

*The key message about admissions tests and interviews is that they *don't* require much preparation, so the point of this sheet is really just to give you a few pointers about what to expect, and what you can do to help yourself feel more comfortable and confident about the process. All the information you need is at: ox.ac.uk/apply, ox.ac.uk/interviews, ox.ac.uk/tests and admissionstesting.service.org*

Admissions Tests

Oxford uses admissions tests for the majority of its courses, which helps us differentiate between candidates. It also gives you an extra chance to show us how brilliant you are. You can find out whether you need to do a test at ox.ac.uk/tests, which also has links to information on preparing and registering for your test (you must register by the deadlines). Admissions tests are designed to test aptitude more than knowledge, so should not require extensive preparation. You don't need to buy any preparation materials – everything you need is provided for free online (including a whole revision guide for the BMAT!) Ways to prepare include:

- Familiarising yourself with the format of the test & types of questions
- Past papers. Remember to space out your attempts, & practice sticking to time limits
- Practising relevant skills, e.g. exam technique and essay writing
- Revising relevant school subjects and checking the test syllabus, if necessary, (e.g. for the BMAT and PAT).

There may only be one or two past papers for each test – if so, this is because it's a test that you can't get better at by practising more, not because we're being mean! If this is bothering you, you can always make use of the fact that some of the tests (e.g. TSA/BMAT/LNAT, the MAT/PAT and OLAT/LAT/CLAT) have quite similar question styles, and so make a good source of further practice questions if you need them.

Interviews

How can I prepare?

Get used to talking about your subject, and reflecting on what you've learnt; having and explaining opinions, and thinking about links and themes between things. Revising isn't really necessary but this isn't going to do any harm! Look at sample questions & videos at ox.ac.uk/tests, and then ask a teacher or friend to give you a mock interview so you can get used to the situation (give them the sheet 'Mock Interviews' if they're not sure what to do). In the days before your interview, look over your personal statement, submitted work, current news stories, and books you said you've read...

What happens in interviews?

Everything you need to know is at ox.ac.uk/interviews, including a guide you can download. You'll be invited to come and stay in a college for 2-3 days, and you'll have 2 or more interviews, each with 2 or more subject tutors. These are usually 20-30mins long, and are effectively a mock tutorial, testing your ability to think about new ideas, so are purely academic. The questions will be intended to stretch you and may not have an immediately obvious answer - tutor will lead you through a problem and see how you respond. Some questions might be quite open, allowing you to talk about your interests. You might be asked to read something beforehand or look at something in your interview and talk about it. Maths-related subjects will have some problem-solving in the interview, so you might find that you're writing on a board rather than talking as much.

Any tips for what to do in the interview?

Remember to listen carefully to the tutors and how they respond to you - take on board what they're saying as this is often their prompt to help you work through the question. It is fine to take time to think about your answer or ask for clarification. It's good to think out loud and talk them through your thoughts, as they want to see how you think. Don't worry if you get stopped and they move on to another question – you haven't said anything wrong, they just literally do need to move on! It is fine to make mistakes, in fact you'll probably find yourself realising this as you go along and going back to them and working it out, which actually is really impressive.

Aren't interviews really scary?

No, they're not meant to be. It's understandable that you'll be nervous but we'll do everything we can to put you at your ease. It would be stupid if we were trying to scare you or trip you up - interviews and whole application process are designed to help you show your academic ability and potential, so we want to help you let your enthusiasm shine through. You're definitely not expected to know about everything or get everything right, in fact quite often the questions won't have an obvious or even a right or wrong answer; we just want to see how you think about new ideas. You'll be chatting with some people who also love your subject (& are in fact very nice humans), and you'll most likely find your interview challenging but actually really interesting and enjoyable.

I'm still feeling a bit nervous, what should I do?

Do what you need to make yourself calm and comfortable. There'll also be lots of student helpers around while you're here to look after you. When you get here you can find out where the interview room will be, and check the time. You can wear whatever you're comfortable in for your interview – we're not judging you on whether you're wearing a suit or not! You've got plenty of free time too in the days you're here, so take some time to relax – go for a walk, read a book, have a cup of tea, whatever works for you.

Admissions Checklist

Use admissionstesting.service.org and ox.ac.uk/apply to check:

UCAS application deadline for Oxford:

Admissions test(s) for my course:

Test registration deadline:

Test date:

Possible interview dates:

(check on the interview timetables at ox.ac.uk/interviews)

I have:

Looked at the information about my test on admissionstesting.service.org

Had a go at a past paper in timed conditions:

Looked at the interview videos and sample questions at ox.ac.uk/interviews

Had a mock interview