

Applying for Oxbridge

UCAS Application Deadline – 15th October 2025

Oxford and Cambridge are two of the oldest and most competitive universities in the world, and applying can be overwhelming. As well as having an earlier application deadline than other universities, there is a more rigorous application process. This sheet lists a few things you will need to consider before making your application.

It is important to note that you can only apply to one of Oxford or Cambridge, not both.

Your Profile

Oxford and Cambridge have high academic standards for applicants, that continue when you attend the university, with an intense workload. Your GCSE grade profile will be looked at closely and you will need to have predicted A-Level grades in line with their entry requirements. Most courses ask for at least AAA, and often higher.

Admissions Tests

Given that most applicants for Oxbridge will have similar GCSE and predicted A-Level grades, admissions tests are used as a good way to compare applicants. There are a wide variety of admissions tests and details of these can be found on individual course information pages. Lots of these tests can be sat in school.

Colleges

Oxford and Cambridge Universities are made up of separate colleges. When you apply, you are required to choose which college you would like to apply to (although you can choose an 'open' application). Your college is where you will have tutorials and where you will live, eat and socialise. There is often a strong sense of community within each college and different colleges have different locations, sizes, traditions and facilities. It is worth spending time researching which you think may suit you best.

Interview

The interview is a big part of the Oxbridge application process, and just securing an interview is a huge achievement. The interviews are designed to assess your suitability for study, your ability to think and learn, and your passion for the course.

Since Covid, most interviews are still online. The Sixth Form team can support you with interview preparation when you get to that point.

Personal Statement

Admissions Tutors at Oxford and Cambridge are interested in your academic ability and potential. They want to see that you are truly committed to the subject or subjects you want to study, but it's not enough just to say that you have a passion for something. You need to show tutors how you have engaged with your subject, above and beyond whatever you have studied at A-Level. This can include any relevant extra-curricular activities.

Tutors will read your personal statement to try to understand what has motivated you to apply for their course. It's a good idea to evaluate your experiences, to show what you have learned from them and how they have helped develop your understanding of your subject.

Admissions Tests/Pre-registration Assessments

You will need to look at which course you are planning to apply to, to find out which admission test you will need to sit. Registration for these tests isn't automatic, and your UCAS application won't register you for the test. It is your responsibility to let school know which tests you would like to sit.

Oxford University

Registration is via the Oxford Admissions Test Registration portal and needs to be done between 18th June and 19th September (6pm BST).

Cambridge University

There are a few courses that require you to register for a test before you apply. These tests are the Law test (LNAT), Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT), Engineering and Science Test (ESAT) and the Mathematics Test (MAT). All other assessments will be arranged if you are shortlisted for interview.

Registration must be done by early September.

LNAT

Registration for and booking of LNAT tests for entry into university in September 2026 opens on 1 August 2025. Testing starts on 1 September 2025.

Useful Links

- Oxford University - www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/guide/admissions-tests
- Cambridge University - <https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/apply/how/admission-tests>
- LNAT – www.lnat.ac.uk/registration/

Be wary of organisations online that charge for admissions test support – there is lots of free preparation material available on official websites, and in the Further Reading section below.

Resources

- Oxbridge Applications - <https://oxbridgeapplications.com/application-resources/>
- Applying to Oxford - <https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford>
- Applying to Cambridge - <https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/applying>
- Oxford suggested subject resources - <https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses/suggested-subject-resources>
- Oxford digital resource hub - <https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/increasing-access/ug-digital-resources>
- Gresham College - <https://www.gresham.ac.uk/watch-now>
- Cambridge University Super-curricular suggestions - https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/files/publications/super-curricular_suggestions.pdf