



CRANFORD  
HOUSE

[www.cranfordhouse.net](http://www.cranfordhouse.net)

CRANFORD SIXTH FORM  
OXBRIDGE

Oxbridge  
Application  
Assistance





# What are they looking for?

There is no 'ideal' Oxbridge student but you can be sure that everyone who gets a place will have done very well at GCSE and A-level. In choosing students, both universities say they are looking for students:

- Who enjoy a challenge
- Who have sound knowledge and can go beyond the syllabus
- Who are self-motivated (this is probed heavily at interview)
- Who are interested in new ideas and who can think critically

*In making their decision as to whether to offer you a place they consider:*

## GCSE Results

The more 8/9s the better! A typical successful applicant will have mostly 8/9 and the rest 7 grades

## A-level Results

You must be predicted grade A/A\* by the end of Y12

## School's reference

The school must comment on your ability, suitability, attendance and involvement in school life

## Personal Statement

This must focus on your enjoyment of, and commitment to, the **subject** and what you have done to extend your study of this, including work experience. You must show that you have done more than turn up to subject lessons and get top grades! (The AQA Extended Project Qualification would be one way of doing this.)

## Entrance Tests

For some subjects you will need to sit a test before they ask you for interview, such as the BMAT for Medicine/Veterinary Medicine, HAT for History and Law Test for Law.

## Interview

All applicants who satisfy the above will be asked to go for interview. There could be 1-3 interviews, each lasting between 30-45 minutes with one or two interviewers at each.

## Supplementary Application Questionnaire (SAQ) Cambridge only.

This is sent and completed on-line shortly after the UCAS application has been submitted. The SAQ asks a few extra questions that Cambridge University find helpful in the selection process and must be completed by a specified deadline.

Oxford Courses	A Level Subjects	
	Must have	Desirable
Medicine (A*AA)	Chemistry is compulsory. Plus one of Biology/Physics/Mathematics	
Law (AAA)	For Law with Law Studies in Europe, a modern foreign language is necessary (this is not required for European Law)	An essay writing subject at A Level.
Philosophy, Politics & Economics (PPE) (AAA)	It is not necessary to have studied any/all of these subjects at A Level	Mathematics, History
Psychology, Physiology and Linguistics (A*AA)	One or more Science/ Mathematics for Psychology. For Linguistics, English Language, Mathematics, a science or a language.	2 Sciences/Mathematics
Mathematics (A*AA)	Mathematics (A*)	Further Mathematics (A*) is highly desirable but not essential
Biomedical Sciences (A*AA)	Two of either Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics or Physics. The A* must be in either Mathematics or a Science.	Mathematics recommend.
Biochemistry (A*AA)	Chemistry plus another Science or Mathematics.	Mathematics desirable. Biology desirable.
Chemistry (A*AA)	Chemistry and Mathematics	Another Science or Further Mathematics
Physics (A*AA)	Physics and Mathematics. A* in Physics or Mathematics.	A mechanics module is useful as is Further Mathematics
Modern Languages (AAA)	At least 1 language (in the subject to be studied ideally)	2 languages
Engineering Science (A*A*AA)	Mathematics and Physics with the A* in Mathematics, Further Mathematics or Physics	Mathematics Mechanics module. Further Mathematics desirable.
Computer Science (A*AA)	Mathematics A* in Further Mathematics or Mathematics	Further Mathematics
Earth Sciences (A*AA or AAAA)	Mathematics in addition to Chemistry or Physics	Chemistry and/or Physics are highly recommended; Geology/Biology/Further Mathematics useful
English Literature and Language (AAA)	English Literature	English Language. A language or History is also useful but not necessary

Cambridge Courses	A Level Subjects	
	Must have	Desirable
Medicine (A*AA)	Chemistry + 2 other Sciences/Mathematics	
Veterinary Medicine (A*AA)	Chemistry + 2 other Sciences/Mathematics	
Law (A*AA)	3 good academic subjects	Combination of science and arts
Economics (A*AA)	Mathematics	Economics and Further Mathematics are useful; also Business Studies
Mathematics (A*AA + STEP)	Mathematics, Further Mathematics	Physics is useful
Natural Sciences (Biological) (A*AA)	At least 3 A Levels in the Sciences/Mathematics; including Biology and Chemistry	Mathematics to AS
Natural Sciences (Physical) (A*AA)	At least 3 A Levels in the Sciences/Mathematics; including Physics and Mathematics	Chemistry
Modern and Medieval Languages (A*AA)	At least one language to be studied must be taken at A Level	2 languages at A Level other than English
Engineering (A*AA)	Mathematics and Physics	Further Mathematics or additional Science
Architecture (A*AA)	Art is a typical subject that successful candidates have taken and a portfolio will be required at interview	Combination of Arts and Science subjects; Mathematics is encouraged
English Language and Literature (A*AA)	English Literature	English Language. a language or History is also useful but not necessary
Theology and Religious Studies (A*AA)		Any subjects which encourage clear, logical thinking and careful analysis of evidence



The following are the suggested subject combinations and entry requirements.

Each university website gives details of which A-level subjects are required for each course.

Oxford  
[www.ox.ac.uk](http://www.ox.ac.uk)

Cambridge  
[www.cam.ac.uk](http://www.cam.ac.uk)



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

For other subjects, such as History, an A-level in that subject is a must.

The following subjects have been specified as 'less favourable' by the universities and it is advisable not to do more than one of these if applying: Art & Design (unless applying for Architecture), Business Studies (can accept instead of Economics if applying for Economics & Management), Drama, ICT, Sports Studies.

# Preparation

## *Preparation is the key and it needs to start at GCSE!*

Getting excellent GCSE results is the first step and without them it is very unlikely that you will be successful – the more 9s you have the better!

### **From Y12 specific preparation will be needed:**

- Reading around the subject to extend your knowledge beyond A-level
- Preparing for any entrance tests
- Preparing for any essays that may need to be submitted to the university (some subjects require you to submit examples of your work)
- Writing your personal statement for your UCAS form. You will receive help with this from the Sixth Form Pastoral Team, and through the tutorial programme
- Ensuring that you have done enough relevant work experience (absolutely vital for vocational courses such as medicine or veterinary science)

### **At the start of Y13:**

- Completing your UCAS form, Oxbridge applicants have an earlier deadline for submission of mid-October
- Working with the relevant subject mentor to make sure that you are adequately prepared for entrance tests (if applicable) and interview
- Doing practice interviews
- Researching which college to apply to

# Entrance Tests

## **Oxford**

Oxford uses entrance tests more than Cambridge. The following entrance tests take place:

Course Applying for	Test
PPE	Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA)
Economics & Management	Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA)
Mathematics	Mathematics Aptitude Test (MAT)
Computer Science	Mathematics Aptitude Test (MAT)
English	English Lit Aptitude Test (ELAT)
History	History Aptitude Test (HAT)
Law	Law National Admissions Test (LNAT)
Medicine	Biomedical Admissions Test (BMAT)
Physics	Physics Aptitude Test (PAT)
Fine Art	Subject test
Modern Languages	Modern Languages Admissions TES (MLAT)
Philosophy	Philosophy Test

## **Cambridge**

All students applying for Medicine or Veterinary Medicine must take the BMAT. All students applying for Law must take the Cambridge Law Test.

Some subjects require a test in advance of an interview. For example, those wishing to study Computer Science are required to take the Cambridge Test of Mathematics for University Admission. This requires a registration in advance, in addition to your UCAS application.

Mathematics at Cambridge is a special case. If successful, you will be made an offer based on your A Levels and Sixth Term Examination papers (STEP). You take 2 STEP papers immediately after A-levels.

They are graded from 5 (outstanding), 1 (very good) to 3 (satisfactory) and U (unclassified). Generally, the offer is based on achieving a grade 1 on the first paper and either grade 1 or 2 on the second. They require separate preparation and candidates considering studying Mathematics at Cambridge should speak to Mr McIntyre to discuss registration and preparation.

# Oxbridge Assistance at Cranford House

*Comprehensive preparation for Oxbridge applicants*

## **Oxbridge Preparation**

---

Oxbridge Evening in January  
of Y11 and Y12

Guidance booklets for Oxbridge  
applications and UCAS

University visits in June/July of Y12,  
in college where possible and  
attendance of Open Days

Option to attend the Oxbridge  
Conference June Y12

Subject Mentor for each applicant

Oxbridge Coordinator to help with  
applications and personal statements

Interview practice and help

Preparation for entrance tests  
through our 'Aptitude Test Work-  
shop' during summer of Y12

Access to feedback/hints/tips from  
previous applicants

Regular update/notification of  
openings for potential Oxbridge  
students such as workshops,  
scholarships and taster days

'Buddy System' linking old  
Cranford pupils currently at  
Oxbridge with potential  
candidates

Moulsford, Wallingford, Oxfordshire OX10 9HT

01491 651218 | [office@cranfordhouse.net](mailto:office@cranfordhouse.net) | [www.cranfordhouse.net](http://www.cranfordhouse.net)