History Admissions Feedback 2018-19

Summary

<table>
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<th>Applications</th>
<th>1109</th>
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<td>Shortlisted¹</td>
<td>772</td>
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<td>Offers¹</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2019 entry</td>
<td>259  [including 20 open offers]</td>
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<td>2020 entry</td>
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Mansfield made 12 offers for 2019 entry, including three open offers.

Shortlisting

Candidates were shortlisted using their UCAS applications, their History Aptitude Test scores and their contextualised GCSE score (where available). 772 applicants were shortlisted, which was approximately 3.4 candidates per place (3.0 candidates per offer made).

History Aptitude Test

All candidates were required to sit the HAT on 31 October 2018. The HAT is a one hour History skills test, marked out of 40, that consists of a single writing exercise in response to an extract from a primary source. The HAT assesses the following skills: the ability to read carefully and critically; the adoption of an analytical approach; the ability to answer a question relevantly; precision, in the handling of concepts and in the selection of evidence presented to support points; historical imagination; originality and independence; precision, clarity and facility of writing.

The mean HAT score for History applicants (excluding those who did not sit the test and applicants for combined courses) was 24.2 out of 40. The mean score for shortlisted applicants was 26.9, and 29.2 for those who went on to receive an offer.

The distribution of marks was as follows:

Note: graph excludes candidates who did not sit the HAT (n=13).

¹ These figures include a small number of candidates (n=14) who applied for a combined course with History but were shortlisted only for History, or were shortlisted for the combined course but made an offer only for History.
UCAS applications
Tutors assessed candidates on the basis of their qualifications and predicted grades, personal statement and reference. Each candidate’s individual circumstances were taken into account when assessing their application.

Contextualised GCSE
All candidates who had sat GCSEs were also given a contextualised GCSE score. The contextualised GCSE score provides information on how well an applicant performed at GCSE compared to other applicants to Oxford, given the performance of the school at which they sat their GCSEs.

HAT scores and contextualised GCSE scores (where available) were combined to create an initial ranking. Both scores were given equal weighting in the ranking, except where a candidate had not sat GCSEs and so were ranked only on their HAT score. The ranking was then used to help shortlist candidates, with those who came higher in the ranking more likely to be shortlisted for interview, and those lower in the ranking less likely to be shortlisted unless mitigating circumstances or contextual information suggested that their scores might not be an accurate reflection of their potential.

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.

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. After candidates had been notified of whether or not they had been shortlisted, written work was graded for those who had been shortlisted.

Essays were graded on a scale of 1-10, using the following criteria: evidence of careful and critical reading; an analytical approach; coherence of argument; precision in the handling of concepts and in the evidence presented to support points; relevance to the question; historical imagination; originality; precision, clarity and facility of writing.

The mean written work score for all shortlisted applicants for History was 6.7, and 7.2 for those who went on to receive an offer. The distribution of written work grades for shortlisted History applicants was as follows:

![Graph showing the distribution of written work grades for shortlisted History applicants.](image)

2 These figures include a small number of applicants for a combined course with History who were shortlisted for History only.
Interview

All shortlisted candidates were asked to come to Oxford to attend an interview. Applicants resident outside the EEA/Switzerland were also offered the option of a remote interview. At Mansfield, each candidate had two interviews of around 20-30 minutes each. The interviews centred on the candidates’ UCAS application, written work, and an unseen source.

In the interviews tutors looked for: clarity of thought and expression; analytical ability; flexibility; enthusiasm and commitment; historical imagination; use of appropriate historical knowledge.

A number of candidates were also interviewed at a second college. Approximately 120 additional interviews took place. These interviews were carried out as part of the movement of candidates between colleges, from oversubscribed to undersubscribed colleges.

Offers

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

20.3% of candidates who were made offers 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.