



2023 Admissions Round Feedback

Geography

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.

Thank You!

A wholehearted thank you to all those candidates who either applied for or were interviewed for Geography at Keble College in the 2023 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 2023 admissions round, we were able to make 9 offers for 2024 (one more than initially planned because of the strength of applications this year).

Online Demonstration Interview

Keble Geography contributed a demonstration interview to the university admissions resources. The online interview can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ncMXUMxdBc>

Dr Sam Hampton and Richard Washington, both on the teaching staff in Keble Geography, ran the interview with one of the current students. Sam and Richard have interviewed together for Keble for the last few years and what you see in the video is as close to the real thing as could be. It is hopefully a useful resource for aspiring applicants.

2023 Admissions Process

Applications

A total of 289 candidates applied to all colleges to study Geography at Oxford in the 2023 round. There were 333 in 2022, 333 in 2021 and 455 in in 2020. 82 places were available to fill this year with a ratio of applicants to offers of 3.5 to 1.

The Table below show the applications by gender for the years 2023-2017 inclusive.

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Female	169	179	191	292	282	333	182
Male	116	154	142	163	165	205	137
Total	289	333	333	455	447	538	319

The Table below shows the applications by school type and gender.

	Female	Male	Total	% of total applicants from this school type (2022 figures in brackets)
State	89	66	157	54.3% (59%)
Independent	44	32	78	26.9% (21%)
Overseas	36	18	54	18.7% (20%)

Shortlisting

We can only interview 3 candidates for every place. Accordingly, 237 interview places were available across all colleges. Shortlisting is done centrally by a committee in the School of Geography and the Environment so as to achieve a list of three applicants for every place offered.

The central admissions panel compiled an initial shortlist of 200 applicants based on cGCSE scores, but also including all post qualification applicants who had already achieved the level of standard offer in A Levels. 20 applicants in the most disadvantaged group who were predicted to obtain the required offer were shortlisted irrespective of their cGCSE score.

Oxford uses a range of contextual measures related to an applicant's school and home postcode. More information can be found on the University website at [ox.ac.uk/context](https://www.ox.ac.uk/context).

There were 246 applicants on the final centrally agreed shortlist (3 x the number of places for entry in 2024). College tutors were then asked to identify (2 x quota of offer places to retain for interview. In Keble this number was 16 (2 x 8 available places). The remainder of the shortlisted applicants were reallocated across Colleges.

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 was initially able to offer 8 places this 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. All interviews took place online via the Microsoft Teams platform following the agreement across Oxford colleges to adopt online interviews for the foreseeable future. During the interviews, interviewers asked a range of questions designed to test the candidate's ability in problem solving, ability to follow and evaluate an argument and independent thinking. 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 2023 were Richard Washington and Dr Sam Hampton (panel 1), Prof Beth Greenhough and Kenta Sayama (panel 2) and Dr Fiona Ferbrache and Alex Henry. Alex is a DPhil student at Keble. All the others are on the Keble teaching staff. Panels 1

and 2 used a short reading which was supplied to the candidates 30 minutes before the interview. The first part of the interview (usually 15 minutes) dealt with the reading. The readings were from the journal *Nature* and *the Conversation* and also a communication written by the Environment Agency. Questions on the reading dealt with the content and interpretation of the content.

The strongest candidates 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.

Each panel scored individual applicants out of 10. With each candidate doing two interviews, we ended up with two scores out of 10. In some cases, where a consensus score within a panel was difficult to reach, the scores of the individual interviewers was recorded. There were often good reasons for within panel divergence and these cases typically were discussed.

Keble College Geography tutors do their absolute best to be as fair, rigorous and as 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. Each candidate was discussed in detail. Discussion included the candidates' application form, exam grades and the interview itself. Decisions are never based on the interview alone.

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.