

2025 Admissions Round Feedback

History and joint schools

Please note this is subject admissions feedback from the 2025 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 48 applications for all courses involving History; 28 candidates were shortlisted for interview; and 13 offers were made. In Keble, there were 38 first-choice applicants (4 for Ancient and Modern History, 20 for History & Politics, 2 for History & Modern Languages, and 22 for History). A total of 37 were shortlisted for interview, including some who were reassigned to Keble from other colleges. A further 11 candidates (three of whom received offers) 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. 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. Contextual GCSE scores are particularly significant in deciding whether to summon a candidate for interview, and other qualifications were carefully scrutinised.

Applicants for History were interviewed by a team of four History tutors, split into pairs so that each candidate had two 20-minute interviews on Microsoft Teams. Applicants for joint schools, including Ancient and Modern History, were also interviewed by tutors in the appropriate subject. One of the interviews addressed issues raised by the written work and the candidate's wider historical interests as articulated in the personal statement. In the second interview, which weighed more strongly in our deliberations, candidates were shown a brief historical source on screen, and given three minutes to read and think about it. They were asked whether there were any words they did not understand before the discussion began. Initially they were given minimal information about the source, but asked what they thought it was trying to say. They were then asked what more they would like to know about the source, and then when that information was provided, how it altered their understanding. The discussion was further complicated by showing them a related visual source, which provided further contextual information, on which they were asked to comment. Candidates were also asked about the implications of the overall discussion for other historical phenomena they had encountered: the source raised issues about political communication between rulers and ruled, and the applicability of terms like 'propaganda'. This was a deliberately challenging exercise, but one which tested source criticism, historical imagination, flexibility, conceptual clarity, and intellectual curiosity. Candidates approached the exercise on very refreshing ways and the interviewers enjoyed their insights. Using a passage in this way enables comparisons across the

whole cohort. We found the source-based exercise particularly helpful in our decision making in the absence of the Aptitude Test which we would normally have run.

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, as well as 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](#).

Further details of the History Faculty's selection criteria and other information on how to apply can be found at: [Making an application | Faculty of History](#) 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 several applicants who had applied originally to other colleges, and, in turn, several Keble applicants were also interviewed elsewhere.

Thirteen offers were made at Keble for 2026 entry (including to three applicants to other colleges). One offer for History was deferred from the last round and reserved for a student on the Astrophoria Foundation Year. The offers comprised eight for History and three for History and Politics, and two for Ancient and Modern History. Joint schools can be particularly competitive and demanding. We tried hard to identify strong candidates for History and Politics in the second round. It should be noted that among the eight offers for History sole, two had originally applied for History and Politics, and one each respectively for History and Modern Languages and Ancient and Modern History.