Theology & Religion and Philosophy and Theology Feedback 2016-17

Across the University, 99 applications were received for Theology and Religion and 140 for Philosophy and Theology. The estimated competition for places was 3.1 applicants per place for Theology and Religion, and 4.9 for Philosophy and Theology.

Candidates were shortlisted using the following criteria: a strong UCAS form, including a supportive reference, excellent past examination results, and good predicted grades; written work which demonstrates the ability to think clearly and to reason coherently, evidence of independence of thought, the ability to structure work and arguments in a logical way, and the ability to write clearly (and grammatically), with clear expression of thought. Any relevant contextual information was taken into account when making shortlisting decisions. Candidates whose written work and UCAS materials were poor were unlikely to be called for interview, as we consider that an interview is unlikely to compensate for weaknesses elsewhere in their application.

Philosophy and Theology applicants also sat the Philosophy Test, a 60 minute test of philosophical reasoning skills (but not philosophical knowledge). The average mark was 59.2; the average mark for shortlisted applicants was 61.3. The test was one of the criteria used to shortlist Philosophy and Theology applicants, along with the UCAS application, academic record, predicted grades, reference and written work. Candidates may request their Philosophy Test result from the College. More information about the Philosophy Test can be found here: http://www.admissionstestingservice.org/for-test-takers/philosophy-test/why-use-philosophy-test/

62 Theology and Religion applicants were shortlisted for interview, and 67 Philosophy and Theology Applicants. All overseas candidates offered interviews were given the choice of either attending interview in Oxford or having a Skype interview. Theology and Religion applicants each had two interviews with our Theology tutors; Philosophy and Theology applicants had one interview with our Theology tutors and one with our Philosophy tutors. All applicants received an interview at a second college, and some at a third college. In selecting candidates for a place to study Theology and Religion or Philosophy and Theology, tutors looked for evidence of such qualities as clarity in analysis and argument, including precise textual analysis and interpretation, and commitment to independent academic study.

Across the University, 37 offers were made for Theology and Religion and 36 for Philosophy and Theology (including open offers). Mansfield offered 5 places for Theology and Religion this year. Two offers were made for Philosophy and Theology.

The selection criteria for Theology and Religion and Philosophy and Theology are published on the web at: http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses/selection-criteria.