



2020 Admissions Round Feedback

Human Sciences

Please note this is subject admissions feedback from the 2020 selection round - there will be changes each year, and these pages are only retained to provide a general indication of process.

In Human Sciences, 233 (220 in 2019) candidates applied to Oxford; 106 of those were shortlisted following the guidelines agreed among the colleges. The outcome was that 34 (40 in 2019) offers were made, 33 for October 2021 and 1 for October 2022. The reduced number of offers made was related to the number of places that had already been given as deferred places from the previous year's cohort, due to the various effects of the pandemic. This was thus an exceptionally competitive year. At Keble, there were 32 (26 in 2019) applicants for the 3 offers made.

As described below, tutors consider candidates from other colleges as well, so the direct application to place ratios for each college are not strongly indicative of a candidate's chance of success.

For Human Sciences, the large numbers applying overall entail that it is not possible to interview all candidates: only a proportion of candidates can be summoned for interview – under 50% this year. 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; and relatively low results in the TSA.

Final selection was made on the basis of several factors, including achieved and predicted grades, personal statement, school report, TSA score, contextual information, and performance at interview. All interviews took place remotely, online, this year due to the pandemic. 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 enthusiasm for studying the course, combined with an inquiring mind, analytical skills, intellectual ambition, commitment and motivation.

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 to. Candidates are normally interviewed by at least two different colleges. Keble applicants would normally have two interviews of about 20-25 minutes each with Keble tutors. Due to the pandemic, however, applicants for Human Sciences had one interview (of about 25 minutes on Microsoft Teams) this year with Keble tutors. There are no written tests, but candidates may be asked to read a passage to discuss in the interview or to engage with material such as graphs.

The tutors would like to thank all applicants and those who supported them by giving advice and writing references. Although it was not possible to make everyone a place, we are confident that our applicants will go on to successful University careers.