

2021 Admissions Round Feedback

Biology

Please note this is subject admissions feedback from the 2021 selection round - there will be changes each year, and these pages are only retained to provide a general indication of process.

The Biology admissions tutors would like to thank all applicants for the time and care they put into their applications. We are also grateful to referees for providing their supporting statements and for the encouragement and support they give to applicants.

In Biology, 684 (677 in 2020) candidates applied to Oxford and 320 (339 in 2020) were shortlisted for interview; 123 (111 in 2020) offers were made for 2022 entry and one for 2023 entry. At Keble, 17 out of the 36 first choice applicants were interviewed; each shortlisted applicant was interviewed at Keble and one other pre-arranged college. Six offers were made for 2022, including three to applicants from other colleges; one of these was an offer made under the [Opportunity Oxford](#) scheme. Two applicants to Keble were made offers at other colleges. Three offers made to Keble-allocated candidates were composite measure band A or B, contributing to reaching the University's Access targets.

We took account of the full range of information available to us at shortlisting, including information about school performance and on any specific factors affecting achievement. Students were selected for interview from their UCAS forms on the basis of examination scores (achieved and predicted), referee's report, and personal statement – showing both an interest in and an academic potential for Biology. In their assessment of individual applications, the tutors took account of contextual data concerning relative individual and school performance as well as some background characteristics related to place of residence. This information is available only for applicants from within the UK. An explanation of how the University uses contextual data can be found here: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/decisions/contextual-data>. We were also mindful of the potential and uneven impact of the disruption to teaching and assessment caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Regarding the interviewing process at Keble, no written tests were set and interviews were approximately 30 minutes in length. During the interview, candidates were partly assessed on their ability to analyse and comment on biological data or images that were presented to them. Very little of the interview was concerned with questions that just required factual recall. We were particularly interested in assessing whether the candidates were genuinely enthusiastic about biology (this is a selection criterion for

Biology) and here it was helpful to ask them to discuss recent reading, project work or other work of a biological nature carried out outside of school.

Further and general information on Biology admissions can be found here:
<https://www.biology.ox.ac.uk/admissions>