

# Oxbridge Applications

Ailís Kane

[akane@esher.ac.uk](mailto:akane@esher.ac.uk)



# Why might a student wish to apply to Oxford or Cambridge?

- The oldest and most eminent universities in the UK
- Cutting edge research, resources and teaching facilities.
- Teaching conducted by world leading experts in the field.
- A particular teaching and learning style – small group teaching
- Extraordinary sports, drama and music facilities
- Collegiate system – Oxford has over 30 and Cambridge 29 undergraduate colleges. A home from home!
- Connections, networking.

# What students are Oxbridge looking for?

- High grades : Oxford between AAA and A\*A\*A\* depending on your course. For Cambridge A\*AA (Humanities) and A\*A\*A (Sciences) is needed.
- Right subject choices – Further Maths is not listed as essential for Cambridge Economics but 93% of candidates had it. Further Maths needed for Computer Science if your school/college offers it – 96% at Oxford had it; 97% at Cambridge.
- PPE (Politics, Philosophy, Economics) course at Oxford says Maths is not essential but the majority of successful candidates this year had it (96%). What other subjects could substitute? Eg Human, Social and Politics Sciences at Cambridge
- Success in admission tests, where applicable
- Areal, genuine and heartfelt interest in their subject and an inquisitive approach
- More than just the ability to read and regurgitate information – critical thinkers needed
- To be able to open up and to talk intelligently at interview- field questions, solve problems (especially in Maths and Science applications) and think on your feet

# Foundation Year



Oxford and Cambridge now offer a Foundation year course as a pre-cursor to a degree



Successful completion leads to a place on a full degree course



Oxford BBB Cambridge 120 UCAS points



Later application deadline in January



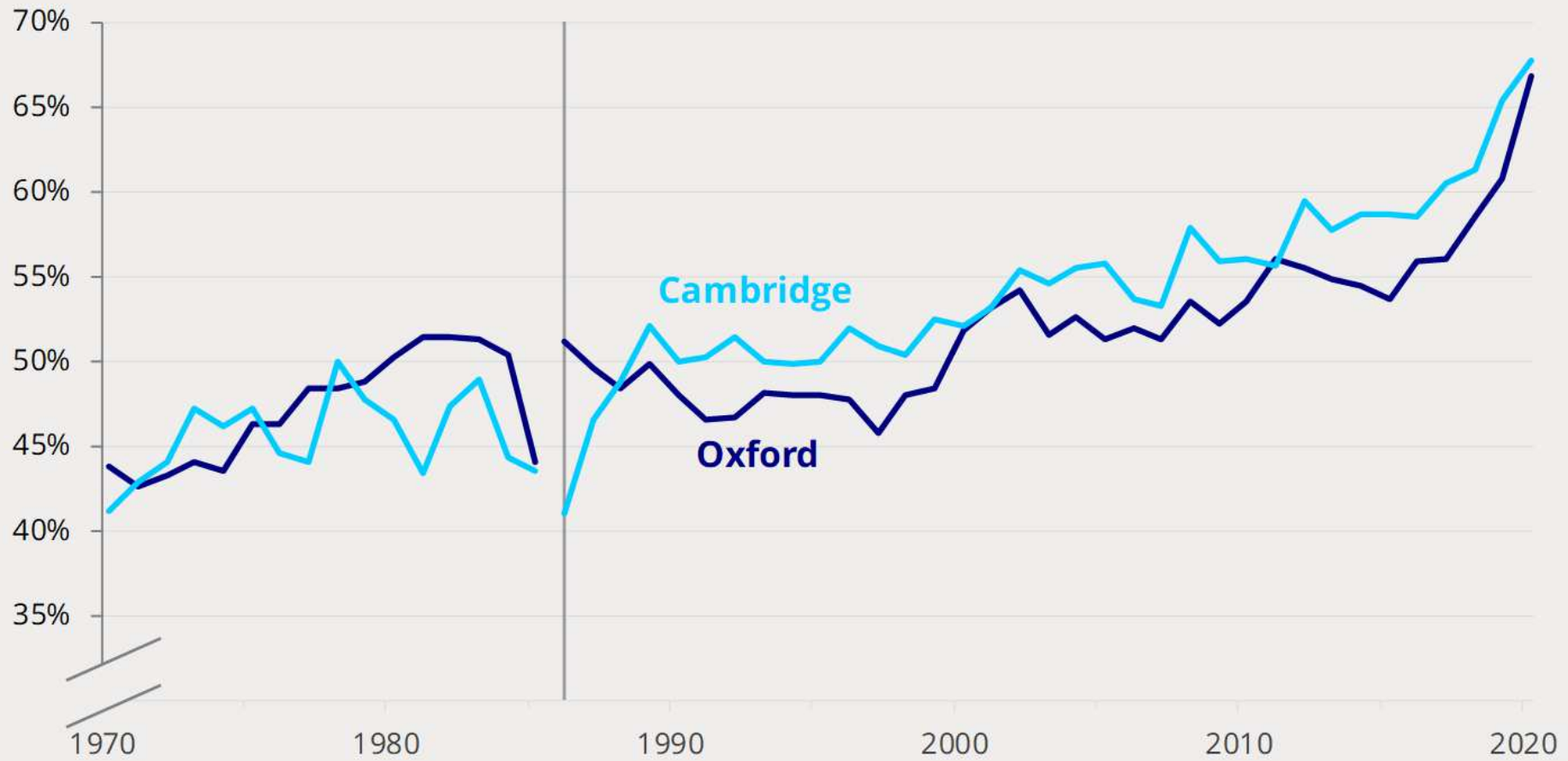
One-year fully-funded foundation programme for UK state school students with significant academic potential, who have experienced severe personal disadvantage and/or disrupted education

# How do Oxford and Cambridge identify suitable candidates?

- Academic achievement (GCSE grades + UCAS (predicted) grades)
- College UCAS Reference
- Personal statement
- Admissions tests
- Submission of written work from your Alevel course
- Interview(s)
- Contextual data
- Additional MyCambridge Form

## Increase in state school entry to Oxbridge over the last two decades

Proportion of undergraduates accepted from state schools



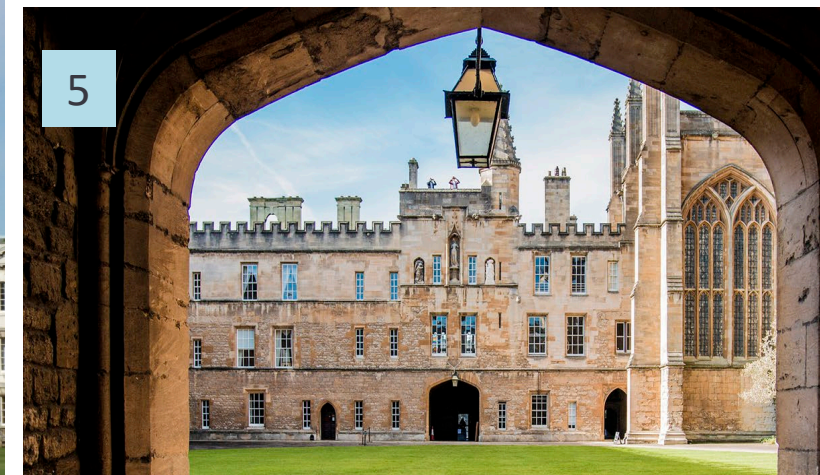
# Oxbridge status this year

- 48 applications
- 28 invited for interview (19 Cambridge, 9 Oxford)
- 12 successful in a range of subjects
- 9 offers from Cambridge in Classics, Design, Engineering, History, Human, Social and Political Sciences, Law, Medicine, Philosophy, Physical Natural Sciences
- 5 offers from Oxford in Computer Science, English Language and Literature, Law, Medicine, Music



## College choice

1. Churchill College, Cambridge
2. Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge
3. King's College, Cambridge
4. St Hilda's College, Oxford
5. University College, Oxford



# Less well-known courses offer new possibilities for learning

- Oxford offers Archaeology and Anthropology, Human Sciences, and Materials Science. Also joint honours subjects like Physics & Philosophy, Maths & Philosophy and Psychology, Philosophy and Linguistics
- Cambridge offers Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic (ASNC), Archaeology, Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (AMES), Land Economy and Theology, Religion and Philosophy of Religion.

# How do we support students here at Esher?

- Excellence Pathway Programme January 6.1 year onwards
- Trips to Oxford and Cambridge
- Supercurricular and other opportunities published on the 6.1 Team
- Summer term workshops on the application process
- 1:1 support for personal statement writing in Autumn term 6.2 year
- Mock assessments and interviews in the Autumn term 6.2 year
- Interview bootcamp with Reigate College
- Post offer mentoring

Microsoft Teams interface showing a channel named "University Enrichment Opportunities".

**Left-hand navigation pane:**

- Activity
- Chat
- Teams
- 6.1 Students (circled in red)
- Main Channels
  - General
  - Exams
  - IT Services
  - Learning Resources Centre
  - News and Announcements
  - SAS and SAL
  - Student Union
  - Work Experience
- Hidden channels
  - PDP
  - Progression Guidance
  - Student Welfare
  - University Enrichment Opportunities (circled in red)
- Assignments
- Calendar
- Calls
- OneDrive
- Copilot
- Planner
- OneNote
- Apps

**Channel Header:** University Enrichment Opportunities

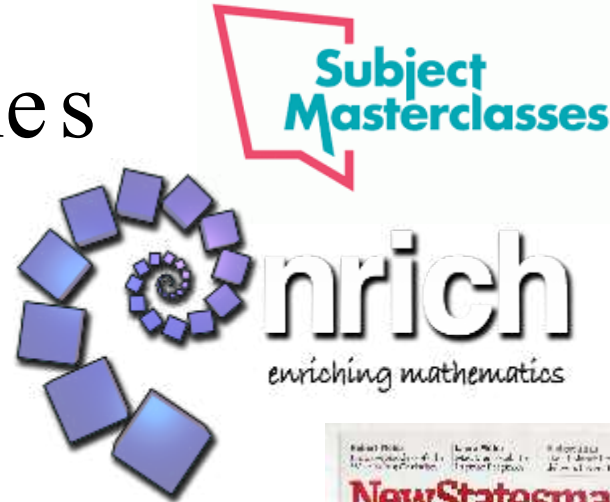
**Post 1:**

- Author: HH Helen Humphreys (Yesterday 14:17)
- Subject: Expression of interest in Oxbridge application 2025-26
- Target Audience: 6.1 Students
- Text: If you are interested in applying to Oxford or Cambridge next year, then please complete this form so we can organise support for you.
- Link: <https://forms.office.com/e/p5yrbFxaXZ>
- Embed: Microsoft Forms "Please fill out this form" (forms.office.com)

**Post 2:**

- Author: HH Helen Humphreys (Yesterday 15:21)
- Subject: Queens College Cambridge Mediaeval Outreach Day
- Target Audience: 6.1 Students
- Text: Carrying on the medieval theme Queens are running an interesting event in September for those students who are interested in this period and aimed at students interested in English literature, Anglo-Saxon Norse and Celtic, History of Art, Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, and Architecture:  
*Mediaeval Outreach Day 2025 - A Deeper Field of View: The Medieval Foundations of the Modern World -*
- Link: [https://cambridge.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_diFGQxG09Hu1GI0](https://cambridge.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_diFGQxG09Hu1GI0)

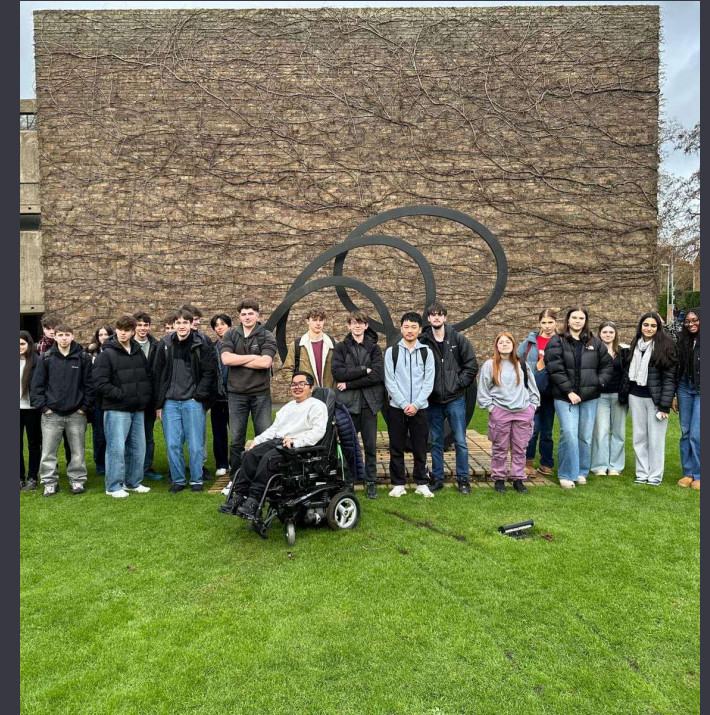
# Supercurricular activities



- Explore beyond your subject
- Keep a journal to analyse & reflect

# Open days

- Cambridge – 9 & 10th July, 11th September
- Oxford – 1 & 2nd July, 18th September.
- Book to attend
- All the colleges will be open and some of the departments
- Plan your visit and consider less traditional colleges as well as those with ‘dreaming spires’
- Ask questions!



# Oxbridge Roadshow

- Wednesday March 25<sup>th</sup> at 2pm Cobham Free School
- St Hilda's College, Oxford and Churchill College, Cambridge will be talking about admissions
- There are still some places available. Students will need to get there under their own steam – bus 714 almost door to door

# What can you do as parents?

- Support, encourage and help your child source wider research and reading around their subject - nourish the nerd in them!
- Give your student the chance to verbalise their ideas – what are they currently learning? For humanities in particular discuss news, current affairs, global events – excellent for interview practice. You don't need to be an expert!
- Reality check – do some digging - what A-level grades/admission test scores did successful candidates get. Is this the right uni? It is the right course? Difference between being meeting requirements and being competitive
- Accompany on open days
- Source and print practice papers for Admissions Tests
- During the summer, help them sit papers under test conditions. Advice is 30 hours of preparation for tests.

# Admission tests

- There are a limited number of past papers but your students can use the legacy admissions tests to prepare
- For TARA (Oxford Humanities) – practice using Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA) – PMT
- ESAT (Science/Engineering) – use old ENGAA and NSAA questions
- TMUA (Maths, Computer Science, Economics) – similar to the old Oxford MAT test – use Maths Admissions Test | Mathematical Institute to help prepare (although TMUA only multiple choice qus, MAT longer answer)

# What is your plan B?

- Application is highly competitive
- National offer rate is approximately 1 offer for every 6 applicants
- Even though Esher rate far exceeds that this year, students need other good options and need to be able to cope with rejection if it happens.
- The application process is NOT perfect. For instance: “We know that every year we turn down applicants who, in the end, turn out to be stronger physicists than some of the applicants we do offer places to.” (Oxford physics department )
- The application process itself is useful for the future – previous student said “Regardless of the outcome I have managed to learn a lot from the application process.” Early application deadline has advantages
- Students have to be resilient and have a Plan B

Should you give it a go?



If you think Oxford or Cambridge could be a realistic choice for you, we will support you all the way through the application process.

If you don't have a go, you will never know!

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Oxbridge 2026 - expression of interest form

