

2021 Admissions Round Feedback

Economics and Management

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 Economics & Management 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.

This year there were 1709 applications to the University for Economics and Management. Of these, 292 were shortlisted for interview and 94 were made offers, including four for 2023.

In Keble, we had a field of 102 (101 in 2020) applicants for a quota of six places. No candidates applied for deferred entry in 2023, although we are always willing to consider such applications. Candidates were required to sit the Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA) provided by Cambridge Assessment prior to selection for interview. The TSA tests student thinking and critical skills. Twenty-five of the 102 applicants were called for an interview. 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.

In the assessment of individual applications, we took account of contextual data concerning relative individual and school performance as well as socioeconomic indicators. 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.

All interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams. Each candidate had a single combined interview with both Economics and Management tutors, and the combined interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. Each combined interview was scheduled in a 45-minute time slot to leave scope to resolve technical issues. Interviews focused on establishing a candidate's ability to think critically, interpret and analyze data, and to synthesize when presented with unfamiliar material. They were designed to determine aptitude for learning economics and management in Oxford's distinct tutorial format. No knowledge of either subject was assumed.

As a quality and standard check, some candidates were selected for second college interviews, and these were held in the week commencing December 13.

Final decisions were based on all the information available on each shortlisted applicant, including TSA score, interview performance, performance in completed examinations, referee statement, personal statement, and contextual data. There were many able and deserving applicants. The margins between those being made an offer and those who were not were very small. Seven offers were made to Keble applicants, including one at another college. Due to the competitive nature of the admissions process and the small number of places available, it is inevitable that exceptional candidates were not selected. We have no doubt that these candidates will go on to have successful academic careers at other universities.