



Oxbridge Evening

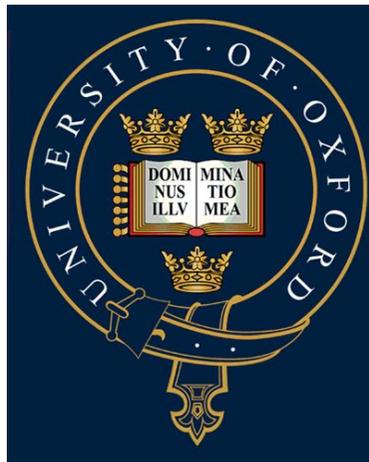
Benefits

£19.9 billion

total economic
impact associated
with the university in
2021-22.

No. 2 in the
*Complete University
Guide 2026.*

No. 1 in the *Times
Higher Education
World University
rankings.*

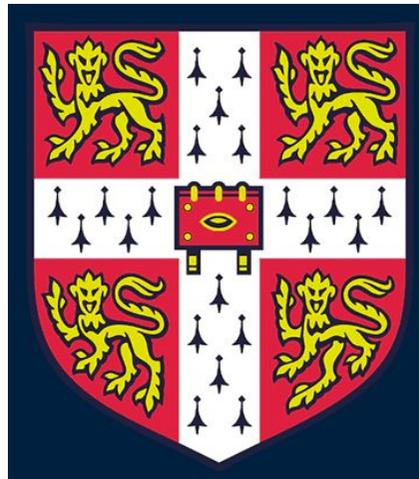


Benefits

£30 billion
generated annually
for the UK economy.

No. 1 in the
*Complete University
Guide 2026.*

No. 3 in the *Times
Higher Education
World University
rankings.*



Benefits

College Structure

Oxford and Cambridge are both collegiate universities, meaning all students are members of both an academic department and a smaller college community. The collegiate system offers a huge amount of personalised academic and pastoral support, as well as offering students a safe and friendly environment in which to live, work and socialise.

Career Prospects

Oxford and Cambridge graduates go into a very wide range of careers. They are highly employable and greatly sought after due to the key transferable skills they develop and hone whilst studying. Both Oxford and Cambridge have extremely high rates of students entering graduate-level employment or further study.

Personal Tuition

In addition to lectures, practicals and seminars, students receive regular small-group tuition, often known as supervisions or tutorials. This usually involves between 1 to 3 students and allows course material to be explored in much greater depth.

Why might students want to study at Oxford or Cambridge?

Academic Excellence

Oxford and Cambridge consistently rank amongst the top universities in the world. They offer students access to teaching staff who are true experts in their fields and provide uniquely challenging learning experiences.

Flexible Learning

Many of the degree courses at Oxford and Cambridge encompass several subjects where the content overlaps. Even courses that only comprise a single subject tend to be very broad in the first year, before becoming increasingly focused in subsequent years. This allows students to explore their subject and confirm their strengths and weaknesses before specialising.

Facilities & Resources

Oxford and Cambridge both offer fantastic academic resources, including extensive libraries and computer access in departments and colleges, as well as specialist equipment for many subjects. There are also outstanding sports and performing arts facilities that are accessible to students.

Downsides

- There are far more applicants than there are places on offer and many of these will be of an extremely high calibre. This makes the process very competitive and means applicants have a fairly low chance of being successful.
- There are a number of additional components to the application process, such as admissions tests and interviews, which can be time consuming and onerous for students, especially as they will be trying to balance these demands with their general Y13 studies.
- Students frequently experience distress and feelings of rejection if their applications are unsuccessful, which can have a detrimental effect on their overall wellbeing.
- The experience of attending these institutions is very different to other universities, with the expectations of students being extremely high. They will typically have more contact hours, more frequent deadlines and a higher volume of work, which will all need to be completed to a high standard. This can feel like a very pressurised environment to some students.

Application Process

1. Course

Students should start researching the courses available to decide which one might be right for them.



2. College

Students should consider whether there is a particular college at which they would like to live, or whether they want to make an 'open' application.



3. Apply

Students need to submit their UCAS applications by the early entry deadline on **15 October 2026**. The My Cambridge application needs to be submitted shortly afterwards for Cambridge applicants.

Application Process

4. Assessment

Most students will be required to take a written assessment or entrance exam, either before they are interviewed, or at interview should they be invited to attend.



5. Interview

Students may be invited to attend an interview. These are usually held in **December**.



6. Decision

A holistic view is taken of the information from the application, assessment and interview to determine whether or not an offer is made. Students will be advised of the decision by the end of **January 2027**.

Course Choice

What is their subject profile from A Level?

Many courses require prior knowledge or particular grades in a certain subject at A Level. It is important that students research these requirements before submitting their application to ensure that they have a realistic chance of being offered a place on the course.

What are their interests and motivations?

Students should consider what they enjoy learning about the most. This may be a certain subject, or particular topics within a subject that they are already studying. Alternatively, it may be something that they are not currently studying, but is an important part of their wider interests. It is crucial that students have a real passion for the subject they choose to study, as they will be required to devote huge amounts of time to their work and it will be difficult to motivate themselves and perform at their best without having a genuine interest.

Have they considered less obvious choices?

Students should try to keep an open mind and avoid limiting themselves to the more obvious or traditional subject choices. There are a wide variety of very specialised courses on offer that students may not have heard of or had the chance to study at A Level, but which are closely aligned to their interests. There are also lots of courses on offer that combine elements of multiple subjects. For example, if they are interested in history, literature and language, they may want to consider Classics.

Course Choice

What would they like to do when they graduate?

There are a small number of professions that require specific degree qualifications, so it is important that students research any requirements if they have a very particular career path in mind after university. However, most employers do not require specific degrees, so students should be careful not to make assumptions about what they need to study. For example, you do not need a degree in Accounting & Finance to become an accountant in the future. The best thing to do is for students to research what people currently working in their chosen field studied at university and what other qualifications may be needed, such as industry accreditation. If students do not have a particular career path in mind, they should keep their options open by choosing a subject that they enjoy and which offers valuable transferable skills.

Have they done their research?

To fully understand what a course entails, it is vital that students research course outlines and look at the particular topics or modules on offer. This is important because courses with the same name may vary greatly at different universities. Students want to choose a course that is taught, assessed and comprises content that is well-suited to their skills and interests.

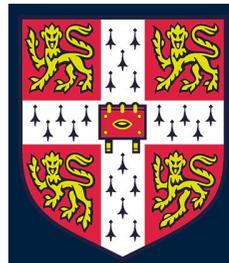
Course Choice

- Archaeology & Anthropology
- Asian & Middle Eastern Studies
- Biochemistry (Molecular & Cellular)
- Biology
- Biomedical Sciences
- Chemistry
- Classical Archaeology & Ancient History
- Classics
- Classics & Asian & Middle Eastern Studies
- Classics & English
- Classics & Modern Languages
- Computer Science
- Computer Science & Philosophy
- Earth Sciences (Geology)
- Economics & Management
- Engineering Science
- English Language & Literature
- English & Modern Languages
- European & Middle Eastern Languages
- Fine Art
- Foundation Year (Chemistry, Engineering & Materials Science)
- Foundation Year (Humanities)
- Foundation Year (Law)
- Foundation Year (PPE)
- Geography
- History
- History (Ancient & Modern)
- History & Economics
- History & English
- History & Modern Languages
- History & Politics
- History of Art
- Human Sciences
- Law
- Materials Science
- Mathematics
- Mathematics & Computer Science
- Mathematics & Philosophy
- Mathematics & Statistics
- Medicine
- Modern Languages
- Modern Languages & Linguistics
- Music
- Philosophy & Modern Languages
- Philosophy, Politics & Economics (PPE)
- Philosophy & Theology
- Physics
- Physics & Philosophy
- Psychology (Experimental)
- Psychology, Philosophy & Linguistics
- Religion & Middle Eastern Studies
- Theology & Religion



Course Choice

- Anglo-Saxon, Norse & Celtic
- Archaeology
- Architecture
- Asian & Middle Eastern Studies
- Chemical Engineering & Biotechnology
- Classics
- Computer Science
- Design
- Economics
- Education
- Engineering
- English
- Foundation Year in Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences (pre-degree course)
- Geography
- History
- History & Modern Languages
- History & Politics
- History of Art
- Human, Social & Political Sciences
- Land Economy
- Law
- Linguistics
- Mathematics
- Medicine
- Modern & Medieval Languages
- Music
- Natural Sciences
- Philosophy
- Psychological, Religion, and Philosophy of Religion
- Theology, Religion & Philosophy of Religion
- Veterinary Medicine



College Choice

- At Oxford and Cambridge, as well as being a member of the university, students are also members of a college.
- If students are making an application to Oxford or Cambridge, they will need to consider whether or not they have a preference about which college they want to attend.
- There are generally more similarities between the colleges than there are differences, so it is not something they need to agonise over.
- On the UCAS application, students will have the opportunity to specify the particular college you would like to attend.
- Alternatively, they can submit an 'open' application, meaning they are happy to attend any college.
- Whether they select a particular college or make an 'open' application does not make any difference to the chances of their application being successful.

College Choice

University	College
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determines course content• Organises lectures, seminars, practicals and projects• Sets and marks examinations• Awards degrees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Admits undergraduate students• Provides accommodation, places to eat and recreational facilities• Organises small group teaching (supervisions / tutorials)• Responsible for academic and pastoral support

College Choice

Subject

Some colleges do not take students in all subjects

Age

Some colleges are exclusively for mature students

Facilities

The particular facilities for sports and arts varies between colleges



Size

The number of students varies between colleges

Gender

Some colleges are exclusively for female students

Accommodation

The location and style of accommodation varies between colleges

Applications

- In order to apply to Oxford or Cambridge, students must submit a UCAS application online.
- They will need to select either Oxford or Cambridge as one of their options in the 'Choices' section of the application. It is not possible to apply to both.
- The deadline for applications to Oxford and Cambridge is **15 October 2026**. Please note that this is earlier than the general UCAS deadline.
- It is especially important that all of the component parts of the UCAS application are completed accurately and to the highest possible standard if students are applying to Oxford or Cambridge.

UCAS Application

Personal Information

Education / Qualifications

Course / University
Choices

Personal Statement

Teacher Reference

Predicted Grades

Applications

Personal Information: Students need to make sure this information is completely accurate. Any mistakes could invalidate the application.

Education / Qualifications: Students will need to put down all of their GCSE grades and any AS grades they may have. There is no minimum requirement for GCSE grades, but they will be looked at and used as a way to gauge the progress students have made between the end of Y11 and the beginning of Y13. Students can put down other qualifications, such as music grades and sports coaching badges, although places are given on academic potential, rather than extra-curricular activities.

Course / University Choices: Students will need to list either Oxford or Cambridge as one of their choices. Students must choose one or the other, they are not able to apply to both. The remaining four choices should be to other universities with a range of entry requirements.

Personal Statement: The personal statement will need to be of a very high standard. Students should be able to write confidently and analytically about the aspects of their A Level courses that have interested them most. Students should also demonstrate that they have read and researched their subjects beyond the confines of the curriculum content. The vast majority of the personal statement should be focused on academic pursuits, rather than extra-curricular activities.

Applications

Teacher Reference: The teacher reference should highlight academic excellence, making reference to intellectual flexibility, analytic ability and logical reasoning. It is beneficial if the teacher reference is able to give evidence of students' willingness to discuss ideas outside of the curriculum content and should refer to assessment data that shows how they compare to their peers.

Predicted Grades: The predicted grades will usually need to be very high to stand a realistic chance of being made an offer. In most cases, students would need predicted grades in the region of A*A*A to A*AA. The school will only make predictions that have a firm basis in data, so students will need to have high target grades or achieve strong grades in their end of year exams and classroom assessments in order to be predicted these grades.

My Cambridge Application

- Shortly after submitting their UCAS application, Cambridge applicants will be contacted by email and asked to complete the My Cambridge Application.
- A deadline for this will be specified at the time, but it is usually around a week after the initial application.
- The My Cambridge Application is divided into sections, each containing a series of questions designed to gather further contextual information to support the application.

My Cambridge Application

<https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/apply/how/cambridge-application>

Decisions

**Academic
ability**

Resilience

**Intellectual
flexibility**

**Self
discipline**

Commitment

**Academic
potential**

Motivation

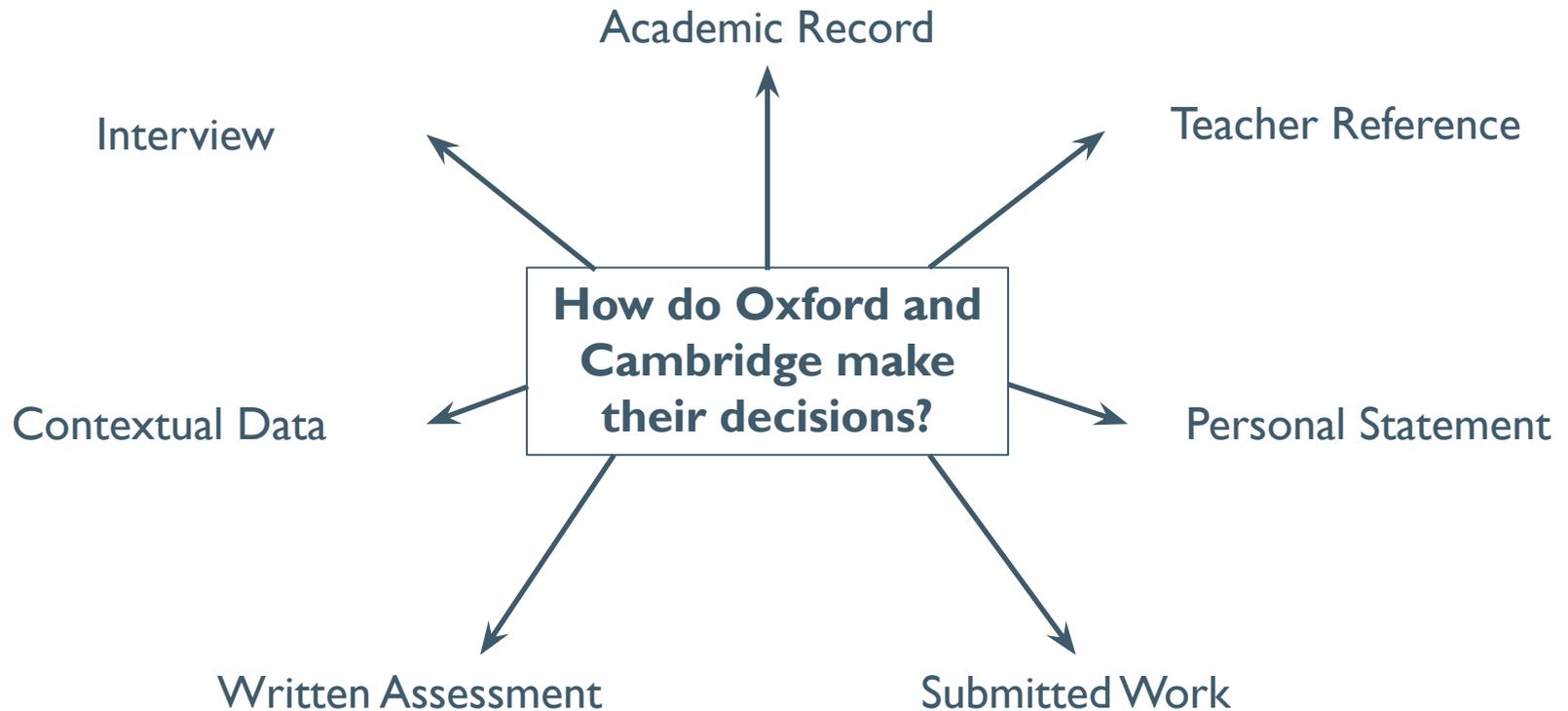
Curiosity

Enthusiasm

Articulate

**Independent
thinker**

Decisions



Oxford and Cambridge decide which students to make offers to based on a holistic analysis of all the available information.

Decisions

Academic Record	Students will usually need to be predicted and achieve A Level grades ranging from A*A*A to A*AA. Their offer may specify that they achieve an A* in the A Level subject closest to their chosen course. There is no minimum requirement for GCSE grades, but they will be looked at and used as a way to gauge the progress students have made between the end of Y11 and the beginning of Y13.
Teacher Reference	The teacher reference should highlight academic excellence, making reference to intellectual flexibility, analytic ability and logical reasoning. It is beneficial if the teacher reference is able to give evidence of students' willingness to discuss ideas outside of the curriculum content and should refer to assessment data that shows how they compare to their peers.
Personal Statement	The personal statement will need to be of a very high standard. Students should be able to write confidently and analytically about the aspects of their A Level courses that have interested them most. Students should also demonstrate that they have read and researched their subjects beyond the confines of the curriculum content. The vast majority of the personal statement should be focused on academic pursuits, rather than extra-curricular activities. The personal statement may be used as a basis for discussion at interview.

Decisions

Submitted Work	Students may be asked to submit written work that has been marked by one of their subject teachers. This is particularly common for arts and social science courses. This work should demonstrate academic excellence, fluency of written communication, analytical ability and responsiveness to feedback.
Written Assessment	Students are likely to be required to take a course-specific written assessment, either prior to interview or at interview. These assessments are designed to gauge their current levels of knowledge and understanding, as well as to test skills relevant to the course being applied for.
Contextual Data	Several types of contextual data will be used to assemble a more complete picture of the social and educational circumstances that underpin their application and academic performance. This may include rates of progression to higher education and socio-economic characteristics of the local area, general levels of academic performance in the school and any extenuating circumstances.
Interview	The purpose of the interview is to explore academic potential, motivation and suitability for the chosen course. The questions asked are designed to assess problem-solving abilities, assimilation of new ideas and information, intellectual flexibility and analytical reasoning. The interview is supposed to be challenging, but the intention is not to 'catch you out'.

Chances

17% of students that apply to Oxford actually get in.

18% of students that apply to Cambridge actually get in.

1 in 3 students that are invited to interview at Oxford actually get in.

1 in 4 students that are invited to interview at Cambridge actually get in.

School Support

Oxbridge Briefing in
February 2026

Targeted recruitment in
February 2026

Induction Sessions in **May**
2026

At least one practice
interview in **November**
2026

Individual Mentoring in **May /**
September 2026

**What support
will the school
provide?**

Oxbridge Personal Statement
Workshop in **May 2026**

Oxbridge Interview Briefing
in **October 2026**

Authorised absences to visit
universities

Guidance on how to book
entry exams

Key Dates

Date	Event
1 / 2 July 2026	Oxford Open Days
09 / 10 July 2026	Cambridge Open Days
18 September 2026	Oxford Open Day
September / October 2026	Registration deadline for most pre-interview assessments
15 October 2026	UCAS early entry deadline
October 2026	Most pre-interview assessments take place
December 2026	Most interviews will take place
January 2027	Offers will be made to students
August 2027	A Level Results Day and confirmation of university places
October 2027	Start of term

Further Information

- <https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate> (**University of Oxford website**)
- <https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/?ucam-ref=global-header> (**University of Cambridge website**)
- <https://myheplus.com/> (**University of Cambridge subject enrichment resources**)
- <https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/student-advice/applying-to-uni/guide-to-applying-for-oxford-and-cambridge-university> (**The Complete University Guide website**)

Questions?



Waldegrave
Sixth Form