Experimental Psychology and Psychology, Philosophy and Linguistics
Admissions Feedback 2019-20

This year the University of Oxford had a high number of applicants for Experimental Psychology and Psychology, Philosophy and Linguistics. 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, and TSA (and MLAT, where applicable) results. This admissions round, the Linguistics test of the MLAT (Modern Languages Admissions Test) was taken by those applying for Psychology and Linguistics or Philosophy and Linguistics. From the 2020 admissions round, candidates applying for course combinations including Linguistics will no longer be required to sit the Linguistics test of the MLAT. All elements are assessed against the published selection criteria: https://www.psy.ox.ac.uk/study/undergraduate_admissions/selection_criteria.

Given the number of shortlisted applicants and their uneven distribution between colleges, a number of shortlisted candidates are reallocated from oversubscribed colleges to colleges with a lower ratio of candidates to places. All shortlisted candidates were invited for interviews in Oxford. All applicants who are interviewed in Oxford are interviewed at two separate colleges, with some additional interviews being arranged. This gives the strongest candidates the best chance of receiving an offer.

In interviews, tutors were looking for the following qualities: clarity of analysis and presentation of ideas; ability to generate own ideas and proposals; ability to listen and respond to ideas put forward during discussion, and to draw inferences from them; ability to put forward coherent and well thought out proposals and responses.

Final offer decisions are made on the basis of: 1) GCSEs or equivalent; 2) predicted or obtained A-levels or equivalent; 3) the reference from the school; 4) the admissions test; 5) the interview; 6) and other relevant information.

The below graph illustrates the distribution of TSA scores and shortlisting and offer decisions.
The below graph illustrates the distribution of Linguistics test scores and shortlisting and offer decisions.

77% of applicants were female and 23% of applicants were male. 75% of offer holders are female and 25% of offer holders are male.

The competition for places was very high this year. Only 30% of applicants were shortlisted for interviews and only 14% of applicants were offered a place.