Theology Admissions Feedback 2021-22

Summary

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<th>Philosophy and Theology</th>
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<td>Applications</td>
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<td>172</td>
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<td>Shortlisted</td>
<td>66¹</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>Offers</td>
<td>2022 entry 37¹ [including 3 open offers]</td>
<td>28 [including 2 open offers]</td>
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Mansfield made one offer for Philosophy and Theology and six offers for Theology and Religion offers for 2022 entry, including one open offer.

Shortlisting

Candidates were shortlisted using their UCAS applications and written work, and for Philosophy and Theology applicants, their scores on the Philosophy Test. 126 applicants were shortlisted for interview, which was approximately 1.9 applicants per place. All figures below include applicants for both Theology and Religion and Philosophy and Theology, except for the section on the Philosophy Test.

Written Work

All candidates were asked to submit a piece of work as part of the assessment, usually a marked essay written as part of their normal school or college work. Work was marked centrally on a scale of 0-100, using the following criteria: ability to think clearly and to reason coherently; evidence of independence of thought; ability to structure work and arguments in a logical way; ability to write clearly (and grammatically) with clear expression of thought.

The mean written work score for all applicants was 63.3. The mean for shortlisted applicants was 64.8, and 65.4 for those who went on to receive an offer. The distribution of grades was as follows:

¹ Includes candidates who applied for Philosophy and Theology or Religion and Oriental Studies but were shortlisted or made offers for Theology and Religion.
Philosophy Test
Candidates for Philosophy and Theology were required to sit the Philosophy Test on 3 November 2021. The Philosophy Test is a 60-minute test designed to assess a candidate's philosophical reasoning skills. The test ordinarily involves a comprehension exercise and a short essay or answer a structured question.

The mean Philosophy Test score for all applicants (excluding those who did not sit the test) was 63.1. The mean score for shortlisted applicants was 64.9, and 65.2 for those who went on to receive an offer for either Philosophy and Theology or Theology and Religion. The distribution of marks was as follows:

[Graph showing the distribution of Philosophy Test scores]

Note: graph excludes candidates who did not sit the Philosophy Test (n=3).

UCAS Application
Tutors assessed candidates on the basis of their qualifications and predicted grades, personal statement, and reference. Tutors looked for: high marks or predictions at GCSE (A*/9/8s) and A level (AAA+) or equivalent; a reference recommending the applicant as outstanding among their peers; a personal statement demonstrating strong evidence of interest and enthusiasm for the course, extending beyond what they had done at school. Each candidate’s individual circumstances were considered when assessing their application.

Candidates were also reviewed by a faculty admissions panel of tutors from across colleges, and a final shortlist was agreed. A number of candidates were reallocated to a different college at this point, to ensure that the ratio of shortlisted applicants per place was approximately the same at each college.

Interview
All shortlisted candidates were asked to attend an interview online of around 30 minutes with Mansfield Theology tutors. The interviews centred on the candidates’ written work, general reading and an unseen text.

Candidates for Philosophy and Theology were also asked to attend a 20 minute with the Mansfield Philosophy tutors, where students were asked to think critically about a question or puzzle relating to philosophy. No prior knowledge of philosophy was expected.

Applicants also had one or more interviews at a second college.

In the interviews tutors looked for evidence of: ability to understand complex concepts; ability to form sound arguments; ability to listen to and respond to counterarguments; openness to learning; ability at close textual reading and interpretation; dedication and diligence in work; independent thought and reading; ability to develop ideas presented in written work; oral communication skills.
Offers

Offers were made to candidates who demonstrated the most potential to perform well on the course on the basis of their UCAS form, submitted written work, performance in the Philosophy Test (where applicable), interview performance and any other relevant contextual information. The list of candidates to be made open offers was agreed at a meeting of Theology tutors from all colleges.

43.9% of Theology and Religion and Philosophy and Theology offer holders received their offer from a college other than their first-choice college. Most candidates were made a conditional offer; for details of the standard offer please see here.