

2023 Admissions Round Feedback

Classical Archaeology & Ancient History

Please note this is subject admissions feedback from the 2023 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 which they put into their applications. We are also grateful to referees for providing their supporting statements and for the encouragement and support which they give to applicants.

In Classical Archaeology and Ancient History, 169 (152 in 2022) candidates applied to Oxford and 142 (142 in 2022) were shortlisted for interview; 32 (32 in 2022) offers were made for 2024 entry and 2 offers for 2025 entry. 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 (it follows that the direct application to place ratios for each college are not necessarily indicative of a candidate's chance of success). At Keble, ten out of the eleven first-choice applicants were shortlisted and interviewed, and three of these candidates had one further interview with tutors from a Faculty panel. Two offers were made for 2024, which is the College quota for this subject.

For Classical Archaeology & Ancient History, candidates are normally 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; and lack of demonstration of interest in Classical archaeology and / or ancient history 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 may be found here:

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/decisions/contextual-data>.

This year tutors were again 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. All shortlisted first-choice Keble candidates were interviewed twice, in each

case by a panel which combined Classical archaeology and ancient history. In each interview candidates were asked to read and discuss a short ancient historical text (translated into English) which was sent electronically twenty minutes in advance. In a second segment, candidates were presented with one or more images for description and discussion. The interview sometimes concluded with general questions generated from the UCAS Personal Statement and / or from the pre-submitted written work.

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 analytical / reasoning ability, visual acuity / engagement with images / objects, communication skills, aptitude for the subject, enthusiasm / motivation for studying the course, and intellectual curiosity.

At Keble, Classical Archaeology & Ancient History, Archaeology & Anthropology, and Human Sciences form part of an integrated 'subject group' directed by two Tutorial Fellows, one in Archaeology and one in Anthropology. 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>