



Oxbridge

Oxford and Cambridge Universities



Why Oxford or Cambridge?

- Both are in the top 12 universities most often targeted by Britain's leading graduate employers (*The Graduate Market in 2024*).





Why Oxford or Cambridge?

Excellent Teaching

- **Top 2** in the *Complete University Guide 2026*.
- **Top 3** in the *Guardian University Guide 2026*.
- **Top 5** in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2026.

World Class Research.

- **Top 6** for research quality (*Complete University Guide 2026*).
- **125 Nobel Prize winners** Cambridge 125 ; 73 Oxford since 1904.



Myths



Applicants are mostly male.

Percentage of undergraduates admitted who were female in 2024:

- Cambridge 52%
- Oxford 52%

There are two single sex colleges for females at Cambridge (Newnham College & Murray Edwards College.)



Myths



Most people at Oxford or Cambridge are from private schools.

Percentage of undergraduates admitted who were from state schools in 2024:

- Cambridge 71%
- Oxford 66%



Myths



Most students at Oxford or Cambridge are white.

Percentage of undergraduate students admitted who declared on their application form they were from an ethnic minority background in 2024:

- Cambridge 35%
- Oxford 31%



Myths



It costs more to study at Oxford or Cambridge.

- The tuition fees are no more than elsewhere:
£9,535 for both Cambridge and Oxford.

Both offer generous bursaries to students from lower income families; terms are shorter; and accommodation is also cheaper than at many other universities and often available for 3 years.



Myths



It is impossible to get in.

- Realistic applicants invited to attend interview – approx 75% of applicants Cambridge.
- Typical offers: **A*A*A*** to **AAA**.
- Looking for potential, not polished answers and a passion for your chosen subject.

Myths



All work and no play!

Opportunities are huge: sports, theatre, music, debating, art, journalism, officer training corps

...

100s of student clubs and societies at each university.





How are applications assessed?

“Each application is considered individually and holistically, using all of the following information:

- academic record
- school/college reference
- personal statement (*due to change*)
- written work submitted
- performance in any written assessment taken
- contextual data
- performance at interview.” **(Cambridge University)**



Work hard and secure high GCSEs

“Higher grades at GCSE can help to make your application more competitive. Successful applicants typically have a high proportion of 7,8 and 9 grades.” ***(Oxford University)***





Secure the best GCSEs

“Applicants have generally achieved high grades in subjects relevant to their chosen course, and most students who apply have at least four or five 7s and above at GCSE.

However, there are always exceptions, and we don’t require a minimum number of 8s/9s at GCSE. One of the strengths of the Cambridge admissions system is its ability to assess all applicants individually.” ***(Cambridge University)***



Do I need 3 or 4 A Levels?

- Offers are based on **3** A Levels. *“We’d rather applicants develop broader and **deeper** knowledge of the subjects most relevant/closest to their chosen course than accumulate additional A Levels.”*
- 3 subjects should complement each other and form a competitive combination.



Do I need 3 or 4 A Levels?

Exceptions:

- Competitive applicants for some STEM courses often have Further Maths as a 4th subject. (*Engineering, Economics, Chemical Engineering, Computer Science and Physical Natural Sciences but is not essential.*)
- Vocational subject as a 4th if you wish to study one. (*Could this be at the expense of grades in the other 3?*)



Consider A Level choices carefully

Oxbridge expects **academic** A Levels, rather than vocational subjects.

Avoid Media Studies, Business Studies, Photography, Performing Arts etc. They do not count Critical Thinking or General Studies A Levels.





Medicine

Medicine at least A*AA grades.

You must have Chemistry A Level (at least a grade A).

Plus 2 from: Biology/Chemistry/Maths A Level.

Excludes Critical Thinking, Psychology and General Studies A Levels.



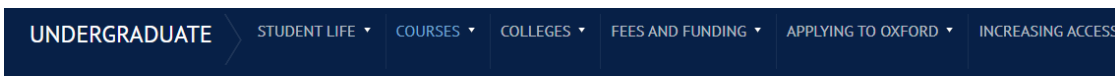
Maths, Science, Engineering

- Science or Maths courses - take at least 2 (ideally 3) of Biology, Chemistry, Maths, **Further Maths** and Physics.
- *“Courses are competitive, and applicants who have more relevant A Level subjects (3 or more) tend to do better in our admissions process.”*
- Chemical Engineering, Biological Sciences or Medical Sciences - **should take Chemistry.**
- Physical Sciences or Engineering - take A Level Maths and Physics and **ideally Further Maths.**



Oxford Subject Summary

[Admission requirements for 2026 entry | University of Oxford](#)



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Admission requirements for 2025 entry

Below is a summary of each course's requirements.

- Essential
- Recommended
- ▲ Helpful – may be useful on course

Please check the course page for details.

Course	Entrance requirements (at A-level or equivalent)	Subject choices	Test	Written work
Archaeology and Anthropology	AAA	▲ Combination of arts and science subjects	None	Two pieces
Asian and Middle Eastern Studies	AAA	▲ A language Mastering the ability to handwrite is a mandatory core element for Japanese, Chinese and Korean.	None	Two pieces
Biochemistry (Molecular and Cellular)	A*AA including Chemistry and another science or Maths, with the A* in Maths, Physics, Chemistry, or Biology (or a very closely related subject)	● Chemistry and another science or Maths ■ Maths ▲ Biology (beyond GCSE or equivalent)	None	None
Biology	A*AA (with the A* in a science or Maths)	● Biology and either Chemistry, Physics or Maths	None	None

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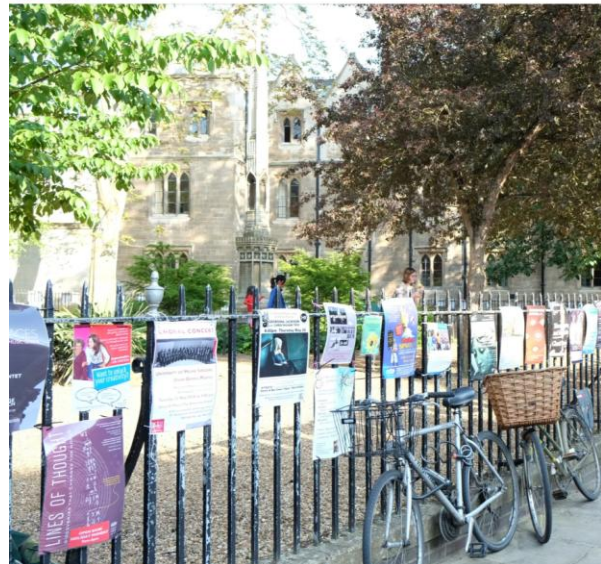
Enhance your University Application

[Super-Curricular Activities \(cam.ac.uk\)](https://cam.ac.uk)

What else do universities look for?

Many universities will be interested in extra-curricular activities, including your hobbies and interests, work experience, voluntary work and any positions of responsibility that you may have held either in school/college or elsewhere. At Cambridge, our admissions decisions are based on academic criteria (ability and potential), so activities that are of no relevance to your course will not increase your chances of receiving an offer. We do look for evidence of wider engagement within your area of academic interest – we call these activities 'super-curricular'. You can find more details on our website; www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/super-curricular-activities.

UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE



Super-Curricular Activities

Enhancing your university application

Read around and beyond chosen subject

- Cambridge - wider reading list:

[super-curricular suggestions 2.pdf \(cam.ac.uk\)](#)



Oxford - reading advice:

History

The best way to prepare for a History degree is to read the history books which interest you, either related to your school work or ranging beyond it – and be prepared to discuss your views of those books and their arguments. To find such material, you might want to follow up on references made in your school or college text books, or your History teacher may also be able to recommend particular works for you to read on topics that you find most interesting.

One good way of broadening your historical horizons is to read one of the popular History magazines: [History Today](#) or [BBC History](#), which has [weekly podcasts](#). You may like to look at the books which are being reviewed in the quality press.

You may also like to explore the websites of public institutions which have excellent links to historical materials, such as the [British Museum](#) or [BBC Radio 4 archives](#).

Lastly, delving into some historical sources can be a great way to develop your ideas and understanding. You could try exploring literature, art, music or even films produced by different societies, and consider what these can tell us about the people of that time.

Oxford research:

- [Looking back to understand the recent economic crisis](#)
- [Helping the UK understand China](#)

History

[Course film](#)

Books	Fordham University History Sourcebooks Boyd-Hilton, <i>A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People? England 1783-1846</i> Butterfield, <i>The Whig Interpretation of History</i> Clark, <i>The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914</i> Gaddis, <i>The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past</i> Jordanova, <i>History in Practice</i> Lawrence, <i>Me, Me, Me: The Search for Community in Post-war England</i> Roper, <i>Martin Luther: Renegade and Prophet</i> Rublack, <i>A Concise Companion to History</i> Said, <i>Orientalism</i>
Journals/Articles	History Today The world's leading serious history magazine HistoryExtra: BBC History Magazine & BBC World Histories Magazine Reviews in History: Latest reviews
Websites	Getting Started: Reading Primary Sources – Cambridge History Faculty My HE Plus The Online Atlas History: British History in-depth British Museum Historical Association – the UK national charity for history The Royal Historical Society Black Cultural Archives
Video	Gresham Lectures - History Cambridge History Faculty YouTube channel
Podcasts	Dan Snow's History Hit Radio 4 - In Our Time, History Historical Association Podcasts

Visit Oxford and Cambridge



- Get a “feel” for the cities and the colleges.
(You apply to a college or can submit an open application.)
- You can only apply to Cambridge or Oxford; not both.





Application Timeline

Note the *earlier* application deadline:

15th October 2024, 18:00 (UK time) – *Oxbridge, Cambridge, medicine, veterinary science, dentistry.*

14th January 2025, 18:00 (UK time) – *most other university courses.*

Note you must register for admissions tests by **26th September (except Law LNAT 1st August -25th September)**

HOW YOU APPLY

2026 ENTRY



[2026 entry admissions timeline | University of Oxford](#)

THINKING OF DEFERRING ENTRY?

This is not always possible so we recommend you check with your course department first.



University – Your timeline?

May 2026	Sit GCSEs
Sept 2026	Begin A Levels /Y12
Mar 2027	University Prospectuses published
Summer 2027	University Open Days
Sept 2027	Start Y13
Early Sept 2027	Register for entrance exams*
Mid Oct 2027	Oxbridge Application UCCAS deadline
Oct 2027	Oxbridge and other entrance exams
Nov 2027	Submit written work Oxbridge
Dec 2027	Oxbridge Interviews
Jan 2028	UCCAs deadline for other universities
Jan 2028	Oxbridge offers
May 2028	Sit A Levels
August 2028	A Level Results
October 2028	Start university

** Law (LNAT), Vet Medicine, Medicine – check deadlines for registering for tests.*



What can you do now and later?

- Get the best grades you can at GCSE.
- Choose A Level subjects carefully.
- Utilise the summer after GCSEs - carry out your own research.
- Read widely around the subject you would like to study at degree level.
- Get to know the admissions process and timeline.
- Be pro-active and let post-16 providers know early on if you wish to apply to Oxford or Cambridge.
- Download sample admission tests.
- Check out online courses/information events.
- Look out for open days (Y12 end of June and July usually).

Useful Websites:

- [Applying to Cambridge | Undergraduate Study](#)
- <http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions>
- <http://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/>
- <https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/ucas-undergraduate-when-apply>
- <https://www.applytocambridge.com/>
- <http://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/find-out-more/teachers-and-parents/oxford-and-cambridge-similarities-and-differences>
- [Super-Curricular Activities \(cam.ac.uk\)](#)