

2021 Admissions Round Feedback

Human Sciences

Please note this is subject admissions feedback from the 2021 selection round - there will be changes each year, and these pages are only retained to provide a general indication of process.

The tutors in Human Sciences 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.

In Human Sciences, 217 (233 in 2020) candidates applied to Oxford; 109 (106 in 2020) of those were shortlisted following the guidelines agreed among the colleges. The outcome was that 34 (34 in 2020) offers were made all for 2022. At Keble, there were 23 (32 in 2020) applicants for the 3 places available; 15 were shortlisted for interview.

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 – about 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.

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 the Covid-19 pandemic on both learning and assessment.

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 were therefore interviewed by at least two different colleges. 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 outcome was that four offers were made at Keble and one offer at another college.