

Modern Languages and joint schools 2021 Admissions Round Feedback

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 Modern Languages 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 providing their supporting statements and for the encouragement and support they give to applicants.

Keble considers applications for French, Italian and Spanish, and the joint schools with English, History, Linguistics and Philosophy.

There were nineteen first choice applicants for the nine places available and eighteen were shortlisted for interview. In common with past practice, typical reasons for not being shortlisted include 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. There was only one applicant for deferred entry. 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. In addition, the admissions tutors considered and interviewed a number of applicants to other colleges.

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. Treating each application individually enabled them to assess how these factors affected applicants.

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.

We made nine offers for 2022 entry, one of which was to an applicant who originally applied to another college. There was one offer each to English and Modern Languages and Philosophy and Modern Languages. This year, there were no offers made to History and Modern Languages, although we continue to welcome applicants for this course.

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.