



2020 Admissions Round Feedback

Modern Languages and joint schools

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.

The College made 10 offers for entry in October 2021, in Modern Languages and joint schools with Modern Languages. There were candidates offering French, Italian and Spanish, and the joint schools with English, History, Linguistics and Philosophy were all represented. No candidates applied for deferred entry, though such applications are welcome and always considered sympathetically. They can be especially beneficial for modern linguists if candidates aim to spend the intervening time using their language (or languages) in appropriate countries.

The College originally considered 26 first-choice applications in Modern Languages and joint schools with Modern Languages. In addition to the first-choice candidates who were interviewed, the College interviewed a further 9 candidates who had already been interviewed by a different first-choice college. Two of the first-choice applicants were not invited to interview (typical reasons for this being, for example, less good public examinations results or predictions, or less good performance in the History Aptitude Test, English Literature Aptitude Test, and/or Language Grammar Tests). Two of the Keble first-choice candidates were interviewed by other colleges.

Candidates offered various combinations of French, Italian, Spanish, Linguistics, English, History and Philosophy, as well as sole languages. The College has no quotas for specific languages or combinations, aiming to take those candidates who are best qualified and show most potential. All first-choice candidates who were invited to interview received a letter explaining that they should give thought to any other combinations they might be willing to be considered for and were asked on arrival to indicate these (if any) on a form. All candidates were considered primarily for combinations they had applied for, but in the case of a few candidates, other combinations were considered.

Candidates received at least online two interviews from Keble. With the exception of candidates applying for Italian ab-initio, candidates, in language interviews, were asked questions in the target language on subjects related to the personal statement in the UCAS form; they were also asked questions (in English) designed to test their conceptual grasp of, and ability to manipulate, basic grammar and syntax. Candidates were given a very short literary passage (variously verse or prose) to read quietly at the beginning of their interview (in French and Spanish in the case of

French and Spanish candidates; in English in the case of Italian candidates) and were asked questions designed to test their comprehension and their observation of detail and form. Candidates for Linguistics were given exercises testing their potential for understanding linguistic concepts. A key aim of all interviews was to assess the degree of engagement, observation, rigour and precision with which candidates approached matters of language usage. This assessment was important in deciding which candidates should be offered places, but was considered alongside the results of the written tests and the information available on the UCAS forms.

10 offers were made: 1 to a candidate from overseas, 6 to candidates from state schools, 3 to candidates from independent schools. Of the 10 offers, two were to candidates who had been interviewed first by another college. Two offers were made for a combination for which the candidate had not originally applied (e.g. a candidate for History and French being offered a place for French and beginner's Italian). Offers were made in the joint schools with English (1) and Linguistics (3), as well a sole- and two-language options within the main school of Modern Languages. One candidate was offered a place at another college. We made no offers in the joint schools with History and Philosophy, but continue to welcome applicants in these schools.

Candidates are reminded that there is no absolute standard for entry. Admission is competitive and often entails good and promising candidates not securing offers owing to the strength of the competition. Care was taken to make fine distinctions between candidates on the basis of all the information that the admissions process offers the College. The field of applicants this year was very good and every effort was made to secure interviews at other colleges for strong candidates to whom Keble was not able to make an offer, though even so it proved impossible to place some deserving candidates.

Conducting the process online, owing to Covid restrictions, brought challenges. Occasionally internet connections were poor and, on a couple of occasions, broke down. Once an interview was interrupted by a fire alarm. Due allowance was made for such interference, and re-scheduling was done, when thought necessary.