PPE Admissions Feedback 2019-20

Summary

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<td>Shortlisted</td>
<td>738</td>
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<td>Offers</td>
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<td>2020 entry</td>
<td>264 [including 16 open offers]</td>
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<td>2021 entry</td>
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Mansfield made eight offers for 2020 entry. In addition, one offer for deferred entry in 2022 was made.

Shortlisting

Candidates were shortlisted using their UCAS applications and their scores on the Thinking Skills Assessment. 738 applicants were shortlisted, which was approximately 3.0 candidates per place.

Thinking Skills Assessment

All candidates were required to sit the Thinking Skills Assessment on 30 October 2019. The Thinking Skills Assessment is a single two-hour test consisting of two sections: the first section (90 minutes) contains multiple choice questions which test problem-solving skills such as numerical and spatial reasoning, and critical thinking; in the second section (30 minutes) candidates are asked to choose one essay question from a choice of four and write a response. More information about the test can be found here.

The mean TSA multiple choice score for all PPE applicants (excluding those who did not sit the test) was 66.0. For shortlisted applicants the mean was 72.9, and 75.9 for those who received an offer. The distribution of marks was as follows:

Note: graph excludes candidates who did not sit the TSA (n=66).

1 Includes candidate(s) deferred to 2022.
UCAS Application

Candidates were assessed on the basis of their past and predicted examination results, their personal statement, their teacher’s reference and any relevant contextual information. Each candidate’s individual circumstances were considered when assessing their application.

A shortlist was created using TSA multiple choice scores, assessment of the UCAS applications, and assessment of the TSA essays. Candidates who performed well in the TSA Multiple Choice (73.26+) and on other aspects of their application were likely to be shortlisted for interview; candidates who scored between 70.45 and 73.26 were invited if their UCAS application showed strong potential; candidates who scored below 70.45 were only shortlisted if mitigating circumstances or contextual information suggested that their scores might not be an accurate reflection of their potential.

A final list was agreed and applicants were then notified about whether they had been shortlisted. 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 come to Oxford to attend an interview. Applicants resident outside the EEA/Switzerland were also offered the option of a remote interview. At Mansfield, candidates who interviewed in Oxford had three interviews of around 20 minutes (one each in Politics, Economics and Philosophy).

In the interviews tutors looked for evidence of: capacity for sustained study, motivation and interest, an independent and reflective approach to learning; ability to analyse and solve problems using logical and critical approaches, ability to assess relevance, capacity to construct and critically assess arguments, flexibility and willingness to consider alternative views; willingness and ability to express ideas clearly and effectively on paper and orally; ability to listen; ability to give considered responses. Candidates were not expected to have studied any philosophy, politics or economics before, but were expected to show critical and creative engagement with issues relevant to the study of those subjects.

A number of candidates were also interviewed at a second college. Approximately 40 additional interviews took place. These interviews were carried out as part of the movement of candidates 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 TSA multiple choice and essay, interview performance and any other relevant contextual information.

18.8% 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.