Medicine Admissions Feedback 2019-20

This year the University of Oxford had a high number of applicants for Medicine. Many of the candidates who applied made very good applications and, as is the case every year, many difficult decisions had to be made.

Throughout the process, contextual data for UK candidates, including school performance and postcode data, were used when assessing applications. You can find more information about contextual data on the Oxford University website here.

As part of the process to decide which applicants are called to interview, the Medical School established a numerical ranking on the basis of GCSE performance (number and proportion of A*s/8s/9s) and BMAT results (both are quantitative and objective measures), with equal weighting given to both elements. If applicants had not taken GCSEs or iGCSEs, ranking was based on BMAT score alone. This ranking formed the basis of an initial shortlist; candidates could be added to this on the basis of individual circumstances, academic and contextual. More information about shortlisting can be found at: https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/study/medicine/pre-clinical/statistics.

Each shortlisted applicant was interviewed at two colleges: the college of preference, or allocation if an open application was made, and one other randomly assigned so as to equalise as far as possible the strength of the applicant field at each college. This gives each candidate the best chance of receiving a place.

Interviews are academic and subject-focussed in nature. Interviewers assess each candidate against the selection criteria (https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/study/medicine/pre-clinical/requirements/criteria): 1) personal characteristics and suitability for medicine: empathy: ability and willingness to imagine the feelings of others and understand the reasons for the views of others; motivation: a reasonably well-informed and strong desire to practise medicine; communication: ability to make knowledge and ideas clear using language appropriate to the audience; honesty and integrity; ethical awareness; ability to work with others; capacity for sustained and intense work; and alignment of individual values and behaviours with the values of the NHS Constitution; and 2) academic potential: problem-solving: critical thinking, analytical approach; intellectual curiosity: keenness to understand the reason for observations; depth; tendency to look for meaning; enthusiasm and curiosity in science; and communication skills: willingness and ability to express clearly and effectively; ability to listen; compatibility with tutorial format. The composition of interview panels was arranged such that every candidate was interviewed by at least one practising clinician. Interviews are conducted blind of college choice (or allocation) and BMAT score.

Further information about the BMAT can be found at: http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/tests/bmat. The below graph illustrates the outcomes by BMAT scores.
The below graphs illustrate outcomes by number of A*s/8s/9s and GCSE and percentage of A*s/8s/9s at GCSE:
Following interviews, college Medicine tutors ranked all the candidates they had seen on the basis of all information available to them at that time. After disclosure of the candidates’ ranks from the second college, BMAT score, and BMAT essays, college Medicine tutors reviewed their ranking and submitted a final version. On the basis of this final ranking, candidates were provisionally assigned offers at a particular college, with the college the applicant had chosen (or had been allocated to) having first refusal. Admissions decisions were confirmed at a final meeting of college Medicine tutors.

73% of applicants attending school in the UK were from state schools (including sixth form and further education colleges), while 27% were from independent schools. The overall success rate in 2019 was 14.4% for state school applicants and 11.7% for independent school applicants. The overall success rate for male applicants was 11%; the overall success rate for female applicants was 9.3%.

The competition for places was very high this year. Only 24% of applicants were invited for interviews and only 10% of applicants were offered a place.