediction/secured set of grades with candidates without this not being summoned for interview); 2) two pieces of submitted written work plus a 800 word essay in response to the question: *“How do you understand the connections between Archaeology and Anthropology? Illustrate your response by reference to what we can learn about people in the past and/or present from their material culture”* showing evidence of logical argument and analysis, as well as sufficient grasp of English to deal with the demands of an Oxford degree, the work being graded by Tutors from best to worst on a 5-1 scale; 3) a positive academic reference from someone acquainted with the candidate's academic background (subject to modification in the case of mature applicants); 4) a strong record of achievement, where relevant, in previous academic examinations, such as GCSE; 5) a personal statement showing a convincing degree of enthusiasm and motivation for studying the subject. Candidates who met all of these criteria were interviewed.

Reallocation and redistribution

Given the small numbers of places, candidates and Colleges involved, this remains an irrelevant issue for Archaeology & Anthropology and all interviewed candidates continue to be seen separately by two Colleges. However, in order to equalise the total burden of interviews between Colleges, a small number of second choice allocations were amended by the Organising Secretary.

Access

i) Open Days

Open Days linked to the University-wide Science Open Days continue to be successful in attracting applicants. We have maintained the fuller and, we believe, more effective programme initiated in 2017. In addition to a general talk about the degree and the admissions process, this includes taster lectures and the opportunity to talk with current undergraduates, including discussion of the fieldwork projects in which they have been engaged. Visits to the Ashmolean and Pitt Rivers Museum and the Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art continue to play an important part in our Open Day event. Outside Oxford, we will continue to support the London Anthropology and Archaeology Days and play a full part in those Oxford-Cambridge Student Conferences taking place in England and Wales. We remain keen to participate in those taking place in Scotland and Northern Ireland. We shall also continue to respond promptly and effectively to requests for further information sent on by the degree's Administrator to the Organising Secretary.

ii) The Archaeology & Anthropology admissions website and related social media accounts continue to be maintained and updated.

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