

2021 Admissions Round Feedback

Classical Archaeology & Ancient History

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 CAAH 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 proving their supporting statements and for the encouragement and support they give to applicants.

In Classical Archaeology and Ancient History, 134 (121 in 2020) candidates applied to Oxford and 122 (107 in 2020) were shortlisted for interview; 27 (28 in 2020) offers were made for 2022 entry. At Keble, eight out of the ten first choice applicants were interviewed (one applicant withdrew), and a number of applicants from other colleges were also interviewed. Two offers were made for 2022, which is the College quota for this subject.

As described below, tutors consider candidates from other colleges as well, so the direct application to place ratios for each college are not strongly indicative of a candidate's chance of success.

For Classical Archaeology & Ancient History, candidates will normally be summoned for interview. Grounds for not summoning include: less good results in official examinations (especially GCSE); less good results predicted for A level and/or other impending examinations; less good written work showing lack of intellectual coherence or power of analysis, or serious inaccuracy; lack of interest in ancient history or Classical archaeology in the personal statement.

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>. This year tutors were also aware of the potential and uneven impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on both learning and assessment.

Final selection was made on the basis of several factors, including achieved and predicted grades, personal statement, school report, written work, contextual information, and performance at interview. All interviews took place remotely, online, again this year due to the pandemic. Interviewees were asked to examine some images and to read and discuss an ancient text, translated into English; the text was sent electronically about fifteen minutes before the ancient history interview, and the images were shown in the interview itself for archaeology. In admitting students we hope to select those individuals who, from the evidence that we have available to us, are the most able and most likely to benefit from the course that we offer. Tutors were looking for evidence of enthusiasm for studying the

course and engagement with its subject matter, combined with an inquiring mind, analytical and communication skills, intellectual ambition, commitment and motivation.

As in previous years, tutors across the University worked together to ensure that the best candidates from the entire cohort applying to Oxford were offered places, regardless of which college they had applied to. CAAH applicants had two separate interviews, both held remotely. There are no written tests, but candidates may be asked to read a passage to discuss in the interview or to engage with images or aspects of material culture. Many candidates in Classical Archaeology & Ancient History had at least one further interview with tutors from another college.

At Keble, Archaeology & Anthropology, Classical Archaeology & Ancient History, and Human Sciences form part of an integrated 'subject group' directed by two Tutorial Fellows, one in Anthropology and one in Archaeology. The subject group as a whole now admits up to 9 candidates per year.

The university website offers more information about the courses including the selection criteria: <http://www.classics.ox.ac.uk/classical-archaeology-and-ancient-history.html>