

2020 Admissions Round Feedback

Economics & Management

This is admissions feedback from the 2020 selection round for 2021 (and deferred 2022) entry. There could be changes to selection criteria in subsequent years, and this feedback is designed to provide a general indication of the admissions and interview process.

In the initial round, we had a field of 101 applicants for a total of five places. No candidates applied for deferred entry in 2022. From the 101 applicants, 16 were called for an interview. Prior to arriving at Keble, candidates were required to sit the Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA) provided by Cambridge Assessment. The TSA tests student thinking and critical skills, and the essay component tests writing ability. We considered candidates due to sit school-leaving exams as well as those post-school leaving exams.

In order to be invited for an interview, we looked for strengths across the following dimensions.

1. Excellent performance in the TSA. Most candidates invited for an interview had scores in the top 15% of all applicants.
2. Exceptional results in official examinations, especially GCSE or equivalent. Most candidates demonstrated strength in analytic subjects and presented robust evidence of high academic achievement.
3. Results predicted for A level, or other impending examinations, are generally at the highest level – candidates must have been predicted to secure A*AA, one of which must be in mathematics to secure an interview. For non-A level candidates, we follow university guidelines. For instance, for International Baccalaureate candidates, the minimum requirement is 39 (including core points) with 766 at HL, and for Advanced Highers, the minimum requirement is AA/AAB. Most candidates selected for an interview had predicted grades well above the minimum requirements.
4. A personal statement that demonstrated clear motivation for studying E&M.
5. A very strong school report.
6. Contextual information, including the candidate's Composite Score, which captures socio-economic characteristics.

All interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams. Each candidate had two twenty-minute interviews that occurred consecutively in a single call. Interviews focused on establishing a candidate's ability to think critically, interpret and analyze data, and to synthesize when presented with unfamiliar material. Background reading materials were circulated prior to the interview and were used as a common basis for further discussion on related topics.

As a quality and standard check, some candidates were selected for second college interviews, and these were held the following week.

The field of candidates was very strong. Students in general performed well on the interview, demonstrating strong skills, suitable proficiencies, and a clear motivation to study E&M. Based on applicant performance in the interview and all aspects of the application, we made five offers for 2021 entry. When making final decisions, we looked particularly closely at the following factors: interview performance, TSA performance, TSA essay, performance in GCSE (raw and contextualized), and predicted (or completed) A-levels (or equivalent), personal statement, and school report. Due to the competitive nature of the admissions process and the small number of places available, it is inevitable that strong candidates were not selected, and we have no doubt that these candidates will go on to have successful academic careers at other universities.