

2023 Admissions Round Feedback

History and joint schools

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.

The History 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.

Keble admits students for History, Ancient and Modern History, History and Politics, and History and Modern Languages (French, Italian, and Spanish only). A summary of the number of applications, shortlisted applicants and offers in History and joint schools is provided by the Faculty of History and is available on this website. This year there were 1700 applications (slightly fewer than last year) for all courses involving History; 1105 candidates were shortlisted for interview; and 384 offers were made.

In Keble, there were thirty-nine first-choice applicants (four for Ancient and Modern History, eight for History & Politics, two for History & Modern Languages, and twenty-five for History). A total of thirty-one were shortlisted for interview, including two who were reassigned to Keble from other colleges. One Keble applicant was allocated to another college for interviews). A further eleven candidates were interviewed in the second round.

The criteria for shortlisting differ according to the course, and they are described in full in the Faculty's summary report mentioned above.

All aspects of a candidate's application were carefully reviewed, including their GCSE results and other qualifications before any decision was to call them to interview. Performance on the HAT and GCSE scores are particularly significant in deciding whether to summon a candidate for interview. Marking of the HAT is fully anonymised, and all scripts are double-blind marked by members of the History Faculty. Further information about the History Aptitude Test, including past papers and mark schemes, can be found on the History Faculty Website: <http://www.history.ox.ac.uk/history-aptitude-test-hat>

Interviews took place on Microsoft Teams and lasted twenty-five minutes. Applicants for History were interviewed by a team of four History tutors. Applicants for joint schools, including Ancient and Modern History, were also interviewed by tutors in the appropriate subject.

Interviews for History began with the tutors asking candidates to summarise a piece of historical writing sent to them online sixty minutes before the start of the interview. The passage was deliberately challenging, but the kind of text undergraduates would encounter

regularly in the course of their degree study. Using a passage in this way enables comparisons across the whole cohort of candidates. The best candidates showed high order comprehension and analytical skills and were able to apply the arguments and concepts deployed in the passage to other contemporary or historical topics they knew about. If there was remaining time interviewees could also be asked questions arising from their submitted written work, but the bulk of the interview was taken up by discussion of the passage.

Our final decisions were based on very careful consideration of all aspects of each candidate's application: achieved and predicted examination results, UCAS reference and personal statement, submitted written work, performance in the HAT and performance in interview. In all aspects of the application procedure, we are looking for evidence of strong analytical ability, clarity of expression, historical imagination and enthusiasm for the subject.

In their assessment of individual applications, the tutors took account of contextual data concerning relative individual and school performance as well as some background characteristics related to place of residence. 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 disruptions associated with reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) problem in some schools. We also took account of difficulties surrounding the technical administration of the HAT test.

Further details of the History Faculty's selection criteria and other information on how to apply can be found at: <http://www.history.ox.ac.uk/how-apply#collapse1-0>

There is a commitment across the colleges to ensure that the chances of being made an offer are not disproportionately affected by college choice. The History tutors therefore interviewed eleven applicants to other colleges, and, in turn, several Keble applicants were also interviewed elsewhere.

Thirteen offers were made at Keble this year. These comprised nine for History and two for History and Politics, one for History & Modern Languages and one for Ancient and Modern History this particular year. Five of these offers were made to applicants whose first-choice college was not Keble.