Human Sciences Admissions Summary Report 2025-6

1.   ADMISSIONS STATISTICS

1.1   Number of Applicants

There were 164 applicants. Of these 153 sat the Thinking Skill Assessment Test (TSA), which is a compulsory part of the admissions process.

1.2   Number of Applicants per Place

A total of 37 offers were made (including open offers and deferred offers) making a ratio of 4.4 applicants per place.

1.3   Breakdown of applicants by open applications, deferred entry, gender and domicile

There were 24 open applications.

There were 161 applications for entry in 2026 and 3 applications for entry in 2027.

There were 34 male applicants, 122 female applicants, and 8 applicants who use another term or preferred not to say.

There were 98 home applicants, 9 EU applicants and 57 overseas applicants.

1.4   Number of shortlisted applicants

100 applicants were shortlisted for interview.

1.5   Number of applicants made offers

37 applicants were made offers (including 5 open offers and 2 deferred offers).

2.   ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES

2.1   SHORTLISTING PROCEDURE

2.1.1   Selection Criteria

The selection process and selection criteria for Human Sciences are set out on the Human Sciences website at Apply to study here | Institute of Human Sciences

2.1.2   Procedures for Shortlisting

Shortlisting was performed in accordance with the stated admissions criteria and taking into account available and relevant data; in particular these data included an applicant's score from the TSA, the candidate's contextualised GCSE score, where available, all aspects of the applicant's UCAS form and any further information specific to the applicant.

The TSA score and contextualised GCSE score, where applicable, were combined to provide a pre-interview score on which candidates were ranked. Where no contextualised GCSE score was available, the TSA score was given double weighting in the calculation of the pre-interview score. A threshold based on the number of places available was calculated and those above the threshold in the ranking, and whose predicted or obtained A level or equivalent grades met the requirement for the course and who had satisfactory previous qualifications, were shortlisted. A number of candidates below the threshold who had exceptional circumstances were also short-listed, resulting in around 3 short-listed applicants per place.

A meeting of tutors from all colleges offering places for Human Sciences was held to discuss shortlisting decisions in the light of all information available to ensure that shortlisting decisions were applied consistently across all colleges. At this meeting short-listing decisions for candidates were agreed and these decisions entered on to the web-based admissions database.

Each applicant had a first assigned college which was either the college to which they had applied or, in the case of open applicants, a college randomly selected by the Admissions Office in such a way as a to even-out competition for places. In cases where a college was particularly over-subscribed, colleges were asked to reallocate some of their candidates after short-listing. The candidates were then assigned to colleges which were under-subscribed. In 2025-26, nineteen applicants were reallocated to a different first choice college after shortlisting.

2.1.3 Weighting of TSA and Contextualised GCSE Scores

For candidates with a contextualised GCSE score, the TSA and contextualised GCSE score were given equal weight in the pre-interview score. For candidates without a contextualised GCSE score, the pre-interview score was based solely on the TSA score, ie the TSA score was given double weighting.

2.1.4. Statistics on Shortlisted Applicants

The average number of GCSEs amongst short-listed candidates was 9.7 (the same as in 2024-25 and compared with 9.8 in 2023-24) and the average number of GCSEs at 9/8/A* amongst shortlisted candidates was 8.4 (compared with 8.1 in 2024-25 and 8.8 in 2023-24). Amongst all candidates, the average number of GCSEs was 9.4 (compared with 9.6 in 2024-25 and 9.5 in 2023-24) and the average number of GCSEs at 9/8/A* was 7.2 (compared with 7.3 in 2024-25 and 7.6 in 2023-34).

The average Contextual GCSE score for shortlisted candidates was 0.48 and for all candidates was 0.09.

Of the 100 shortlisted candidates, 71 were taking (or had taken) A-levels (compared with 72 out of 104 in 2024-25) and of these 58 (or 81.7%) were taking (or had taken)

Biology (compared with 65 or 90.3% in 2024-25 and 59 or 88.1% in 2023-34). 36 (or 50.7%) were taking (or had taken) A level Maths (compared with 32 or 44.4% in 2024-25).

2.2 INTERVIEW PROCESS

2.2.1 Description of Interview Process

All short-listed candidates were interviewed in early December. The interview dates by subjects are readily available on the University undergraduate admissions webpage in advance.

All interviews took place remotely on Microsoft Teams.

2.2.2 Number of Interviews at 1st Colleges

There were 99 first college interviews.

2.2.3 Number of 2nd College Interviews Including Second College Allocation Process

There were 99 interviews at second colleges. Each short-listed candidate was randomly assigned a second college by an algorithm to equalise across colleges the interview load per place ratio.

2.2.4 Descriptors of Interview Scoring Used

Interviews are academic in nature. An applicant's performance was judged according to the admissions criteria. The interviews were graded on a scale of 1–20 against descriptors as follows:

20	Truly exceptional: A candidate such as only rarely encountered	(A++)	78+
19	Outstanding academic skills: as above	(A+)	72-77
17-18	Excellent Thoughtful and insightful in discussion, able to propose relevant insights/examples in response to questions, taking the conversation further in development of ideas, concepts and arguments, than the norm	(A)	68-72
14-16	Very good: competent, with sound relevant responses to interview questions; engaged in the discussion; enthusiastic about multi-disciplinary studies	(AB)	63-67

12-13	Competent overall in response to questions and tests; but some weakness, eg, difficulty, irrelevance, or inaccuracy in response to questions, tests or discussion of relevant issues; and/or some lack of enthusiasm/curiosity regarding engagement in discussion	(B)	58-62
10-11	Borderline acceptance: signs of potential, but also clear signs of weakness; inaccuracies or difficulty in response to discussion of relevant issues; not as engaged/articulate as tutorial discussion requires	(BC)	54-57
8-9	Too weak to consider for a place: failure to sustain discussion of subjects initiated by interviewers; lack of engagement in simple QM tests	(C)	48-53
4-7	Very weak; as above, but to a greater degree	(D)	21-47
0-3	Exceptionally weak; Failure to navigate the tests and sustain a discussion; unenthusiastic	(E)	0-20

2.2.5 Procedures for Final Decision Making Including Final Admissions Meeting

The Institute of Human Sciences operate various procedures in a co-ordinated effort to ensure that the strongest applicants are offered places irrespective of college choice. These include transparency of all test results, interview grades and UCAS forms amongst all tutors involved in admissions, and a meeting of college tutors at which places awarded are collectively agreed. At the meeting the strongest unplaced candidates were discussed and ten were selected for a panel interview.

A panel comprising three college lead interviewers for Human Sciences (including the Admissions Co-ordinator) interviewed these candidates and five of those were made open offers.

3. Pre-Interview Admissions Test: Thinking Skills Admissions Test (TSA)

3.1 When the Test Results Are Available

The TSA results are available shortly after decision letters are sent in January.

3.2 How they Can Be Accessed

Test scores will be automatically distributed to all applicants shortly after decision letters are sent in January.

3.2 The Average Performance of Applicants

The average TSA score in 2025 was:

50.2 amongst all applicants (compared with 58.0 in 2024 and 56.7 in 2023).
54.6 amongst shortlisted applicants (compared with 63 in 2024 and 60.3 in 2023).

55.1 amongst candidates who were made offers (compared with 63.5 in 2024 and 61.5 in 2023).

For the problem-solving questions, the average score in 2025 was:

49.7 amongst all applicants
54.0 amongst shortlisted applicants
54.2 amongst candidates who were made offers

For the critical-thinking questions, the average score in 2025 was:

50.7 amongst all applicants
53.6 amongst shortlisted applicants
54.6 amongst candidates who were made offers

Distribution of TSA Scores