Oriental Studies Admissions Feedback 2019-20

This year the University of Oxford had a high number of applicants for Oriental Studies. Many of the candidates who applied made very good applications and, as 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.

Unfortunately, not every applicant could be interviewed. Decisions about which candidates to shortlist were based on exam results and predictions, the UCAS academic reference and personal statement, submitted written work, and OLAT (Oriental Languages Aptitude Test) results (for candidates specialising in Islam/Arabic or Judaism/Hebrew). These were assessed according to the published selection criteria: https://www.orinst.ox.ac.uk/article/applying-undergraduate.

More information about the OLAT can be found at: https://www.orinst.ox.ac.uk/article/oriental-languages-aptitude-test. Below is a graph illustrating outcomes by OLAT results.

All shortlisted candidates were invited for interviews in Oxford. All candidates received an interview at the Faculty of Oriental Studies. Wherever possible, further interviews were organised by Admissions Coordinators and Admissions Tutors.

Interviews were assessed based on the published selection criteria. Interviewers were looking for evidence of candidates’ intellectual curiosity, conceptual clarity, flexibility - the capacity to engage with alternative perspectives and/or new information, accuracy and attention to detail, critical engagement, capacity for hard work, and enthusiasm for their chosen subject.

The competition for places was very high this year. 83% of applicants were invited for interviews and only 35% of applicants were offered a place.