

Modern Languages and joint schools 2022 Admissions Round Feedback

Please note this is subject admissions feedback from the 2022 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.

The College made 10 offers for entry in October 2023, in Modern Languages and joint schools with Modern Languages (English, Linguistics, Philosophy). There were no offers for deferred entry, though such applications for deferred entry are welcome and are 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 considered a total of 22 first-choice applications in Modern Languages and joint schools with Modern Languages, including 4 re-allocated to Keble from oversubscribed colleges. In addition to these candidates, the College interviewed a further 11 candidates who had already been interviewed by a different first-choice college. Four of the first-choice applicants were not invited to interview (in all cases because of relatively weak performance in the written language tests or History Aptitude Test). One of the Keble candidates was interviewed by another college.

Candidates offered various combinations of French, Italian, Spanish, Linguistics, English, History and Philosophy, as well as sole French and sole Spanish. 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. It is not unusual to make a candidate for an offer other than that for which they had applied (e.g. French sole as opposed to French and English), but this year all offers were for the combinations applied for.

Candidates received at least two interviews at 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 presented with a very short literary passage (variously verse or prose) with a few minutes to read through it in silence (in French and Spanish in the case of French and Spanish candidates; in English in the case of Italian candidates).

They were then 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: 3 to candidates from overseas, 5 to candidates from state schools, 2 to candidates from independent schools. One of the offers was made under the Opportunity Oxford programme, designed to widen participation in the University. Of the 10 offers, four were to candidates who had been interviewed first by another college. Offers were made in the joint schools with English (1), Philosophy (3) and Linguistics (1), as well as sole- and two-language options within the main school of Modern Languages.

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 it was not possible to offer places to all the candidates who impressed.