

Oxbridge Admissions: How to make a strong application

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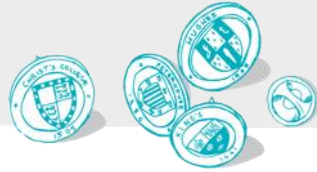


The Application Process

- 1 Choose your course**



- 2 Choose a College or open application**



- 3 Check admission assessment arrangements**



- 4 UCAS application (mid-October)**

- 5 My Cambridge Application**



- 6 Submit written work and/or take admission assessment**



- 7 Interview (December)**



- 8 Decision (January)**



What Cambridge looks for

- It is a competitive application process. This year we had over 22,000 applicants for ~3,500 places.
- The admissions process is designed to help us find students who have:
 - **Enthusiasm** (for their subject)
 - **Motivation** (for independent study)
 - **Potential** (to thrive at Cambridge)
- Decisions are holistic – we look at all available information when making decisions (tests, grades, interviews, reference etc.)
- We **contextualise** every application



Super-Curricular Study

- Super-curricular: independent academic engagement outside the school curriculum in terms of both its **content** and **conceptual sophistication**.
- Includes but not limited to:
 - Books/articles
 - Lectures
 - Podcasts
 - Problem-solving
- Your engagement with super-curricular study in your Personal Statement is how you **show** me that you have the things I'm looking for.
- It helps you in your interview as you'll be used to engaging with challenging material and questions.



Super-curricular resources

- University department reading lists
- [Isaac Physics](#) – **very useful for STEM**
- Physics/Chemistry/Biology Olympiads
- HE+ (myheplus.com)
- Online catalogues and databases – e.g. [Parker Library online](#)
- Podcasts – in particular BBC Radio 4 (useful for sparking new areas of interest)
- Lecture series – the Royal Society lectures
- Competitions/Essay Prizes

We encourage students to find their own resources!



How to prep for admissions assessments

- Pre-Interview Assessments taken in September & October.
- It is very important to prepare for these (and relatively easy to do so).
- Research the format, structure, and content – lots of free resources online.
- Revision of GCSE content.
- Timed past-papers.
- If taking the ESAT applicants can also use parts of the old NSAA and ENGAA for more practice.

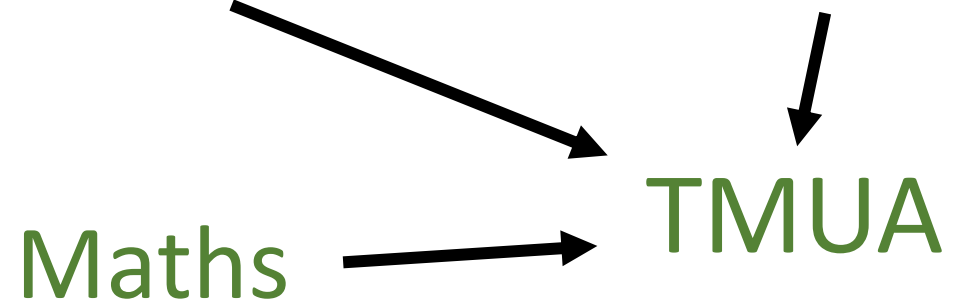
Medicine → UCAT

Law → LNAT

Engineering Natural Sciences



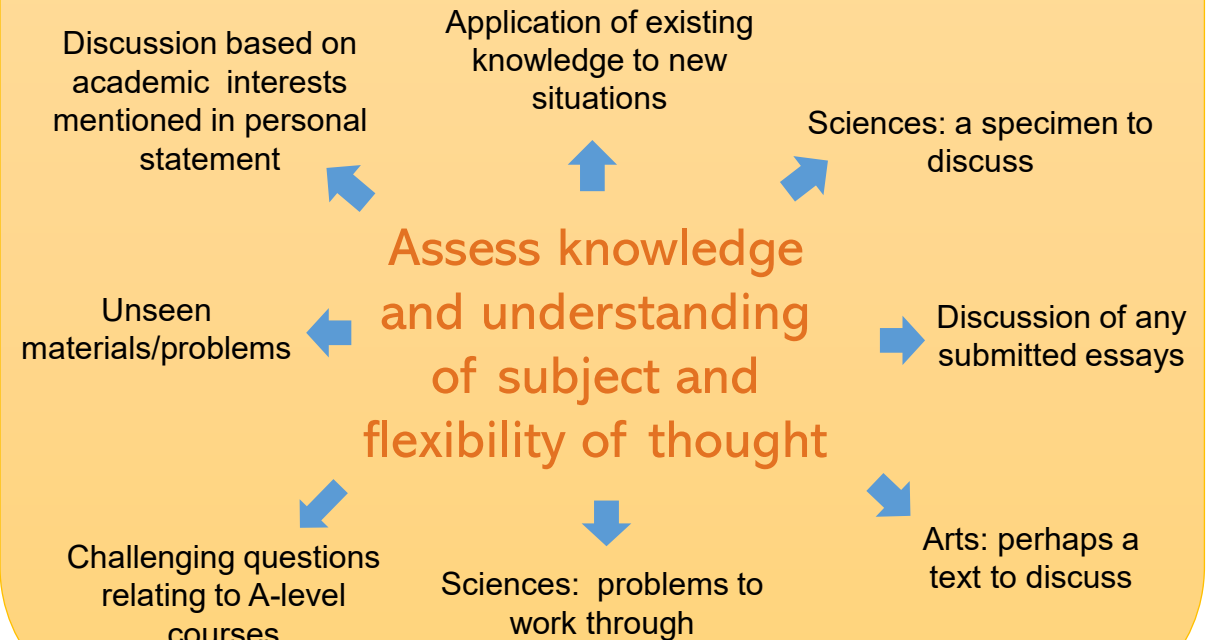
Economics Computer Science



How to prep for interviews

- Interviewers stretch and challenge students and see how they respond to prompts, so your super-curricular study is your best prep!
- Again, lots of online resources available (mock interviews, interview guides etc.).
- Mock interviews organised by school can be useful but not necessary.
- Important to start working on verbalizing your thoughts and ideas as soon as possible.
- Remember that they are not a 'quiz'. We're looking for you how approach problems and trying to understand your thought-process.

Why do we interview?



How to best use your time

- Have a plan of what you want to explore and what super-curricular resources you'll use. Should be flexible.
- STEM students – must be using Isaac Science platform to consolidate A-level knowledge.
- Arts & Hums students – must be reading!
- If you are not enjoying a particular resource, don't force yourself to finish it.
- Aim to do some super-curricular study every day.
- It's easy to postpone it – “*there's always tomorrow*”. Need to be disciplined and find a way to be held accountable.
- Find a way to practice discussing your ideas and talking confidently about what interests you.

