

FEEDBACK ON UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS TO THEOLOGY AND RELIGION

INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the admissions process in the Faculty of Theology and Religion and contains generic statistical information from the 2023-24 UCAS cycle. This information is relevant to three BA courses: Theology and Religion (T&R); Philosophy and Theology (P&T); and Religion and Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (RAMES). In some cases, statistics are withheld to protect the privacy of individuals within a very small cohort.

Individuals may request particular feedback on their own performance from the colleges to which they applied or where they were interviewed. It is hoped that the data supplied in this document will help candidates and referees to understand an individual performance in the context of a very competitive field of applications and a complex process.

Requests for clarification and further information should be directed to colleges in the first instance but the Faculty of Theology and Religion may be contacted via general.administrator@theology.ox.ac.uk. The Faculty is unable to comment on individual applications.

NUMBERS OF CANDIDATES AND RATES OF PROGRESSION

Table 1: Number of candidates and rates of progression through the admissions process for each course, for different cohorts as defined by application course and offer course, taking account of transfer between courses during the admissions process

	T&R Offers Inc all Applicants	T&R applicants only	P&T Offers	P&T Applicants for any offer	RAMES Offers	Combined T&R and P&T
APPLICATIONS	126	121	159	159	Data withheld to protect privacy of small cohort.	280
SHORTLISTED CANDIDATES	73	71	77	79		150
OFFERS including Open Offers	39	34	31	36		71
% Applicants invited to interview	57.9%	58.7%	48.4%	49.7%		53.6%
% Applicants offered a place	31.0%	28.1%	19.5%	22.6%		25.4%
% Shortlisted offered a place	53.4%	47.9%	40.3%	45.6%	47.3%	
Applications received per offer	3.2	3.6	5.1	4.4	4.7	3.9

NOTES:

- Application figures include all submitted applications, including any that were incomplete or withdrawn before shortlisting.
- Shortlisting figures include all shortlisted applications, including any which were withdrawn after shortlisting.
- Offer figures include any open offers and offers for deferred entry. An open offer is one that will be confirmed when conditions are met but the college where the place will be confirmed is not yet specified.
- A small but significant number of applicants to P&T were either transferred to T&R at shortlisting or the offer a place in T&R. In Table 1, the figures in the two columns headed 'T&R Offers including all Applicants' and 'P&T Applicants for any Offer' include P&T applicants who were interviewed and/or offered a place in T&R

BREAKDOWN OF APPLICANTS BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

Table 2: Breakdown of applicants by selected characteristics and also that number of applicants as a percentage of the application cohort

	T&R		P&T		RAMES	
Total Number of applicants	121		159			
Number making an 'Open' application (not specifying a preferred college)	12	9.9%	16	10.1%		28.6%
Number applying for deferred entry (2025 or later)	4	3.3%	2	1.3%		7.1%
Domicile						
UK	99	81.8%	136	85.5%		42.9%
Overseas	22	18.2%	23	14.5%		57.1%
Gender (as declared to UCAS)						
Man	49	40.5%	74	46.5%		35.7%
Woman	64	52.9%	80	50.3%		64.3%
I prefer not to say	6	5.0%	2	1.3%		0.0%
I use another term	2	1.7%	3	1.9%		0.0%

SHORTLISTING PROCEDURE

All applications are assessed individually and in full by tutors, both at the college that has received the application and by an intercollegiate Faculty Admissions Committee. Final shortlisting decisions rest with college tutors but tutors in all colleges commit to working together to achieve a fair outcome and the work of the Faculty committee helps to ensure parity of standards across colleges. **The Faculty does not apply specific weighting measures to the various components of an application but the whole of each application is assessed on its relative merit in relation to the following published criteria.**

For any BA degree in the Faculty of Theology and Religion, candidates must:

- submit a strong UCAS form, including a supportive reference, excellent past examination results, and[/or] the predicted 3 'A' grades at A-level or equivalent.
- submit written work which demonstrates:
 - 1) the ability to think clearly and to reason coherently,
 - 2) evidence of independence of thought,
 - 3) the ability to structure work and arguments in a logical way,
 - 4) the ability to write clearly (and grammatically), with clear expression of thought.

Additionally, for applications to Philosophy and Theology, tutors will take into account each candidate's performance in the Philosophy Test.

The Faculty's use of contextual data throughout the admissions process accords with University's published statement, summarised at <https://ox.ac.uk/context>.

After shortlisting, but before candidates are invited to interview, some candidates are reallocated to a different college. This helps to ensure that no candidate is unfairly disadvantaged, for example by application to an especially oversubscribed college. The Faculty considers reallocation (where implemented) to be in an applicant's best interests and effective in ensuring parity of standards and in the treatment of candidates across colleges.

Applications to Philosophy and Theology which will not be shortlisted for that course are further considered for shortlisting for Theology and Religion. The most usual reasons for course transfer are because (i) Theology and Religion tutors are confident of an applicant's aptitude in Theology independent of Philosophy and consider that candidate's application to be competitive in the Theology and Religion field and (ii) there is greater capacity for interviewing and places on the Theology and Religion course.

The selection criteria are published and further information about these processes is provided in answers to FAQs on the Faculty Website, <https://www.theology.ox.ac.uk/undergraduate-faqs>.

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Every shortlisted candidate was interviewed by the college which called them to interview and by one other college. Second colleges are allocated according to college capacity by an automated process and then adjusted to eliminate procedural difficulties, e.g. ensuring that non-mature applicants have not been allocated to mature-only colleges.

All interviews were conducted over MS Teams. The precise scheduling and format of interviews may vary between colleges but the following is expected:

- All candidates receive at least one interview at each of two colleges.
- Some colleges conduct interviews in Philosophy separately from interviews in Theology and Religion, whereas other colleges combine both subjects (Philosophy and Theology) in a single interview.
- Religion and Asian and Middle Eastern Studies candidates also an interview at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. Some colleges also invited applicants to an Asian and Middle Eastern Studies interview.

At interview, Theology and Religion tutors assess candidates according to the following published criteria:

- an ability to think clearly, including understanding complex concepts, forming sound arguments, and listening and responding to counterarguments.
- an openness to learning.
- an ability at close textual reading and interpretation.
- evidence of enthusiasm and/or motivation, including dedication and diligence in work, and evidence of independent thought and reading.
- an ability to develop ideas presented in their submitted written work.
- oral communications skills.

Tutors are encouraged to represent and record their assessment of interview performance as a numerical mark with reference to the above criteria and on the following scale:

70-80	Outstanding interview
60-69	Competent to very impressive interview;
51–59	Poor interview
40–50	Very poor interview

It is worth noting, however, that assessment of interview performance is a *qualitative* academic judgement and only one element of tutors' evaluation of a candidate.

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DECISION MAKING

Based on all the information available, with reference to the selection criteria detailed above (for both the pre-interview and interview stages) and in accordance with their academic judgement, tutors at each college identify those candidates they believe to be most deserving of an offer/place.

All college tutors meet in a final faculty meeting to declare their decisions. Where a candidate does not receive an offer from the college that called him/her to interview, that candidate becomes available to the second college and may receive an offer from that college.

College tutors collectively scrutinise the decisions being made and review data on all shortlisted applicants to ensure fair treatment, to avoid mistakes and to minimise the risk of any candidate being unduly neglected. Tutors also consult and collaborate to identify candidates to receive “open” offers, which could be ultimately realised as places at a number of different colleges.

STATISTICS RELATING TO QUANTITATIVE DATA

Box-and-whisker plots included in this section of the report display the following information:

- interquartile range (the box)
- the range excluding outliers (the whiskers)
- the median (a line across the box)
- the mean (marked by X)
- 'outlying' data (i.e. a data point exceeding 1.5 x the interquartile range beyond either the first or third quartile) are indicated by dots on the plot.

GCSE STATISTICS

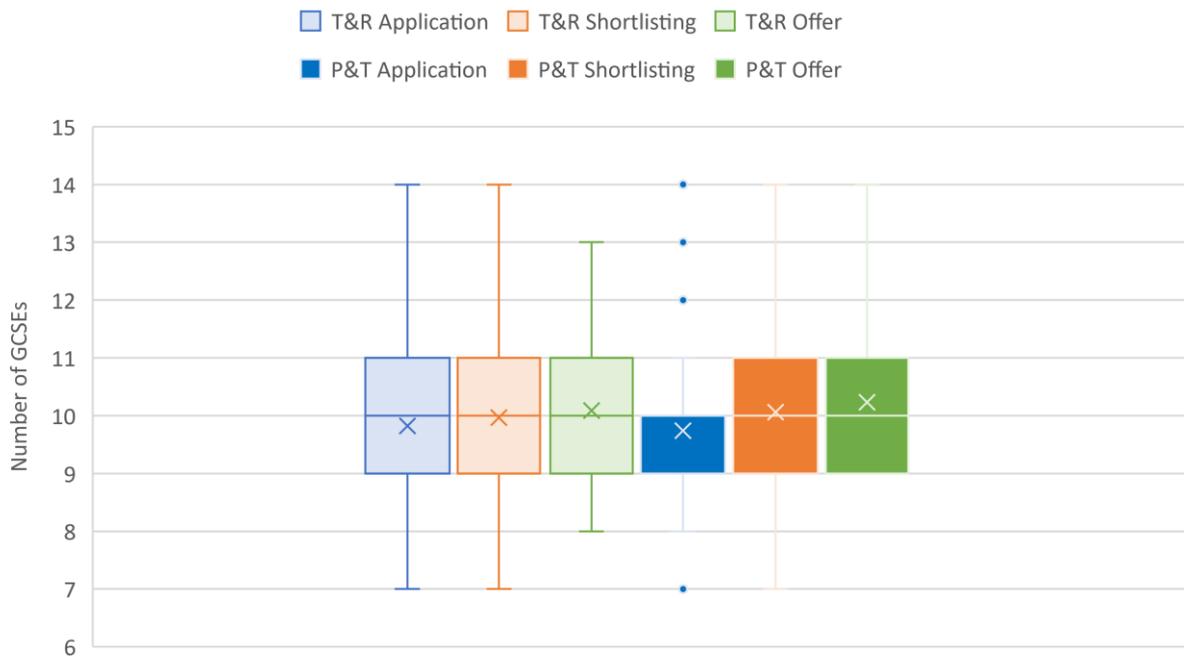
Table 3: GCSE Statistics for T&R and P&T in 2023-24 at each principal stage of the admissions process.

T&R				P&T		
App	Short	Offer		App	Short	Offer
Number of GCSEs						
96	63	34	Number of candidates	139	67	26
7	7	8	Minimum	7	7	9
14	14	13	Maximum	14	14	14
9.8	10.0	10.1	Mean Average	9.7	10.1	10.2
10	10	10	Median	10	10	10
10	10	11	Mode	10	10	10
1.2	1.3	1.1	Standard deviation	1.1	1.2	1.2
Number of 8/9/A* GCSE grades						
96	63	34	Number of candidates	139	67	26
0	1	2	Minimum	0	0	3
12	12	12	Maximum	14	14	14
7.3	8.4	8.7	Mean Average	6.7	8.5	9.0
8	9	9	Median	7	9	10
10	10	11	Mode	10	10	10
3.0	2.5	2.2	Standard deviation	3.3	2.5	2.4

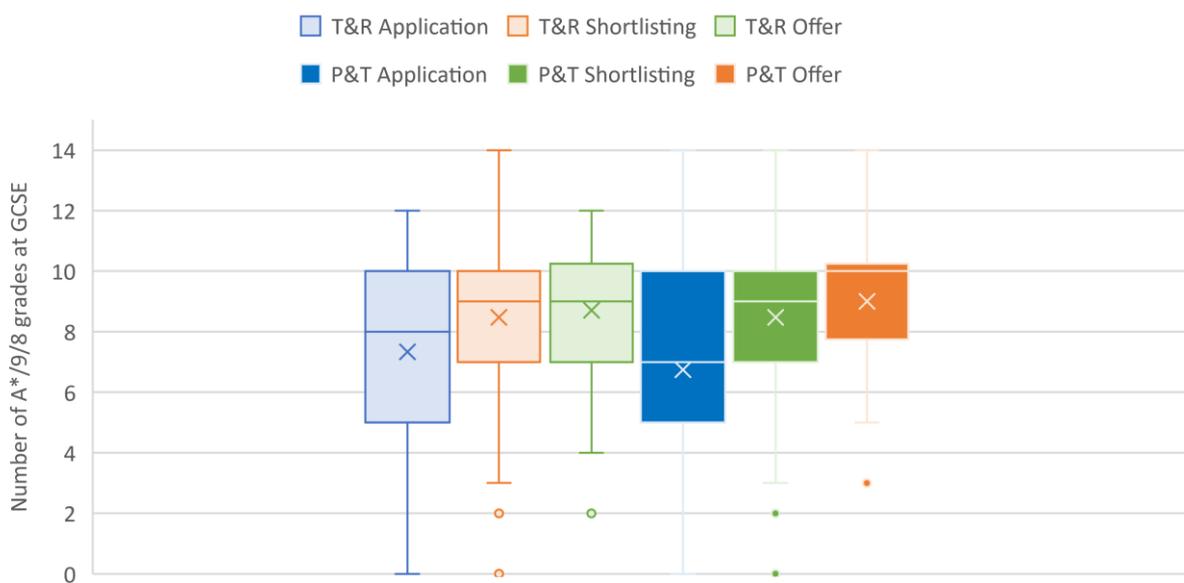
These figures are provided for only that portion of the cohort applying with 5 or more GCSEs, i.e. where GCSEs are an applicant's principal pre-16 qualification.

Note that since none of T&R, P&T or RAMES require the study of a particular subject or subjects at A Level or equivalent, A Level subject data has not been compiled formally for this report. A wide range of A Level (and equivalent) subjects are represented on applications considered throughout the process.

Graph 1: Distribution of the number of GCSEs achieved by candidates at each principal stage of the admissions process



Graph 2: Distribution of the number of A*/9/8 grades at GCSE achieved by candidates at each principal stage of the admissions process.

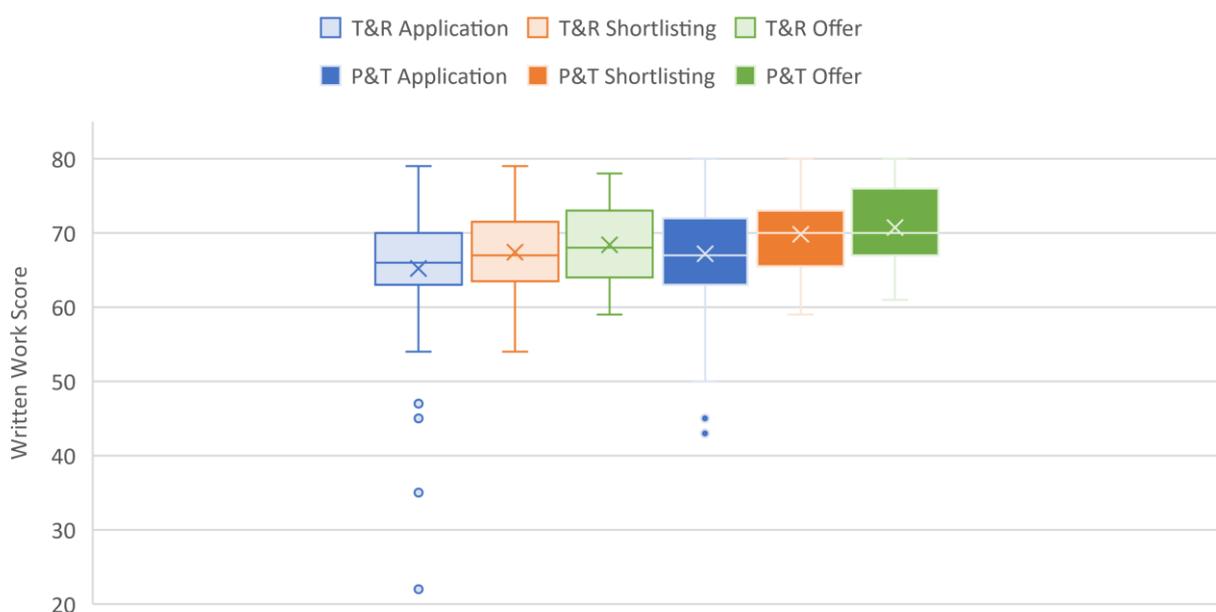


WRITTEN WORK

Table 4: Written Work Statistics in 2023-24 for T&R and P&T at each principal stage of the admissions process. (Marks are out of 100, zero scores omitted.)

T&R				P&T		
App	Short	Offer		App	Short	Offer
120	73	39	Number of candidates	159	77	31
22	54	59	Minimum	43	59	61
79	79	78	Maximum	80	80	80
65.2	67.4	68.4	Mean Average	67.2	69.8	70.7
66	67	68	Median	67	70	70
67	67	67	Mode	64	68	77
8.3	5.5	4.9	Standard deviation	6.4	5.2	5.3

Graph 3: Distribution of Written Work scores of candidates at each principal stage of the admissions process in 2023-24.



THE PHILOSOPHY TEST

Table 5: Philosophy Test Statistics in 2023-24 at each principal stage of the admissions process. (Marks are out of 100, zero scores omitted.)

	Application	Shortlisting	Offer
Number of candidates	155	76	31
Minimum	54	60	60
Maximum	80	80	80
Mean Average	64.5	66.0	66.9
Median	65	66	66
Mode	65	66	70
Standard deviation	3.9	3.7	4.0

Graph 4: Distribution of Philosophy test scores of candidates at each principal stage of the admissions process for Philosophy and Theology in 2023-24.



Scores for the following the Philosophy Test will be automatically distributed to all applicants shortly after college decision letters are sent in January. You do not need to request your own Test Score.