PPE Feedback 2016-17

Across the University there were 1985 applications for PPE. The estimated competition for places was 7.2 applicants per place.

706 applicants were shortlisted for interview, approximately 2.6 applicants per place. The tutors made their decisions about who to shortlist based on the information provided in the UCAS forms - including past and predicted exam results, reference, and any relevant contextual information - and the result of the Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA). Where possible, school performance was taken into account when assessing past exam results, and attention was paid to achievement that went above or below the norm for the school. Candidates whose UCAS materials and test results were not strong were unlikely to be called for interview, as we consider that an interview is unlikely to compensate for weaknesses elsewhere in their application.

The Thinking Skills Assessment is a two-hour test involving multiple-choice reasoning questions and an essay. Each candidate is issued a statement of results by the Admissions Testing Service. Further information can be found on the ATS website: http://www.admissionstestingservice.org/for-test-takers/thinking-skills-assessment/tsa-oxford/scoring-and-results/

Candidates with a good TSA result and good exam results and references were likely to be asked for interview. This year, candidates scoring 66.5 or above on the test fell into band one. Candidates who scored between 64.2 and 66.4 were also invited for interview provided other parts of their application were strong. Below 63.2 was considered quite a weak test result and candidates were invited for interview only if tutors considered there were strong reasons to interview.

The number of applicants to particular colleges varies from year to year, so candidates that were judged worthy of an interview were reallocated from the oversubscribed colleges of that year to the undersubscribed colleges.

Shortlisted candidates who came for interview at Mansfield were each given three twenty minute interviews (one in each of the three component subjects), each conducted by two tutors. All shortlisted overseas candidates were given the choice of either attending interview in Oxford or having a Skype interview. Please note that in all cases the interviews are just one part of our selection procedure, and did not outweigh other factors.

In selecting for PPE we look for evidence that candidates can listen effectively and can present reasoned arguments orally and on paper, that they can understand and analyse text, that they are sufficiently numerate to undertake advanced study of Economics, and that they have a high level of self-motivation. Candidates are not expected to have studied any philosophy, politics or economics before, but we expect them to show critical and creative engagement with issues relevant to the study of those subjects. The university selection criteria for PPE are published on the web at: http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses/selection-criteria.

Across the University, 274 offers were made for PPE for 2017 entry (including open offers). Mansfield offered 8 places for PPE this year.