



2019 Admissions Round Feedback

Geography

Please note this is subject admissions feedback from the 2019 selection round - there will be changes each year, and these pages are only retained to provide a general indication of process.

Thank You!

A wholehearted thank you to all those candidates who either applied for or were interviewed for Geography at Keble College in the 2019 round. We also greatly appreciate the efforts of school staff in preparing the reports on the UCAS forms and in supporting students to apply to Oxford. For the 2019 admissions round, we were able to make 10 offers for 2020 (one more than initially planned because of the strength of applications this year) and a further two for 2021.

Keble Website

Keble Geography maintains a website which we hope is useful to those who are thinking of applying to the college to read Geography: <http://www.keble-oxford-geography.info>. This website was designed by past students of Keble and provides some background information on applying to the college. The website has an FAQ section and also a video of an admissions interview run by Richard Washington and Ali Rogers which follows a similar format to the admissions interviews we run each year. While the interviewee was an undergraduate geographer at the time (and not a real applicant), the interview is in all other respects as close to the real thing as we could make it. It was filmed as a once-off, single take, with no editing. We always welcome feedback on our website, especially if the feedback would improve the content and make it more useful for future applicants.

2019 Admissions Process

Shortlisting process

A total of 447 candidates applied to all colleges to read Geography at Oxford in the 2019 round. There were 517 in 2018. 81 places were available to fill this year with a ratio of applicants to offers of slightly greater than 5.5 to 1. We can only interview 3 candidates for every place. Accordingly, 243 interview places were available across all colleges. Shortlisting

is done centrally by a committee of three people in the School of Geography and the Environment so as to achieve a list of three applicants for every place offered. The following criteria were applied for shortlisting in 2019:

- * All Band A classified applicants (Access criterion) are included in the shortlist. Across all colleges this summed to 47 applicants
- * Absolute performance at GCSE: all applicants gaining 10 or more GCSEs at A*/9/8 (87 applicants in 2019)
- * Contextualised GCSE performance: This was used to fill the remaining places to a total of 200. The lowest applicant cGCSE score included on this basis was +0.23. Contextual GCSE scores are hard on candidates from selective schools. In 2019 there were 29 candidates with 9 A* (or A* equivalent) at GCSE who fell below the contextual GCSE threshold of 0.23.

Although candidates were required to complete an entrance exam, we were not permitted to see the results of the exam. Neither did we see the actual exam content. This is because the entrance exam is in a trial year.

Reallocation

A centralised system of reallocation across colleges was applied, after each college had been given the chance to select twice as many candidates than places on offer. Keble offers 8 places per year and could therefore retain 16 shortlisted candidates for interview at Keble. Candidates beyond the 16 who had applied to Keble and who had been shortlisted were then reallocated to other colleges for interview.

Keble Interviews

Candidates invited for interview at Keble were assessed on the basis of two independent 30 minute interviews with Geography fellows and tutors. In one of the interviews, candidates were given an article to read 35 minutes before the start of the interview. The article was discussed for 15 minutes in interview. Interviewers also presented the candidates with graphs, pictures and diagrams, to evaluate the applicants' ability to interpret data. We do not test directly for geographical knowledge, but we expect candidates to be able to engage with geographical topics. The academic staff conducting the interviews in 2019 were Richard Washington, Beth Greenhough, Fiona Ferbrache, Samuel Hampton, Catherine Buckland and Thomas Caton Harrison. The first five are Keble tutors and Thomas is a researcher in the School of Geography and Environment.

The strongest candidates were able to relay the argument and content of the article they read prior to the interview accurately and to consider the merits of the argument. They were able to respond in a thoughtful way to questions and ideas, creatively applying pre-existing knowledge to new problems. They responded precisely and clearly to graphs, maps, pictures and diagrams, seeking clarification from interviewers when necessary, and showing good attention to detail. Strong applicants also came across as engaged and enthused by

the topics they were discussing, and demonstrated a broad awareness of, and engagement with topical issues. Above all, the better interviewees responded to what was asked of them rather than tried to inject prepared statements or facts or rely too heavily on previous knowledge. Generally there are no strictly right and wrong answers to the questions we pose. We are much more interested in the ability of candidates to justify their reasons for the responses they give. Keble College Geography tutors do their best to be as fair, rigorous and consistent as possible in the identification of candidates with the potential and ability to flourish at the University. Post interviews the panel of 6 met for several hours on two separate occasions. Each candidate was discussed in detail. Discussion included the candidates' application form, exam grades and the interview itself.

We very much regret that we are unable to offer places to more candidates as so very many of them are deserving of a place. Thank you once again to all candidates for applying and to teaching staff for their very helpful contributions to the process.

Summary data below.

Total number of applicants for 2020 entry (excluding withdrawals)	431
Total number of applicants for 2021 entry	16
Gender of applicants Female: 282 Male: 165	
Not invited to interview	169
Number interviewed	278
Number of candidates reallocated before interviews	86
Places offered for 2020	82
Open offers for 2020	15
Places offered for 2021	5
Ratio of applicants to offers (all applicants)	4.4