



PARENTS' AND CARERS' GUIDE TO OXFORD

OXFORD

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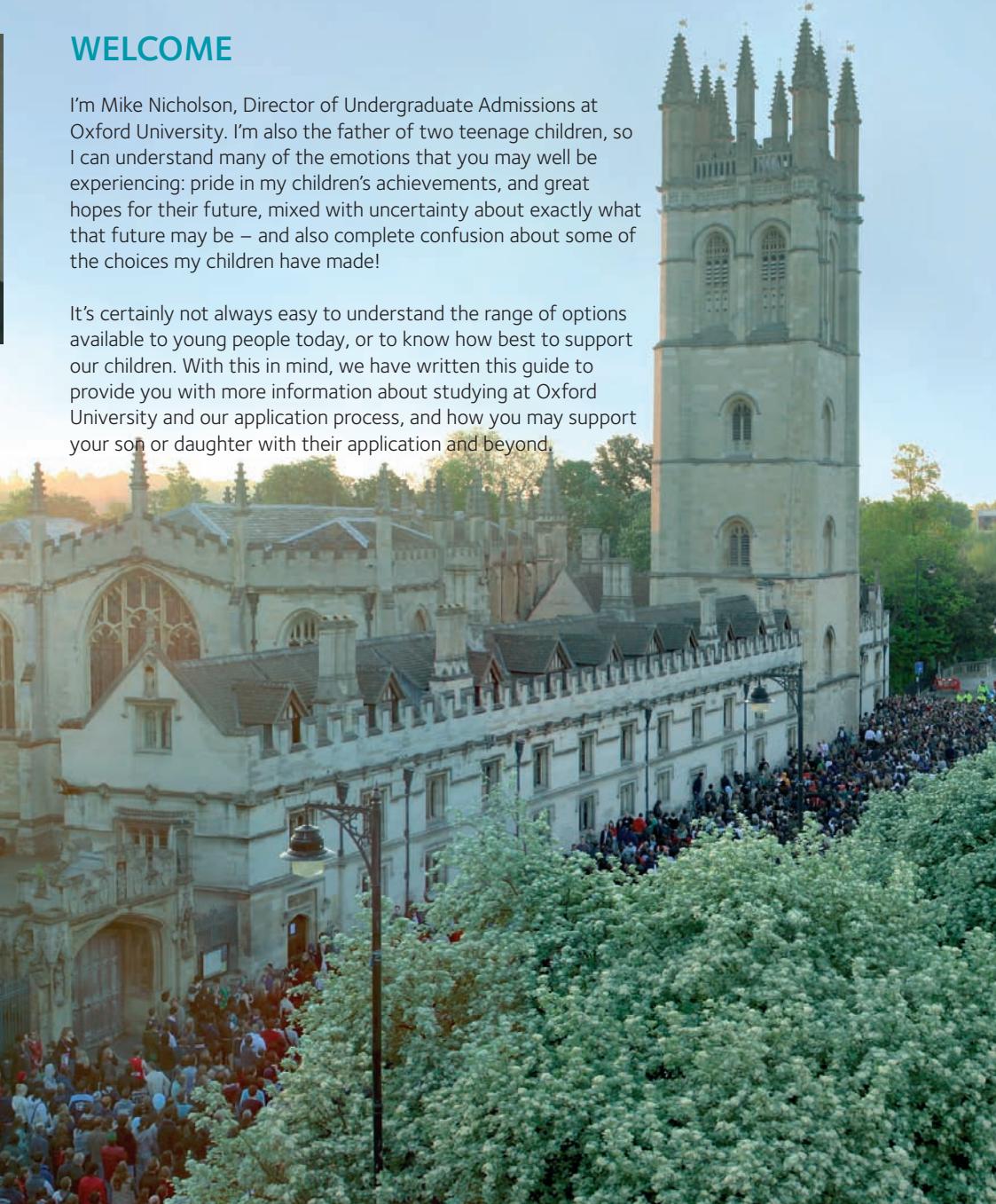
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WELCOME

I'm Mike Nicholson, Director of Undergraduate Admissions at Oxford University. I'm also the father of two teenage children, so I can understand many of the emotions that you may well be experiencing: pride in my children's achievements, and great hopes for their future, mixed with uncertainty about exactly what that future may be – and also complete confusion about some of the choices my children have made!

It's certainly not always easy to understand the range of options available to young people today, or to know how best to support our children. With this in mind, we have written this guide to provide you with more information about studying at Oxford University and our application process, and how you may support your son or daughter with their application and beyond.



ABOUT OXFORD UNIVERSITY

Introduction

Oxford University is probably best known for its academic excellence. Some of the best and brightest students in the world have studied here, including many prime ministers and other politicians, Nobel Prize winners, authors, poets, philosophers and artists – not to mention comedians, screenwriters and chefs.

As the oldest English-speaking university in the world, Oxford is also famous for its architecture. You may have seen the city's beautiful buildings and 'dreaming spires' on many films and television programmes. As well as this impressive historical background, the University is also very modern, at the cutting edge of research, with unparalleled resources and facilities for students.

Oxford was ranked fourth in the *Times Higher Education Supplement's* World University

Rankings 2008, and in June 2008, the annual *Times Good University Guide* named Oxford Britain's top university for the seventh consecutive year. If your son or daughter came to study here, you can be sure that they would be extremely well supported, in terms of their education, other interests and welfare.

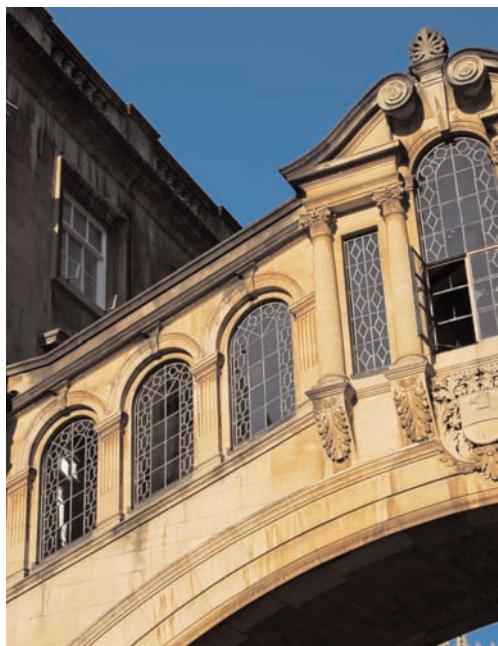
Unfortunately you can't just register your son or daughter for a place, as they do have to go through an application process. We explain this in the 'How to apply' section starting on page 18. It is competitive to get in but possibly not as competitive as you might think – on average, around four students* apply for each of the places available: many fewer than for similar courses at other top UK universities. To make a competitive application, your son or daughter needs to be predicted three A grades at A-level, or other equivalent qualifications.

Qualifications

Some examples of qualifications, with the level of achievement that would usually be required to make a competitive application:

- A-levels: AAA, excluding General Studies
- Scottish Advanced Highers: AA if taking two subjects, AAB if taking three
- International Baccalaureate: 38–40 points, including core points

Other equivalent qualifications are also acceptable. If your son or daughter is studying for qualifications not listed here, please do contact us for further details and advice or see www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/int/quals/.



Greg Smolonski

* Please note that this figure does vary according to each course.

Teaching and assessment

Tutorials are at the heart of teaching at Oxford. A tutorial is a lesson between a tutor (a University teacher) and normally just one or two students, usually taking place once or twice every week. Tutors are nearly always lecturers or professors in their subject, and will be experts in their field – often world-leaders. The students usually have to prepare some work in advance, for example an essay or some mathematical problems, which they then discuss in the tutorial.

Oxford University is in a strong position to have the resources to provide this level of personal tuition with real experts. You can be sure that your son or daughter would be stretched and challenged academically, with the tutor there to provide whatever support and guidance they may need. There is also a programme of lectures, as well as the tutorials, with additional laboratory work and field trips, where appropriate for the subject.

Most courses have an introductory first year, which finishes with a set of examinations. Students have to pass these exams to continue in to the second year. Most students do pass but for any that do not, there is an opportunity to retake them. Oxford University also has one of the lowest drop-out rates in the UK, at only 1.1%, compared with the national rate of 7.1%. Students do work extremely hard, but they tend to enjoy the work that they do, and have a great deal of support in place at both college and University level for when they do need assistance.

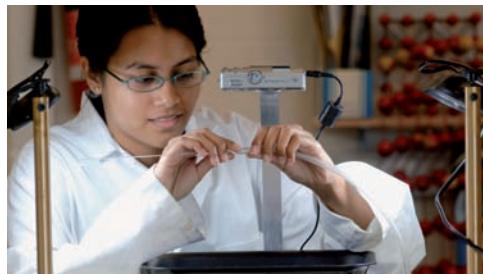


Rob Judges

Would Oxford be the right choice for my son or daughter?

Does your son or daughter love to talk about their subject? Do they like to get in to debates about their work with teachers and friends? Do they love to read about their subject above and beyond what they are actually required to do at school or college? Do they perform well in exams? If so, they would probably enjoy the style of studying at Oxford.

However, some students do not like to be challenged by teachers in quite the same way: they may also prefer to be assessed through completing coursework, rather than by exams. If this is the case for your son or daughter then the teaching style at Oxford may not suit their way of learning or enable them to achieve the highest marks, and they may prefer to apply to universities that do not use a tutorial system.



Rob Judges

The college system

Oxford University is made up of a number different colleges – 30 undergraduate colleges in total – and departments. Colleges are where students usually live, study and have their tutorials. Most colleges offer most subjects, so your son or daughter would be studying alongside other students taking a range of different courses. College choice really comes down to personal preference rather than any academic considerations. There is more about choosing a college in the 'How to apply' section of this guide on page 18.

Although the colleges differ in their size and architecture, there are really far more similarities between them than there are differences. Colleges set their own tests for students to check their progress, just as schools may set mock exams, but it is the University which sets and marks formal exams, and awards degrees. Consequently, all colleges are working to the same syllabuses, and preparing students for the same exams. Facilities may vary a little between the colleges but each one certainly offers a very well-stocked library, a dining hall, laundry facilities, a common room, a bar and a programme of social events. Colleges are responsible for students' academic progress and also for their personal welfare. All colleges offer the same excellent standard of teaching and support.

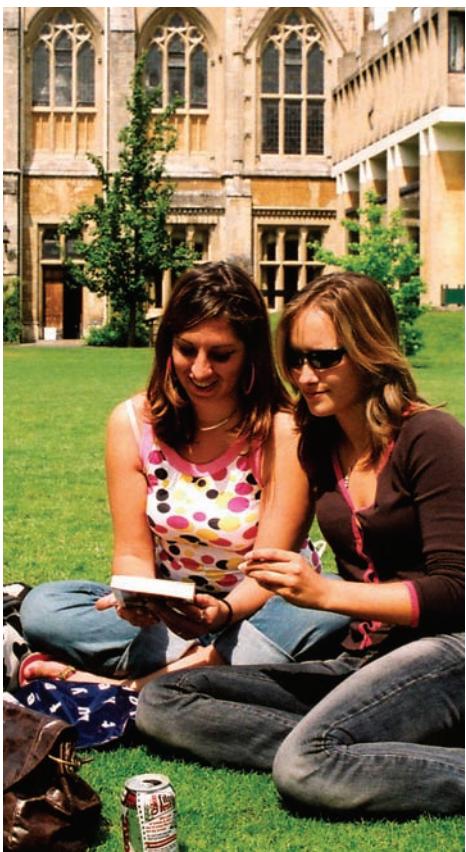
As well as all the facilities and support of college life, your son or daughter would also have access to wider University resources. Departments of the University hold lectures, classes and laboratory work for students from all colleges. Many departments also have subject libraries that students can use in addition to their college library.

One of the great advantages of the collegiate system is that students have all the benefits of a small, close-knit community and of belonging to a large international university.

'I felt very happy that Sinead was part of a college where she was personally known to tutors, catering staff and the porters. She adapted well to college life, helped by her "college parents" – college parents are two students in the second year who are there to assist first years. They are usually studying the same course, and will get in touch with the new students before they start, and also during the first week. I found this very reassuring.'

Oxford takes care of its students and I was happy that Sinead blossomed in its care.'

SIOBHAN



Rob Judges

Accommodation

All students are guaranteed accommodation in college for the first year of their course. Parents do not need to worry about finding a room for their son or daughter before they start at the University, as this would all be arranged by the college. If your son or daughter has any particular requirements, it is important to let the college know as early as possible, but, in general, the bedrooms for first year students will simply be allocated at random.

All colleges can also offer students a room for at least one further year; many colleges provide accommodation for the whole of a student's course. College accommodation may either be on the main college site, or just a few minutes' walk away in a separate college accommodation block. College rooms are good quality, furnished and may be en suite. Where students are required to live out in private accommodation they usually get together with friends to rent a shared house.

As with college accommodation, rented accommodation is usually no more than a few

minutes away from the centre of Oxford. The University Accommodation Office produces information about private sector housing. Students have access to their college facilities whether they are living in the college itself or in private accommodation. It is a benefit of the college system that a student can make use of college facilities throughout their course as well as the general University resources.

Colleges are very safe environments. Each one has a Porters' Lodge, which is like a reception office at the main entrance, where porters fulfil reception and security duties 24 hours a day. They also tend to get to know the students, and take an active interest in their personal safety.

Meals

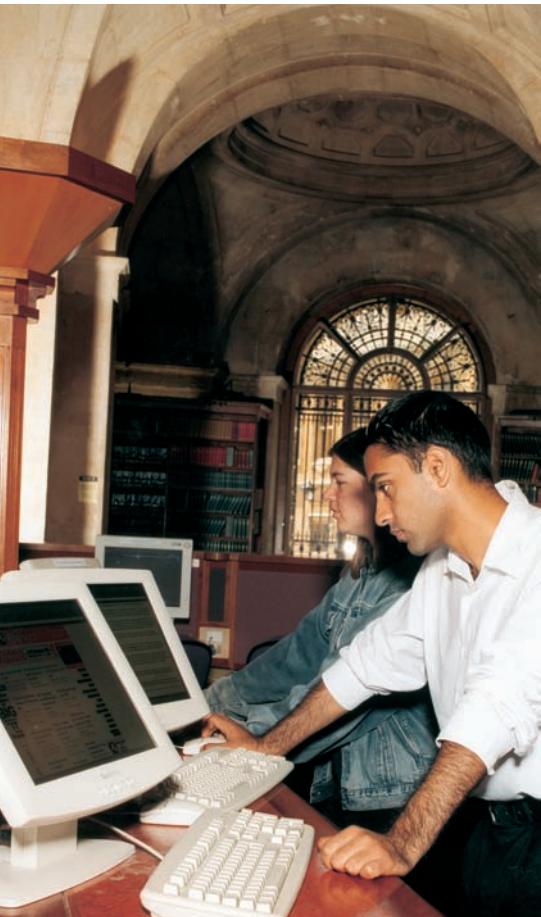
Each college has a dining room normally providing three meals a day throughout the week, and may also offer meals at weekends. The exact arrangements will vary from college to college but the food is extremely good value. Many college rooms also have kitchen facilities where students can prepare their own meals if they wish to do so.



Rob Judges



Rob Judges



Nick Cistone

Resources

As well as the facilities available in colleges there are also various University resources which may be used by all students. Your son or daughter could save money by studying at Oxford rather than at some other universities, since Oxford's resources are so extensive that students often don't need to spend very much themselves.



Rob Judges

Libraries

All colleges have their own libraries, which are typically a student's first port of call for any books they may need, particularly during the first year of their course. Department and faculty libraries provide an extra source of the basic texts, as well as specialist materials for optional topics and more advanced study. Students can also make use of the world-famous Bodleian Library. This is a copyright library meaning that it has a copy of every book and periodical published in the UK and Ireland since 1610. Oxford University Library Services, which manages most of the main University libraries, holds over nine million printed items, and vast quantities of materials in many other formats. Its collections grow by three miles of shelving a year.

www.lib.ox.ac.uk

Computing Services

All colleges have computer rooms, and there is also the central Oxford University Computing Services (OUCS), which offers computer facilities and free training, and also runs a computer shop. Some students bring a computer with them when they come to Oxford, as many rooms have ethernet connections that allow 24-hour internet access. However, the college and University resources are such that it is certainly not necessary for your son or daughter to have a computer of their own.

www.oucs.ox.ac.uk

Language Centre

All students, even if they are not studying for a language degree, may use the Language Centre. The Centre runs courses and has a library, which provides study material for 130 languages, a study area, with computer-based learning resources, and audio-visual study rooms. This is a particularly useful resource, as it means that your son or daughter can continue with their language studies, or even learn a new language, even if this is not part of their degree course.

www.lang.ox.ac.uk

Sports

Oxford is consistently among the top 10 universities in the annual rankings produced by the British Universities Sports Association (BUSA). All colleges have a wide variety of sporting teams that students of any ability can join. The University also has teams covering most sports, which may compete against other universities. As well as college sports facilities there is a large University sports complex offering many facilities, from a powerlifting room to an Olympic astroturf pitch and a 25-metre swimming pool. Whatever sports your son or daughter is interested in they will have the opportunity to take part in them at Oxford, whether they compete seriously, or just for fun.

www.sport.ox.ac.uk

Other clubs and societies

Whatever other extra-curricular activities your son or daughter enjoys now, or whatever they may wish to begin at university, Oxford offers excellent opportunities in a wide range of clubs and societies. These include music, drama, student newspapers, volunteering activities and the Oxford University Student Union (OUSU), as well as groups for students from particular countries or religious backgrounds.

www.ousu.org



Rob Judges

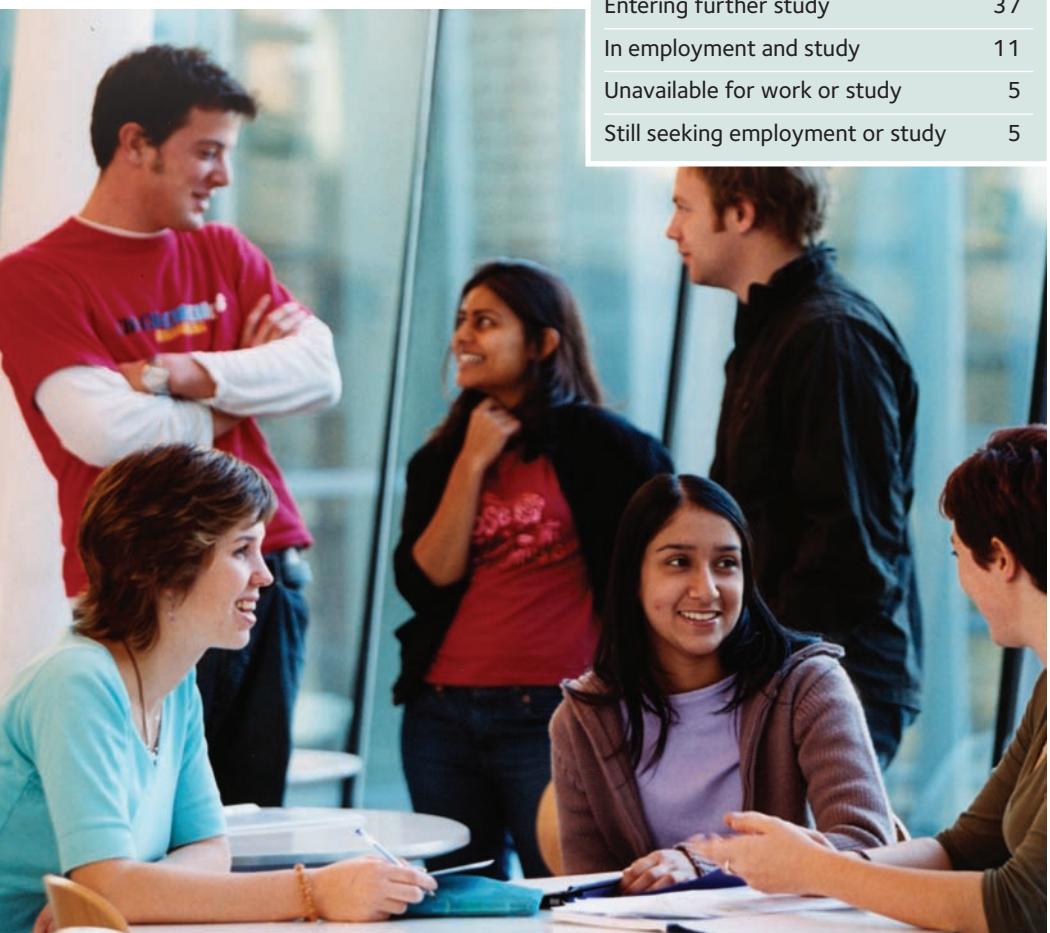


Andrew Hurton

Graduate destinations*

Oxford graduates are among the most employable in the UK. They enter a range of different careers, or choose to study for further qualifications.

The Careers Service is available for use by all students throughout their course. As well as holding a wide range of resources, vacancies are advertised, and there are Careers Advisers available to answer questions and discuss career options. Many vacation work opportunities are also advertised by the Careers Service. www.careers.ox.ac.uk



What do employers like about Oxford graduates in comparison to other graduates?

Employers particularly value the mix of intellectual ability alongside personal and social skills that are developed through the vast array of opportunities available at Oxford.

What do Oxford graduates go on to do?

Destinations of Oxford graduates

(2007 leavers)	%
In employment	42
Entering further study	37
In employment and study	11
Unavailable for work or study	5
Still seeking employment or study	5

Here are just few examples of the huge range of careers entered by Oxford graduates in the last couple of years.

'The responsibility is really motivating. Starting out in most careers you are lucky if someone asks you what you think the company should be doing, but in media planning you are advising clients on how to spend millions of pounds on presenting their products to the world. It is always a bit of a thrill to turn on the TV or get on the Tube and see a campaign you have put together.'

ENGLISH GRADUATE NOW A MEDIA PLANNER

'I am expected to undertake numerous three-month placements across the company, working with different teams and on different projects. Examples of current projects vary from major projects, such as the refurbishment of King's Cross/St Pancras station, preparations for the Olympic games, complete upgrade of the Victoria line, to "smaller" projects, such as station modernisations, provision of disabled access or upgrade of ticketing and information provision.'

CHEMISTRY GRADUATE NOW A TRAINEE AT TRANSPORT FOR LONDON

'Currently in my third Fast Stream posting. (The Fast Stream is a graduate entry route for senior Civil Service careers.) I'm working at the Foreign Office for a year, on loan from the Home Office. I'm working on reform of the criminal justice system in Afghanistan, which is fascinating.'

MODERN LANGUAGES GRADUATE NOW WORKING IN THE CIVIL SERVICE

'It was successfully studying a challenging subject at Oxford that made me realise I can achieve what I set out to do.'

COMPUTER SCIENCE GRADUATE NOW A SELF-EMPLOYED BUSINESS MANAGER





A week in the life of an Oxford student

Rachel Gregory is a Physics student who has shared her timetable to show an example of a first year student's week at Oxford University. It demonstrates how she organises her time for studying, and that she makes time to have fun and relax as well.

Monday

- 9 am-12 pm: Lectures
12.15 pm-1 pm: Coached fencing training
Afternoon: Finish off tutorial work that was set last week; hand in at 5pm
6 pm: Dinner in College
8 pm-9 pm: Fairtrade Coalition meeting (I'm the Secretary)
9 pm onwards: Do a bit of work, bed at 11ish

Tuesday

- 9 am-12 pm: Lectures
12 pm-1 pm: Have some lunch in the College gardens
1 pm-3 pm: Prepare for tutorial by working on problem sheet I had to prepare
3 pm-4 pm: Physics tutorial, reviewing the problem sheet with one other first year physicist and my tutor, asking any questions we have from this and from our lectures; organise next week's tutorial work
4 pm-5.30 pm: Relax! Maybe tidy my room, have someone over for tea
5.30 pm: Rowing training
6 pm: Dinner in college
7 pm-9 pm: Do a bit of work for my maths tutorial
9 pm onwards: go out with my friends

Wednesday

- 9 am-12 pm: Lectures
12 pm-3 pm: Lunch, relax
3 pm-5 pm: More work on the problem set for my maths tutorial, read over the lab script in preparation for practicals tomorrow
5 pm-5.30 pm: Weights session in the gym
Every Wednesday evening I have several friends over and someone cooks for everyone else and we generally catch up.

Thursday

- 9 am-10 am: Lectures
10 am-5 pm: In labs. Basically, we collect the details of the week's experiment the week before and read over the theory and background. There might be a demonstration from one of the supervisors, then we conduct the experiment.
6 pm: Dinner
7 pm-8.30 pm: Work on maths tutorial work
8.30 pm-10 pm: Fencing at the Sports Centre
10 pm: Sleep!

Friday

- 6 am: Rowing outing on the river
9 am-10 am: Lectures
10 am-3 pm: Go over maths tutorial work, make a start on the physics
3 pm-4 pm: Maths tutorial, same format as physics - we say what we don't understand, and work through it. Set work for the next week.
6pm: Dinner
Evening: friends come over

Saturday

- Lie in! Get up about 11am, maybe have a rowing outing at some point, see some friends, work on physics for a few hours, watch a film in the evening and generally relax.

Sunday

- This is when I get a lot of my work for the week sorted, probably work from about 10am until 6pm, then church until 8pm, come back and do some more work. Have an early night, ready for the nine o'clock lectures tomorrow morning...

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER

At 14 or younger: still choosing their GCSEs

It's never too early to start thinking ahead to university. Of course your son or daughter does not need to have their future mapped out by the time they are 14 but we do recommend that they consider their options for GCSEs with possible university courses in mind. Choices at 14 do often determine what qualifications can be taken later, and, therefore, which university courses may be possible.

For example, your son or daughter will probably find that English, Maths, science subjects, ICT (Information and Computer Technology), Religious Studies, and Physical Education are compulsory at their school. This combination will keep their options open for a wide range of A-levels, or other qualifications. However, if they think they may wish to study foreign languages later on, or other non-compulsory subjects such as History, Geography or Art then it's really important to choose these subjects at GCSE.

Changes to 14–19 qualifications have introduced new Diploma courses in England. Whilst these courses will ensure that your child continues with Maths and English language to GCSE standard, it is probable that the Diploma will begin to narrow and focus your child's subject choices, as the Diplomas are also designed to prepare students for employment. Oxford tends to value a broad general education up to the age of 16, so students who are considering a Level 2 Diploma course should be aware that this option may limit the range of options for later study with us.

What you can do

- Identify with your son or daughter the subjects that they enjoy most since these are the subjects that they are most likely to excel in.
- Also identify those subjects which your son or daughter likes the least, and see if you can find ways to support them in those subjects and help them to enjoy them more.
- Talk to your son or daughter about all the things that they may like to do in the future. At this stage it's probably not about making definitive decisions but more about keeping their options open.



Rob Judges

At 15 and 16: studying for their GCSEs

Parents often ask us what GCSE grades their son or daughter needs to achieve to be able to apply to Oxford. There is no simple answer to this, as there are no specific grades that are required: there is no specific number of A* or A grades that a student must have.

However, GCSE grades are important and will be taken in to account when considering applications to Oxford. Unless there are particular extenuating circumstances, a student that does not have a high percentage of A* and A grades at GCSE is unlikely to be offered a place at Oxford University.



Rob Judges



Rob Judges

What you can do

- Understand that this can be a particularly difficult time for young people and some may appear to lose interest in their school-work, especially given the large number of subjects. Students often find it hard to get motivated for subjects that they plan to drop as soon as possible.
- Discuss with your son or daughter their ambitions, as it may remind them that there are some things they have to do, in order to do the things they want to do.
- Remind your son or daughter that universities may take every grade in to consideration, even in subjects that don't appear directly relevant to the course. For example at Oxford, tutors considering a candidate for a Medicine course would review all of their GCSE grades, even in non-science subjects.
- Help your son or daughter to research the requirements for any university course they may wish to study later. For example, you will find the requirements for Oxford courses in the Undergraduate Prospectus.

At 16: choosing A-levels or other qualifications

Choice of A-levels (or equivalent qualifications) can be critical in determining which university courses will be open to your son or daughter. This means that it's really important to think ahead to what they would like to study later and make sure they are taking the right combination of subjects.

In some cases particular A-levels will be absolutely essential for the course, such as Maths A-level if your son or daughter wishes to study Maths at university. In other cases, some A-levels may be recommended or helpful, even if they are not specifically required. It's important to check university prospectuses or websites to see their requirements for particular courses.

Your son or daughter really does need to enjoy the subjects they choose, and it's best not to see them simply as a means to an end. Students tend to be happier if they are enjoying themselves at school or college, and they will probably get better grades as a consequence.

If your son or daughter is thinking of taking a subject that they don't actually like just because they will need to use it later on, it's a good idea to reconsider: will they actually

enjoy the university course they have in mind? Using the example above, someone may take A-level Maths just because they think it will help them to go on and study Computer Science. However, if they really don't enjoy Maths at school, they probably won't enjoy Computer Science at university.

Qualifications that emphasise development of academic skills and disciplines, for example the International Baccalaureate or Scottish Advanced Highers, are appropriate for entry to Oxford. Vocationally orientated qualifications, for example the BTEC National Diploma, are less appropriate, except for very practically orientated courses, such as Fine Art. The Level 3 Advanced and Extended Diplomas generally will help prepare students only where their Additional Specialist Learning (ASL) is closely related to the relevant Oxford course. For example, an Engineering Diploma student will need to take Maths and Physics ASL at Level 3 to apply for Engineering.

What you can do

- Help your son or daughter to research the requirements for any university course they may wish to study later.
- Talk to them about their A-levels, and make sure they are choosing courses which they really will enjoy.



At 17: completing AS-levels or other qualifications

As your son or daughter completes his or her AS-levels, they will be thinking ahead to their university choices. They may have a fixed career path in mind and have particular ideas about what they will need to study in order to get their dream job. However, it's important to remember that it's not always necessary to study a course that directly relates to a chosen career – certainly not straight from school or college.

For example, a degree in Journalism is not a requirement to become a journalist. A degree in History, Politics, English or another subject might be just as useful. Likewise, to become a lawyer, students do not need to study their first degree in Law. They may take a first

degree in a different subject and then take a law conversion course.

Your son or daughter's school or college will probably be providing them with a great deal of information about their options. Oxford and Cambridge Regional Conferences, HE Fairs, Open Days and other events will all provide opportunities to find out more. For further information on such events relating to Oxford University, please refer to www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/liaison/.

The Stamford Test is a short questionnaire which can help to match interests and abilities to possible university courses or subjects. The test is available at www.ucas.com.*



Barker Evans

What you can do

- Ask your son or daughter what their school or college is doing to provide information about universities and make sure that they are taking advantage of the opportunities available. Attend any parents' events that are taking place. If the school or college is not running any trips to university open days, you may like to attend these with your son or daughter instead.
- Listen to your son or daughter as they talk about what they want to study. Sometimes this can be hard for parents, as it's natural to have your own dreams of what they will achieve – such as studying at a university like Oxford. However, it is important that young people are able to make their own decisions. Oxford tends to offer traditional academic courses with a particular style of teaching, which may not be suitable for your son or daughter. Also, Oxford tutors can often tell when an applicant has applied for a course that they are not really interested in.



Rob Judges



Rob Judges

At 18: the final year at school or college

In the first few weeks of their final year at school or college your son or daughter will need to decide whether or not they wish to apply to Oxford University. The reason for this is that there is an earlier deadline of 15 October. There is further information in the next section of this guide on how to apply.

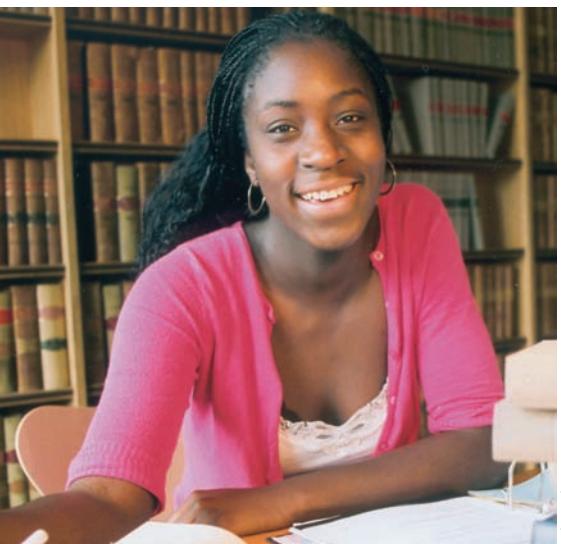
Your son or daughter will probably be concerned about how to make their application as competitive as possible. They may consider taking four or even five A2s, extra study such as Advanced Extension Awards, or extra-curricular activities or work experience. This extra work may appear to be a good idea, but it's worth looking at the selection criteria for the course your son or daughter wishes to apply for, to see whether or not it will help.

For example, Oxford tutors certainly look for applicants who have excellent academic abilities, but taking extra A-levels is certainly not the only way to demonstrate those skills. Extra reading around the subject your son or daughter wishes to study may actually

be much more useful to them in preparing for their application than just taking an extra A-level. Tutors may prefer a candidate who has read around their subject beyond their school or college work, and who shows a great passion for it, over a candidate who may have taken more subjects, but who is not able to discuss their interests with any enthusiasm or in any depth.

We also advise candidates not to spread themselves too thinly across too many subjects, where they may risk dropping a grade or two in their results. Three A grades would be sufficient to meet most conditional offers, but two As and two Bs would not.

Also, you may hear that universities look for well-rounded applicants, who have a wide range of interests such as sport and music. While this may be true at other universities, Oxford tutors are interested only in applicants' academic ability and potential. Extra-curricular activities may be useful in demonstrating a candidate's time-management skills but are unlikely to make an application any more competitive unless they relate directly to the entrance criteria for their course.



Rob Judges

'My daughter and I both found university open days immensely useful. I found them particularly helpful in terms of all the information they gave about costs and bursaries. My daughter found them helpful as she could meet actual tutors and real students and find out exactly what the courses involve - everyone was so helpful and friendly. I would say that course information from open days was the deciding factor for my daughter in choosing her first choice university. I also noticed she was more motivated in her studying after the open days as she really knew what she was aiming for.'

ANNE



What you can do

- Support your son or daughter with a quiet place to study and do any extra reading which they may wish to do.
- Resist any temptation to spend a lot of money on expensive courses offering advice on making applications. There is a wealth of information and advice available completely freely, directly from Oxford University (please refer to the 'Further information' section on page 24), UCAS and other groups. Take advantage of these free resources.
- Make sure your son or daughter knows that you support them in their application but that it would not be the end of the world if they are not successful. Many students feel a great deal of pressure when making their application, but they are more likely to be successful if they are able to relax enough to be themselves.



HOW TO APPLY

The application

Applying to Oxford is similar to applying to any other university, as all candidates must apply online through UCAS at www.ucas.com. However, as noted previously, there is an earlier application deadline of 15 October.

Please note that it is not possible to apply to both Oxford and Cambridge in the same year.

So, your son or daughter completes their application online by 15 October, and UCAS automatically sends this to Oxford University for consideration. They will also send the application to other universities your son or daughter has chosen to apply to. No university can see which other universities a candidate has applied to.

Your son or daughter may also be required to sit a test, and/or to submit some written work as part of their application, which will also be considered alongside the UCAS application.

It is very important to check the specific requirements for the course to make sure that your son or daughter knows exactly what they need to do.

APPLICATION CALENDAR

By 15 October*	Closing date for UCAS applications for students wishing to apply to Oxford University.
September October November	Some subjects require candidates to take a written test as part of the application procedure. Please note that separate registration may be required for this. To check the details, please refer to the 'How to apply' tab on the course pages at www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/courses/ . It is the candidate's responsibility to make sure that they have completed the registration, if required, and that they are available to take the test on the correct day.
10 November	Some subjects require one or two samples of written work by this date. To check the details, again, please refer to the 'How to apply' tab of the course pages at www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/courses/ .
December	Interviews take place in Oxford.*

* Please check www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/int/ for details of interview arrangements for international students.

Choosing a college

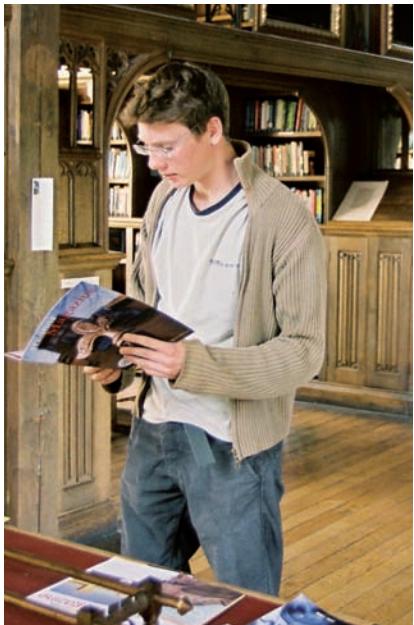
As Oxford University is made up of different colleges, students who apply to Oxford can choose which college they would most like to go to. Sometimes this is called their 'college of preference'. However, students do not need to make this decision, as they can make an 'open application', which means not specifying a preference. In these cases, around 16.5% of applicants, the Undergraduate Admissions Office allocates each candidate to a college and the application is then treated in exactly the same way as if the candidate had specified a preference for a particular college.

Lots of people appear to worry about their choice of college but there is really no need to do so. As explained on page 4, colleges really do have more similarities than differences, and your son or daughter would have similar educational and other opportunities whichever college they go to.

What you can do

If you do want to help your son or daughter to choose a particular college, here are some suggestions on how you may do so:

- Check the 'Which colleges offer my course' page at www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/colleges/ to see which colleges actually offer the course. All colleges are open to men and women, but do remember that Harris Manchester only admits students aged 21 or older.
 - Refer to the 'Undergraduate numbers by college' page at www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/colleges/ for information on the size of each college, and how many students are studying each course there.
 - Read the college pages in the Undergraduate Prospectus and refer to their individual websites for further details about the college, such as its age and style of architecture. Also, do check
- a map of Oxford to see the college's location. You might like to think about how near it is to the city centre, to particular departments and libraries, or to other places like the river or the University Parks. However, please remember that Oxford is a fairly small city, and no college is more than a few minutes walk from the centre.
- Check on the accommodation available at each of the colleges.
 - Encourage your son or daughter to attend a college open day which is a great way to find out more. The main events are usually at the end of June or start of July but there may be other dates throughout the year. Please check www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/opendays/ for further details. Please be aware that it is not always possible for parents to attend student events.



Rob Judges

Interviews

Many applicants are shortlisted, and will then be invited to an academic interview at Oxford in December.* The dates of the interviews can be found at www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/interviews/.

Most interviewees will spend at least one night in Oxford. The colleges provide free meals and accommodation for all interviewees during the interview period. Unfortunately colleges are not able to provide any accommodation for parents. Colleges and current undergraduates look after candidates during the interview period, answering their questions and providing social activities. They want to ensure that all candidates have a positive experience of their interview and are able to perform to the best of their ability. Candidates will often have more than one interview in their college and may also be interviewed by tutors at one or two other colleges. A separate guide called Interviews at



INTERVIEWS AT OXFORD

OXFORD

Oxford is available, which you can download from www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/downloads/ or request from the Undergraduate Admissions Office.

What you can do

- If your son or daughter is invited for interview then you can celebrate this achievement with them. Being invited for interview shows that the tutors believe your son or daughter demonstrates the sort of potential required for an Oxford course. You may be able to help them to overcome any initial nerves that they may have. Their school or college may set up practice interviews but if not, perhaps you have a colleague or friend with interviewing experience who could help. If they meet your son or daughter and ask a few basic questions about their application, this may help your child to get over their nervousness, as well as give them some practice in answering basic questions.
- At the interview time itself you will want to make sure your son or daughter gets to the college safely of course, but it is best if you then leave them to settle in by themselves. Your son or daughter will be well looked after by college staff and undergraduates. They will have their own room and all their meals provided.
- If your son or daughter is not invited for an interview they—and you—may feel very disappointed: please remember that even the shortlisting process is very competitive. In some subjects there are many applications for every place, most of whom will be excellent candidates, but unfortunately, it is not possible to interview everyone.

* Please check www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/int/ for details of interview arrangements for international students.

After the interview

Candidates are notified of the outcome of their application by mid-January. This will be one of three things:

- an offer of a place, conditional upon achieving certain examination results, e.g. AAA at A-level; if the candidate meets the conditions of that offer, the college will confirm their place after publication of examination results in August;
- an unconditional offer of a place, where examinations have already been completed;
- unfortunately, the application has not been successful.

'We found the application process to Oxford very straightforward. I'd say the thing which caught us most unawares was quite how early the deadline for applications is. My son started to write his personal statement at the beginning of the autumn term which meant his A2 work was squeezed. If he could do it all over again he would definitely write a good first draft over the summer holidays. He was disappointed not to be called for interview but when he wrote asking why, the Tutor for Admissions at the college he had applied to clearly explained why he had failed to meet their criteria. Our son went on to receive offers from three other excellent universities so the disappointment of being turned down by Oxford has been offset by this tremendous encouragement.' SARAH



Greg Smolinski

What you can do

- If your son or daughter is offered a place – congratulations on their achievement. They will probably still need to gain high grades in their final exams so will require your continued support with their studies. They will automatically receive further details and practical information from the college which has made them the offer.
- If your son or daughter is not offered a place at Oxford, please do not be too disappointed. With so many applications, around 11,500 candidates are unsuccessful each year, simply

because there are just not enough places for all the excellent students who apply. Most go on to study at other excellent universities.

- If your son or daughter wishes to reapply to Oxford next year they may do so, but please talk to them about whether or not this is the best course of action for them. Rather than waiting a year to re-apply, they may prefer to focus their attention on performing to the best of their ability at another university. They may like to consider applying to Oxford for postgraduate study after they have completed their first degree elsewhere.

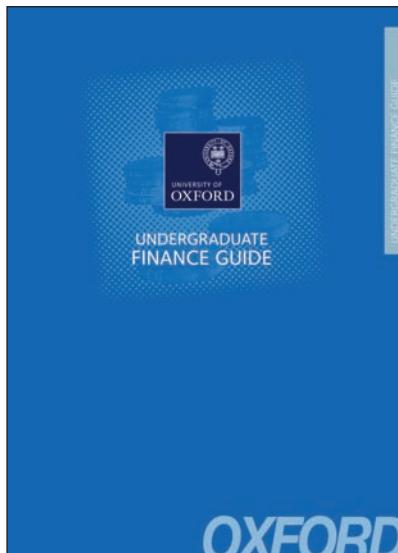
SUPPORT

Finance

Oxford University charges the same tuition fees as most other UK universities: for the academic year of 2009/10 this will be £3,225 per year. The 2010–11 fees will appear online at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/studentfunding/fees/ as soon as they are known. As Oxford offers such extensive academic and material resources, and personalised teaching through the tutorial system, we believe that Oxford University provides its students with exceptional value for money.

The University is committed to making sure that students of all financial backgrounds are able to study at Oxford. Currently, Oxford University has one of the most generous undergraduate bursary schemes in the country for UK students from families with incomes below £50,000. Students can receive up to £4,100 in their first year and up to £3,225 in subsequent years depending on their household income. If your family were to experience financial difficulties after your son or daughter starts studying at Oxford, the University would aim to make sure that your son or daughter does not need to leave their course.

We have produced a separate finance guide full of information about the costs of studying at Oxford, and the many ways of meeting those costs, including the generous Oxford Opportunity Bursaries. You can order a copy of this guide by contacting the Undergraduate Admissions Information Centre, admissions@, at the address on the back cover of this booklet or download it from www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/downloads/.



Disabled students

The University welcomes applications from disabled students and makes reasonable adjustments to facilitate their access to its courses. Colleges and departments view applications from students with disabilities on exactly the same academic grounds as those from other candidates.

Candidates are strongly advised, before applying, to consider the requirements of their chosen course and to identify any elements that might present particular difficulties. It is recommended that candidates arrange to visit the college and department of their choice to explore facilities and discuss specific needs. It takes time to arrange adjustments and to organise appropriate support so it is essential to make contact with the department and University Disability Office as early as possible in the application process.

www.admin.ox.ac.uk/access/
www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/disab/

A student and parent case study

Thomas and his daughter Aisha, a student studying English Language and Literature, provide here a first hand account of their experience of Aisha applying and successfully gaining a place at Oxford.



AISHA

Rob Judges

'The most important way that my parents supported me during my application to Oxford, and to higher education in general, was by encouraging me to keep working hard and allowing me complete freedom to choose courses and universities for myself. After choosing my course and college they completely supported my decision.'

I'm so glad that I decided to apply to Oxford. The other students are friendly and tutors are interested in your potential. I was worried about money, but loans are easy to apply for and the University offers a generous bursary which really helps.

Immediately after you start, welfare officers and support groups are made known to you. Furthermore, each college has welfare officers and the city is very student-friendly.

Accommodation at Oxford varies from college to college, but is generally very good and, of course, in beautiful buildings. Meals in college are a bargain too.

The best advice I can give to anyone who is considering applying to Oxford is to try and experience the University from the inside out before applying. They should try to attend an open day if they have the opportunity or talk to past and present students.'

'I was really happy when I learned that Aisha was applying to Oxford University and I supported her through the application process by keeping a positive frame of mind about the possible outcome. I would advise other parents whose children are considering (or in the process of) applying to Oxford, that they should also stay positive while bearing in mind what other options there will be if their child's application is not successful.'

I remember taking Aisha to Oxford for the start of her first term, meeting other students with their parents, and also meeting some of the college staff. Seeing the living quarters set my mind at ease, and I was delighted at how nice the other students were.

The most positive thing I experienced about Aisha applying to and attending Oxford University was the deep sense of satisfaction at all that she has achieved so far.'



FURTHER INFORMATION

Admissions Information Centre *admissions*

Anyone is welcome to call us in order to discuss any queries or worries they may have about applying to Oxford. We have an Enquiries Team dedicated to responding to such queries. A member of the Team will be able to provide information on all aspects of applying to and studying at Oxford, as well as talking through any concerns a prospective candidate may have: no query is too trivial! Telephone lines are open 9 am until 5 pm, Monday to Friday. Alternatively, we are happy to respond to queries via email.

If you are going to be visiting Oxford with your son or daughter, we recommend the Admissions Information Centre as your first port of call. It is here that you will be able to



Rob Judges

pick up leaflets and booklets about applying to and studying at Oxford. And, of course, you will also be able to meet and talk to members of the Enquiries Team.

**55 Little Clarendon Street
01865 288 000
undergraduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk**

Website

The Undergraduate Admissions Office has a comprehensive website, **www.admissions.ox.ac.uk**, which provides a wealth of information about applying to and studying at Oxford as an undergraduate. It is on these pages that the most up-to-date information can be obtained.

Podcasts

Podcasts about applying to and studying at Oxford are available to download and listen to at www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/podcasts/.

iTunes U

Our podcasts are also available on the University's site on iTunes U, along with lectures, interviews and short films about life at Oxford. They can be listened to online or downloaded to a mobile device.

<http://itunes.ox.ac.uk>



This screenshot shows the main navigation bar of the University of Oxford website. Below it, the 'Undergraduate courses' section is displayed. This section includes a grid of thumbnail images representing various academic fields like Medicine, Engineering, and Law. To the right of the grid, there is a sidebar with links to 'Find out more' about specific topics such as 'College and departmental fees', 'How to apply', and 'Prospective students'. At the bottom of the section, there is a search bar labeled 'Search Undergraduate Admissions site'.



This screenshot shows the 'iTunes U' page for the University of Oxford. It features a large image of a lecture hall and a sidebar with links to 'iTunes U', 'Help', and 'How to contribute to iTunes U'. The main content area is titled 'The University of Oxford on iTunes U' and contains a grid of video thumbnails. At the bottom of the page, there is a 'Background' section with statistics: over 200,000 downloads of the site and over 200,000 subscribers. There is also a note about the site being used by the Royal Family.



'The sense of achievement and accomplishment when Laura graduated was intense. To see her receive her degree from such a prestigious university was the culmination of relentless commitment on Laura's part, support and encouragement from her tutors, and an absolute belief that a girl who was the first generation in her family to go on to university could make her mark at Oxford.'

ALI

Contact details:

Undergraduate Admissions Office
University Offices
Wellington Square
Oxford OX1 2JD

Tel: 01865 288000
Fax: 01865 280125
Email: undergraduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk
Web: www.admissions.ox.ac.uk