

Aspire

Information about applying to the University of Oxford and University of Cambridge (collectively known as Oxbridge)

Enjoy the journey

- [1. Why apply to Oxbridge?](#)
- [2. The Aspire programme: how we can help](#)
- [3. The process: a timeline](#)
- [4. Oxford or Cambridge?](#)
- [5. Choosing a college](#)
- [6. Choosing a course to study](#)
- [7. Subject requirements](#)
- [8. Entry requirements \(GCSEs and A-Levels\)](#)
- [9. Preparation and reading](#)
- [10. How to apply](#)
- [11. Admissions tests and shortlisting](#)
- [12. Personal statements](#)
- [13. Written Work](#)
- [14. Interviews](#)
- [15. What are the chances of getting in?](#)
- [16. Aspire - Enjoy the journey - to be completed by students](#)

[Competencies & Skills](#)

[Wide Reading](#)

[Essay Competitions/Prizes](#)

[MOOCs & online course](#)

[University Events/Experiences *including \(virtual\) work experience](#)

N.B. The information in this booklet consists of Bohunt Sixth Form advice, advice from Oxbridge (both universities have produced an overview guide together), and advice from the University of Oxbridge and University of Cambridge respectively. The best place to find out more is the universities' undergraduate admissions websites.

1. Why apply to Oxbridge?

Why apply?

- Intellectual stimulation
- Tutorials
- Be taught by the best
- Interesting students
- College system
- World-class facilities
- History
- Job prospects

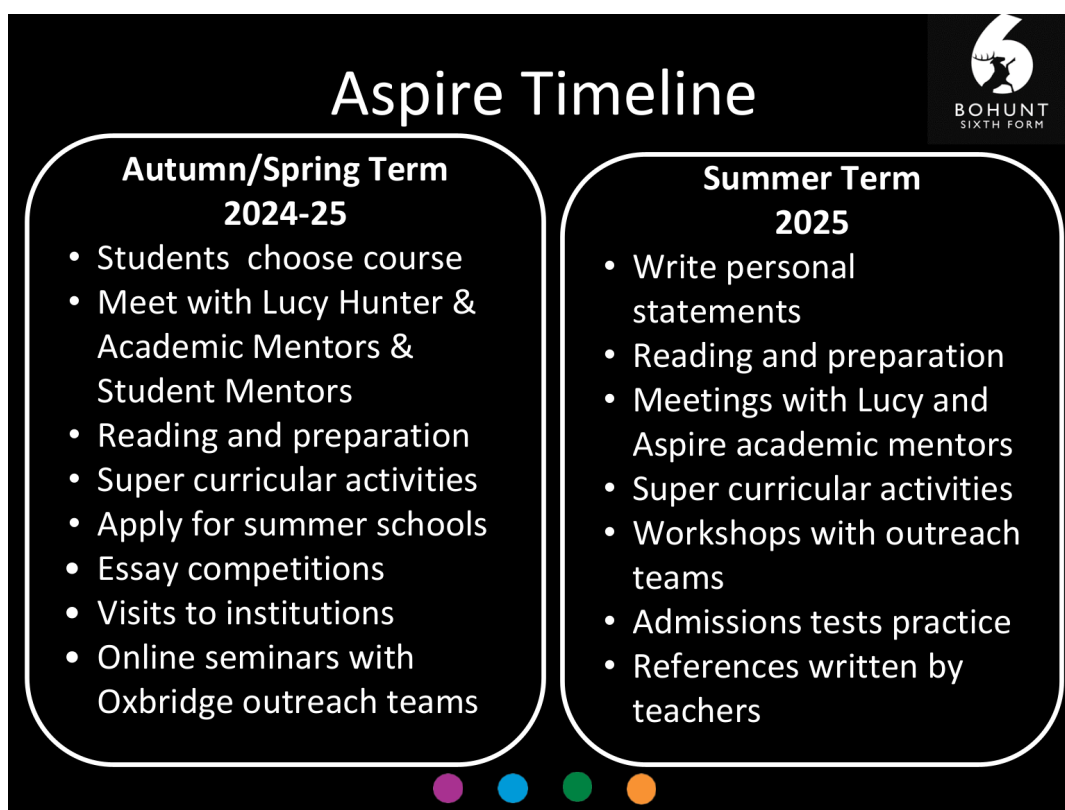


2. The Aspire Programme: how we can help

The Bohunt Sixth Form Aspire Programme will support you through the stages of the application process. You will meet with Assistant Head Teacher Lucy Hunter to discuss your application and work on your personal statement and interview technique. You will also meet with subject specialist teachers who will act as Aspire Advisers or Academic Mentors to guide you towards a deeper understanding of your subject and may suggest additional reading. They will help you to prepare for admissions tests, if required, and for interviews. You will be given a number of formal practice interviews, to help prepare

you to respond to complex questions. Departments may also offer additional enrichment activities which will support your application, such as Model United Nations or General History and Politics Seminars. We would also advise you to read the library newsletter carefully and enter some of the competitions advertised and read some of their suggested articles/books to extend your knowledge of your subjects beyond the scope of the taught curriculum.

3. The process: a timeline



4. Oxford or Cambridge?

Oxbridge advice:

Oxford and Cambridge: the similarities and differences

The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge have a great deal in common, including their collegiate structure, personalised teaching methods and

wealth of resources available to students. Oxford and Cambridge courses tend to be traditional academic courses, with a strong emphasis on personalised teaching. Formal assessment is often 100% based on examinations. Both universities are committed to recruiting the best and brightest students from all backgrounds.

Choosing between Oxford and Cambridge

It is not possible to apply to both Oxford and Cambridge in the same admissions round, so students will have to choose one or the other. Both universities are world-renowned for teaching and research in both arts and science subjects, so the decision is largely an individual one.

Some courses are offered at one of the universities but not the other. Check each institution's Undergraduate Prospectus/website for details of courses on offer. However, it is important to be aware that courses with a similar title at the two universities may be different in content. It is therefore important for students to check the course details to see which one will suit them best.

For further details:

Cambridge: www.cam.ac.uk/courses

Oxford: www.ox.ac.uk/courses

Teaching

Teaching methods are very similar at both universities, as students will attend lectures, classes and laboratory work as appropriate for their course. Unlike at many other universities, students at Oxford and Cambridge also benefit from highly personalised teaching time with experts in their field. The only difference is in the name: Oxford refers to these sessions as 'tutorials' while Cambridge calls them 'supervisions'.

Students are required to prepare an essay or other piece of work in advance for these sessions and then meet with their tutor to discuss the work, perhaps with one or two other students. Supervisors or tutors are specialists or suitably qualified or experienced, so this time is extremely valuable to students in developing their understanding of the subject.

For further details:

Cambridge: www.cam.ac.uk/supervisions

Oxford: www.ox.ac.uk/tutorials

[Oxford and Cambridge: the similarities and differences](#)

Bohunt advice: as the two universities are very similar, there are two important things to consider when making your choice. The first is the

differences between the course you would study at each university – which course looks more interesting, and which offers the best options in terms of content or assessment? The second is the difference between the two environments: Oxford is a big, bustling city, whereas Cambridge is quieter and more sedate. Both offer beautiful buildings and a rich history. Oxford is a little closer to Hampshire, which may or may not be a positive from your point of view!

5. Choosing a college

Oxbridge advice: Both Oxford and Cambridge universities are made up of individual colleges, as well as different subject departments. A college will be a student's home and their central focus of teaching for much of their time at university. Each college will have a diverse range of students - usually including both undergraduate and graduate students - studying across a range of subject areas.

The college system offers the benefits of belonging to a large internationally renowned university, and also to a smaller, interdisciplinary academic college community. You will have access to your college's facilities, such as extensive library and IT provision, as well as the resources of the wider university.

Each college offers an excellent standard of teaching and has very high academic standards. Both universities work hard to ensure that the best students are successful in gaining a place, whichever college they've applied to. This means that you may be interviewed by more than one college and you may receive an offer from any of them. If you would prefer not to choose a college, you can make an open application.

For further details:

Cambridge: www.cam.ac.uk/ugcolls

Oxford: www.ox.ac.uk/ugcolls

Bohunt advice: colleges vary hugely in their character, so look at the descriptions of the different colleges to find one that appeals to you. Is a central location an advantage to you, or would you prefer to be further away from the centre of town? Would you prefer to go to a college with a lively sporting, musical, or dramatic scene?

One golden rule: do not apply to the same college to study the same course as another Bohunt student. You have a better chance of getting in if you both apply to different colleges.

An open application is where you allow the university to choose your college for you, by allocating you to whichever college has the fewest

applicants for your chosen course. There is more information and a video on how to choose an Oxford college here: [Do you choose a college?](#)

There is detailed information on how to choose a Cambridge college here:

[Choosing a College](#)

6. Choosing a course to study

Bohunt advice: Some students are clear from the start that they wish to study a certain course (e.g. Medicine), while others can take a long time to decide what they would like to specialise in. This is perfectly normal, so take your time and research all your options carefully. Think about where your strengths lie, what you would find most interesting, and how different subjects link to possible careers. Look carefully at the full range of courses on offer at each university before making your choice. Both Oxford and Cambridge offer unusual undergraduate degrees that you may not have heard of before e.g. Oriental Studies at Oxford University, Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic at Cambridge University.

Cambridge University list of undergraduate courses: [Course listing](#)

Oxford University list of undergraduate courses: [AZ of courses](#)

7. Subject requirements

Bohunt advice: Some courses require specific subjects to be studied at A-Level e.g. Mathematics A-Level is required to study Mathematics, Chemistry A-Level is required to study Medicine. Other courses *recommend* certain subjects be studied e.g. History A-Level to study History, though it is not essential. At Cambridge, some colleges may require a particular subject while others may not.

Once you've identified a course that you wish to apply for, check the information on their course page to see whether you are studying the required A-Levels.

- To see a full table of subject requirements for Oxford University, go to [Admission requirements for 2022 entry](#)

- For information about course requirements for Cambridge University, go to [Course requirements](#)

8. Entry requirements

The following information is taken from the universities' websites:

University of Oxford

[UK qualifications](#)

A-Levels

Offers for students studying A-levels will range between A*A*A and AAA depending on the course. If a practical component forms part of any of the A-levels taken, we expect candidates to have taken it and passed.

Each course gives details of specific subjects and grade requirements. [AZ of courses](#)

You may also like to see this summary of our [A-level offers](#)

Other equivalent qualifications are also welcome: [UK qualifications](#) and [International qualifications](#)

A*A*A

The following courses require two A* grades and one A grade:

- Chemistry
- Engineering Science
- Mathematics
- Mathematics and Philosophy
- Mathematics and Statistics

A*AA

The following courses, mostly in science subjects, require one A* grade and two A grades:

- Biochemistry
- Biological Sciences
- Biomedical Sciences
- Computer Science
- Computer Science and Philosophy

- Earth Sciences (Geology)
- Economics and Management
- Geography
- Materials Science
- Mathematics and Computer Science
- Medicine
- Physics
- Physics and Philosophy
- Psychology (Experimental)
- Psychology, Philosophy and Linguistics (PPL)

AAA

Offers for the following courses will usually be for three A grades:

- Archaeology and Anthropology
- Classical Archaeology and Ancient History
- Classics
- Classics and English
- Classics and Modern Languages
- Classics and Oriental Studies
- English Language and Literature
- English and Modern Languages
- European and Middle Eastern Languages
- Fine Art
- History
- History (Ancient and Modern)
- History and Economics
- History and English
- History and Modern Languages
- History and Politics
- History of Art
- Human Sciences
- Law (Jurisprudence)
- Modern Languages
- Modern Languages and Linguistics
- Music
- Oriental Studies
- Philosophy and Modern Languages
- Philosophy and Theology

- Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE)
- Religion and Oriental Studies
- Theology and Religion

*NB These may be subject to change

Providing that any specific subject requirements have been met, all A-levels are approved for admissions purposes, with the exception of General Studies.

GCSEs

GCSEs will be taken into account when we consider your application but they are just one aspect that we look at. GCSE results will be considered alongside your personal statement, academic reference, predicted grades and performance in any written work or written test required for your course. If you are shortlisted, your performance in interviews will also be taken into account.

Higher grades at GCSE can help to make your application more competitive, and successful applicants typically have a high proportion of grades 7,8 and 9. However, we do look at GCSE grades in context. Where possible, tutors will be made aware of the overall GCSE performance of the school or college where you studied. They will also have information on how you have performed compared with other Oxford applicants at similar schools.

Contextual data

Tutors will also consider your achieved or predicted grades at A-level (or other equivalent qualifications), your personal statement, academic reference, and any written work or written tests required for your course. If your application is shortlisted, your performance at interview will also be taken into account.

If you feel that you did less well in your GCSEs than you might otherwise have done, because of extenuating circumstances, you may still be able to make a competitive application. Examples would include disruption caused by change of school or system, severe discontinuity of teachers, bereavement, and debilitating illness. We take care to treat each application individually and would always take such mitigating circumstances into account, if they are brought to our attention. You may like to mention any such circumstances in your personal statement,

and your referee should make sure to mention them clearly in their reference.

Tutors will want to see how you improve your academic performance after your GCSEs and that you do well in your A-levels or other equivalent qualifications.

Candidates do not need to take the English Baccalaureate to be able to apply to Oxford. We recommend that candidates take those GCSE subjects that they enjoy the most and are confident in achieving good grades in.

University of Cambridge

A-Levels

Most Cambridge applicants are studying three or four A Level subjects in Years 12 and 13, and this is usually sufficient to show breadth of interests and ability to manage a range of differing academic tasks. We'd rather applicants develop broader and deeper knowledge of the subjects most relevant/closest to their chosen course than accumulate additional A Levels. Applicants taking four subjects won't normally be at an advantage compared with those taking three, although competitive applicants for STEM subjects often have Further Mathematics as a fourth subject.

If you're taking any modular courses, you're asked to report (in the Supplementary Application Questionnaire, SAQ) the details of your uniform mark scheme (UMS) performance for any modular AS and A Level units taken to date, whether certificated or not (we normally expect good A grades in relevant subjects, if the AS is taken at the end of Year 12). Colleges won't make unconditional offers on the basis of AS Level grades alone. You'll only have UMS marks for modular AS/A Level subjects. If you're taking linear qualifications, your teachers will provide us with information about your performance through their UCAS reference.

For 2022 entry, the typical conditional A Level offer will be A*AA or A*A*A, depending on the course. In countries where an A* grade at A Level is not available, three A grades would be acceptable.

Some applicants may be set lower offers or more challenging ones. Applicants may be required to achieve A* in a particular subject(s) depending on individual circumstances.

- We expect that students taking A Levels in new science subjects will complete and pass the practical assessment.
- Cambridge doesn't require 90 per cent in every AS or A Level unit/subject.

- A Level Critical Thinking isn't considered an acceptable third A Level subject for any course at Cambridge. While it's regarded as a worthwhile addition to your portfolio of qualifications as a fourth AS or A Level subject, it's unlikely to be part of a conditional offer.
- Key Skills and General Studies aren't required or included in academic assessment.

GCSEs

There are no GCSE (or equivalent) requirements for entry to Cambridge. GCSE results are looked at as a performance indicator, but within the context of the performance of the school/college where they were achieved.

Applicants have generally achieved high grades in subjects relevant to their chosen course, and most students who apply have at least four or five 7,8, 9s at GCSE. However, there are always exceptions and we don't require a minimum number of 7, 8, 9 at GCSE. One of the strengths of the Cambridge admissions system is its ability to assess all applicants individually.

Our research shows that post-16 examination performance is a much better predictor of degree success at Cambridge. While GCSE results are looked at as a performance indicator, this is within the context of the performance of the school/college where they were attained, and strong performance in Years 12 and 13 can make up for a less stellar performance at GCSE.

[Entrance requirements](#)

9. Preparation and Reading

Bohunt advice: The most important thing that you can do to support your application is to delve as deeply into your subject as you can. For most subjects this means reading. Try to do the following:

- ask your teachers for reading recommendations to broaden and deepen your knowledge
- after you read a book or an article, summarise the key arguments contained within it, and your view of them (this is an important skill, and you can also use your notes to jog your memory about the books you've read before interview)
- read a newspaper, keeping an eye open for links to your subject, and cut out and keep any relevant articles in a folder (you can look through this before interview)

- follow leading figures in your subject on Twitter, and keep up to date with current debates and controversies
- practise past questions for the admissions tests (these can be found online), and ask your teacher to look at them for you
- talk about your subject with friends, teachers, parents: this is great practice for interviews
- ask your teachers for practice interviews
- *think* about your subject, and write down your thoughts

10. How to apply

Oxbridge advice: All students must apply through UCAS by a date in mid-October (released later by UCAS).

Cambridge also asks all applicants to complete an online Supplementary Application Questionnaire (SAQ) and, for those outside the EU, the Cambridge Online Preliminary Application (COPA) after submission of their UCAS application to ensure consistent information about all applicants. There may be different deadlines for students wishing to be interviewed overseas.

Oxford does not require students to complete any extra forms.

You may also need to take a written test as part of your application, or submit some written work. If your application is shortlisted, you will be invited to the relevant university for interview.

For further details:

Cambridge: www.cam.ac.uk/apply

Oxford: www.ox.ac.uk/apply

11. Admissions tests and shortlisting

Oxbridge advice: Many A-level applicants are predicted to achieve top grades and many also have excellent references. It's therefore not possible for Oxford or Cambridge to select the best students based on their UCAS applications alone.

Cambridge asks applicants for most courses to take a written assessment either pre-interview or at-interview. AS level grades and Uniform Mark Scheme (UMS) scores are collected, where available. Around 80% of applicants to Cambridge are interviewed.

Oxford asks applicants for most of its courses to take a test before interview as part of their application, and applicants need to register separately for this test. Tutors then shortlist applicants based on students' applications and performance in the test. Where applications are around three per place, most applicants are shortlisted. For the most competitive degrees, far fewer will be shortlisted, to allow those who most closely meet the selection criteria to have multiple interviews. AS-level grades and Uniform Mark Scheme (UMS) scores are not a key element in shortlisting.

For further details:

Cambridge: www.cam.ac.uk/assessment

Oxford: www.ox.ac.uk/tests

University of Cambridge: courses requiring pre-interview or at-interview assessments

Courses	
Pre-interview assessment	At-interview assessment
▪ Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic ▪ Asian and Middle Eastern Studies ▪ Economics ▪ Engineering (including Chemical Engineering via Engineering) ▪ English ▪ Geography ▪ History ▪ History and Modern Languages ▪ History and Politics ▪ Human, Social, and Political Sciences ▪ Medicine (BMAT) ▪ Natural Sciences (including Chemical Engineering via Natural Sciences) ▪ Psychological and Behavioural Sciences ▪ Veterinary Medicine	▪ Archaeology ▪ Architecture ▪ Classics (3-year) ▪ Classics (4-year) ▪ Computer Science¹ ▪ Education ▪ History and Modern Languages ▪ History of Art ▪ Land Economy ▪ Law ▪ Linguistics ▪ Modern and Medieval Languages ▪ Philosophy ▪ Theology, Religion, and Philosophy of Religion

Please note:

- there's no common format written assessment for Mathematics (applicants will continue to sit STEP) – Colleges will assess aptitude, knowledge base and potential through short tasks at the time of interview²
- there's no common format written assessment for Music – Colleges will assess aptitude, knowledge base and potential through short tasks at the time of interview
- applicants to History and Modern Languages are required to take written assessments both pre-interview (the History assessment) and at interview (the Modern Languages assessment), if interviewed
- applicants to Asian and Middle Eastern Studies wishing to combine an AMES language with a modern European language are required to take written assessments both pre-interview (Asian and Middle Eastern Studies) and at interview (Modern Languages assessment), if interviewed
- applicants to Chemical Engineering will sit the assessment relevant to their chosen route/first-year course (Engineering or Natural Sciences)

(Taken from [Admission assessments](#) – please note, the table above may be subject to change for 2023 entry, so please check the website carefully.)

University of Oxford: courses requiring pre-interview assessments

Biomedical Sciences
Chemistry
Classics
Classics and English
Classics and Modern Languages
Classics and Oriental Studies
Computer Science
Computer Science and Philosophy
Economics and Management
Engineering Science
English and Modern Languages
European and Middle Eastern Languages
Geography
History
History (Ancient and Modern)
History and Economics
History and English
History and Modern Languages
History and Politics

Human Sciences
Law
Materials Science
Mathematics
Mathematics and Computer Science
Mathematics and Philosophy
Mathematics and Statistics
Medicine
Modern Languages
Modern Languages and Linguistics
Oriental Studies
Philosophy and Modern Languages
Philosophy and Theology
Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE)
Physics
Physics and Philosophy
Psychology (Experimental)
Psychology, Philosophy and Linguistics
Religion and Oriental Studies

Please note: this list may be amended, so check your course's subject page for full details: [Admissions tests](#)

12. Personal Statements

Advice from the University of Cambridge:

As part of your UCAS application you'll need to write a personal statement. Personal statements give you the chance to tell us about your subject interest(s), and the process of writing a personal statement can often help you to better understand your academic interests and intellectual motivations.

We advise you to follow the UCAS advice about what to include in your personal statement.

At Cambridge, all admissions decisions are based solely on academic criteria (ability and potential). Therefore, in your personal statement, we'd like you to:

- explain your reasons for wanting to study the subject at university

- demonstrate enthusiasm for and commitment to your chosen course
- express any particular interests within the field
- outline how you've pursued your subject interest in their own time

This information is often used as a basis for discussion at interview.

[UCAS application](#)

Advice from the University of Oxford:

One section of the application is called your personal statement. This is where you can write whatever you'd like to say about yourself and your motivation to study your course.

People sometimes think that there is a trick to writing a personal statement for Oxford, or that we are looking for some special secret formula, but this is not the case. Writing a personal statement for Oxford is no different from writing a personal statement for any other university. In fact it's important to remember that the same wording will be seen by all the universities you apply to and should therefore focus on the course you want to study, not the universities themselves. Please read this [helpful advice from UCAS about writing your personal statement](#).

How important is the personal statement?

Universities build a picture of you as a student from all the different information you provide, to help decide whether or not to offer you a place. The picture is made up of several different pieces: your personal statement, academic record, predicted A-level grades (or equivalent), and your teacher's reference. For most courses at Oxford you will also need to take an admissions test or submit written work as well ([check the details for your course](#)). If your application is shortlisted, your interview will also be taken into account. This means that your personal statement is important but it's not everything: it's just one part of the overall picture.

What are Oxford tutors looking for?

Tutors at Oxford are only 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 at university 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 school or college. This can include any relevant extracurricular activities.

Try to avoid writing your personal statement as though you are ticking things off a list. There is no checklist of required achievements, and tutors will not just scan what you have written to look for key words or phrases. 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.

Should I include extracurricular activities?

If you're applying for competitive courses, which includes any course at Oxford, we typically suggest that you focus around 80% of your personal statement on your academic interests, abilities and achievements. This can include discussion of any relevant extracurricular activities. The remaining 20% can then cover any unrelated extracurricular activities.

There's a myth that Oxford is looking for the most well-rounded applicants, and that you will only be offered a place if you have a long list of varied extracurricular activities. In fact, extracurricular activities are only helpful in so far as they demonstrate the [selection criteria for your course](#).

Do I need experience of work and travel?

We understand that not everyone has the opportunity to do work experience or to go travelling so these activities are not a requirement for any of our courses. Tutors won't be impressed by your connections, or the stamps in your passport, but they will be impressed by how you've engaged with your subject.

For example, some of our applicants for Medicine may have had work experience placements in prestigious hospitals but not be able to evaluate their time there. If you have no more experience than some simple voluntary work, or even just discussing medical matters with your friends and family, you can still write an effective personal statement by reflecting critically on what you have learned and discussed.

To give another example, for the History of Art, tutors will not want to hear about all the galleries and exhibitions that you have visited around the world if you cannot discuss the art that you saw. You can come across more effectively in your personal statement by evaluating art you have seen, even if you've only seen it online or in books without ever leaving the school library.

Don't be put off by any friends who you think have more impressive things to say in their personal statements. Remember that tutors do not have a checklist of achievements that they are looking for: they want to see how you have engaged with your subject.

I'm applying to different courses at different universities – how should I write my personal statement?

If you are thinking of applying for completely different courses at different universities (e.g. Physics and Accounting, or Biology and Music) we'd encourage you to reconsider. It's important to choose a subject area that you really want to study, and focus on that one area when making your applications. Also, you can only write one personal statement which will be seen by all the universities to which you apply, so it needs to be relevant for all your courses.

If you are thinking of applying for *related* courses at different universities then we suggest that you avoid using course titles in your personal statement. We recommend that you write about your interest in the general course themes, and how you have engaged with relevant subject areas, so that your personal statement is equally relevant for each of your course choices.

Does my personal statement need to stand out?

Students sometimes feel that they need to say something dramatic to stand out from the crowd and be really memorable in their personal statement but this is not true. Applying to Oxford is not like a talent show where you may only have a few seconds to make an impression. Tutors consider each application carefully on its individual merits, looking for evidence of your commitment and ability. If you use your personal statement to demonstrate your academic abilities and your engagement with your subject or subjects, then your application will be memorable for all the right reasons.

Where should I start?

Think about talking to your friends about what you want to study at university: what would you tell them? What have you read or watched or seen that has inspired you? (This might have been at school, at home, in a museum, on TV, in a book, on YouTube or a podcast or anywhere else.) Why was it interesting? What do you want to find out next? What did you do?

If you find this difficult, it might be time to think about whether or not you've really chosen the right course. If you can't think of anything that has inspired you, this lack of enthusiasm will probably come across in your personal statement, or it will become clear at interview, and you're unlikely to gain a place at Oxford. If you find it easy to answer these questions, you will have a long list of ideas to help you write your personal statement.

When you start to write, remember not just to list your achievements but show how they have affected you, how you have benefited, and what

you'd like to learn next. Be honest about yourself and what has inspired you, whether that's been text books, museums and literature, or websites, podcasts and blogs. Be sure to tell the truth, as tutors might check later, so don't exaggerate and certainly don't make any false claims. Don't hold back either – this is no time for modesty.

When you've written a first draft, have a look back at the [selection criteria](#) for your course and think about the evidence you've given for each of the criteria. Have you covered everything?

How many versions should I write?

Ask your tutor, subject teacher or academic mentor to read through what you've written, listen to their feedback and then make any updates that they suggest. You may need two or three tries to get it right. Don't keep writing and rewriting your statement though, as it is more important to keep up with your school or college work, and to explore your subject with wider reading. (See [suggested reading and resources](#).)

Some dos and don'ts

DON'T:

- DON'T be tempted to make anything up, as you might be asked about it at interview.
- DON'T copy anyone else's personal statement. UCAS uses plagiarism detection software.
- DON'T list qualifications like your GCSE grades or anything else that's covered elsewhere on the application.
- DON'T just list your other achievements: you need to evaluate them.
- DON'T feel the need to be dramatic in order to be memorable.

DO:

- DO apply for a course you really want to study.
- DO be yourself: tell the truth about your interests.
- DO sell yourself: this is not the time for modesty.
- DO re-read your personal statement before an interview – the tutors will.
- DO read the [UCAS guidance on personal statements](#).

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/ucas-application?wssl=1#content-tab--2>

13. Written work

Oxbridge advice:

Both universities require some applicants to submit samples of written work as part of their application. At Oxford the deadline for the submission of this work is in November. Applicants to Cambridge will be advised by their college when it needs to be submitted.

For further details:

Cambridge: www.cam.ac.uk/writtenwork

Oxford: www.ox.ac.uk/writwork

14.Interviews

Oxbridge advice:

The purpose and structure of interviews is very similar at both universities. Essentially they are rather like a mini tutorial or supervision, where the tutors will give students a small passage to read or perhaps set a small problem and then ask the student to discuss it.

Contrary to many popular myths about such interviews, there are no tricks or mind games involved. The interview is for tutors to get a sense of how the student reacts to new situations and how they process the information available. It is not a matter of how quickly - or even whether - the student arrives at the right answer. There may not even be a right answer. The tutors just want to get an insight into how the student thinks.

For further details and video examples:

Cambridge: www.cam.ac.uk/interviews

Oxford: www.ox.ac.uk/interviews

Bohunt advice: Interviews are an essential step to achieving an Oxbridge offer, and you have a good chance of getting an interview if you apply. Cambridge interviews about 75% of applicants, some of whom are determined by the results of admissions tests. Oxford decides who to interview based on the admissions tests, if applicable. You should therefore assume that you are going to be interviewed and should start preparing early. It's absolutely normal to feel a little nervous about the prospect of Oxbridge interviews. Chat to your teachers for help, practice, and reassurance.

You may find that you have one, two or more interviews. One student I taught previously had seven! (Happily, after all that, he was offered a place.) Interviews could focus on your personal statement, the written work you have submitted, a passage you have been asked to read or a problem you have been asked to solve, or a general discussion about your subject. They can offer a taste of what an Oxbridge tutorial is like: if you have a positive attitude then they can be a lot of fun!

15.What are the chances of getting in?

Bohunt advice: On average Cambridge receives about six applications per place (Oxford does not publish an average figure), so you stand a reasonable chance of being accepted. Your chances increase if you are called for interview.

Some individual courses are more competitive than others. This link takes you to a table showing the percentages of offers to applications at Oxford University in 2020:

[Oxford student offers show significant state school increase](#)

This link takes you to an interactive tool that allows you to look at similar data for Cambridge: [Application statistics](#)

The main thing to remember is that getting in is not the sole aim of the Aspire programme: rather, it is to stretch and challenge yourself. You should welcome the opportunity to engage with your subject and to undertake interesting reading. The whole process of interview practice, and the actual interviews themselves, can be a hugely enjoyable experience if you embrace the challenge of discussing your ideas with experts. You will learn a great deal about your subject, and improve your interview technique, regardless of whether you are ultimately lucky enough to be selected. This programme will prepare you to apply to other prestigious universities as well.

Aspire: enjoy the journey

To be completed by Aspire Students

The following pages are designed to support you in preparing to apply to Oxbridge. You should aim to complete them over the course of Year 12, creating a timeline or action plan of what you intend to do/have done in order to be successful.

It is crucial that you demonstrate how you have gone beyond the scope of curriculum study for your A Level courses and are 'studying' for the course you intend to apply for, aiming to demonstrate intellectual curiosity and a range of competencies.

You will be expected to bring this to each Aspire meeting and to be consistently adding to these pages. Sometimes, I will set specific tasks as assignments, but it is imperative that you demonstrate autonomy and drive to achieve your aspirations to Oxbridge.

Competencies & Skills

Wide Reading

Essay Competitions/Prizes

MOOCs & online course

University Events/Experiences *including (virtual) work experience

You can format and record information in a style of your choosing.

Please ensure you correctly reference sources referred to by recording the title, author, date of publication or date you accessed in the case of a website. URLs can be recorded.

The following links may be a helpful starting place:

<https://www.myheplus.com>

<https://www.univ.ox.ac.uk/applying-to-univ/staircase12/>

<https://explore.org>

<https://www.thecarolineclub.com/competitions/oxbridge>

<https://www.univ.ox.ac.uk/applying-to-univ/resource-hub/>

<https://www.gresham.ac.uk/watch/>

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