**Applying to Oxbridge**

You can apply to either Oxford or Cambridge but not both. Some courses are only offered by one of the two -e.g. PPE can only be studied at Oxford and at Cambridge students study flexible Natural Sciences (which allows them to combine biological and physical sciences) whereas Oxford offers single subject Science courses. Even if your subject is offered at both universities, the content will differ. Attend an open day if you can to see if it’s the right course and university for you.

**Colleges**

Both Oxford and Cambridge are collegiate universities. There are more than colleges 40 at Oxford and more than 30 at Cambridge. Students are based in a college which varies in size between about 300 and 500 students. This is where you’ll live, socialise and do most of your studying. Colleges provide support services and act as social hubs. Very small group teaching, normally with two or three other students, is delivered in your college whereas the university organises larger lectures, seminars and practicals. Some colleges have more applicants than others, but selecting a college with fewer applications doesn’t increase your chance of being made an offer. Make sure your chosen college offers the subject you want to do. You can apply to a specific college, or if you would prefer not to choose you can make an ‘open application’. This won’t increase your chances of being accepted, but you won’t be penalised for submitting an open application either. If you make an open application a computer program will allocate your application to a college for you.

Things to consider when **choosing a college**

* Location- how close to the city centre, your department, the park, the river, the sports facilities
* Size and age of the college and its buildings
* Facilities – all colleges have a library, common room and dining hall but other facilities will vary
* Accommodation – number of years of college accommodation
* Finances – rents vary and some may offer grants or other funding opportunities
* Grants or other funding – as well as any [support provided by the University](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/fees-and-funding/oxford-support)

**What do I need**

* Really good grades at GCSE. Most students will have mainly 8/9s
* Strong predicted grades for your A levels. Check the requirements for your chosen course but mostly this is AAA or above. In reality we would recommend you have at least one A\* prediction.
* Super curricular reading – this means going above and beyond the curriculum. You will need this for your personal statement and interview. This is really important. There are lots of suggestions on the resources section of the careers portal.
* A love of the subject you have chosen
* Personal statement – this should be a 90/10 split between academic content and extra-curricular information. When discussing your extra-curricular commitments or experience, you should detail how this is relevant to your course and why this makes you a good candidate.

**The process**

You will most likely have to sit an admissions test for either university. Details will be on the university website. These are often sat at school which acts as a test centre. You might have to take a test before or at interview.

At Cambridge you will also have to complete the My Cambridge Application form. This is an additional application form which you will be asked to submit after your UCAS form. You will only have a few days to complete this. It includes an optional additional personal statement.

You might also be required to submit written work as part of your application, depending on your chosen subject.

If the admissions department want to take your application forward and you’ve performed well in admissions tests/test/submitted essays (where applicable) you will be invited to interview. Applicants aren’t offered a place without an interview. It’s really recommended to practice speaking about yourself, your interests and your subject choices to other people. This might be to teachers or family friends. It’s often useful if you do this with people you don’t know very well too, to give you experience of talking in an interview style to people you don’t know very well.

Following all the different parts of the application process you will hear in January whether you get an offer of a place. The decision has been made taking into account your UCAS form, admissions test, written work, reference, interview performance, exam results and predicted grades. You might not be offered a place by the college you applied to but may be put into “the pool”. This is when the college you applied to does not have a place for you but it pools your application for other colleges to consider. If you receive an offer but have not yet completed your exams then you will receive a conditional offer which will specify the grades and any other conditions that will have to be met before your place is confirmed.