Physics Admissions Feedback 2020-21

Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applications</th>
<th>1631</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shortlisted</td>
<td>447</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offers</td>
<td>2021 entry 184 [including 6 open offers]</td>
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<td>2022 entry 4</td>
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Mansfield made five offers for 2021 entry. One offer for 2021 entry was also made in the previous cycle.

Shortlisting

Candidates were shortlisted using their scores on the Physics Aptitude Test, their contextualised GCSE score (where applicable), and any other relevant contextual information. 447 applicants were shortlisted, which was approximately 2.4 candidates per place.

Physics Aptitude Test

All candidates were required to sit the Physics Aptitude Test on 5 November 2020. The Physics Aptitude Test is a single two-hour paper combining maths and physics questions. The test is set to a defined syllabus and the content is checked by school teachers to ensure that it is set at an appropriate level. More information about the test can be found here.

The mean PAT score for all applicants (excluding those who did not sit the test) was 49.5. For shortlisted applicants the mean was 66.5, and 72.4 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 PAT (n=49).

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 (A*A+) or equivalent; a reference recommending the applicant as outstanding among
their peers; a personal statement suggesting a strong interest in the study of Physics to degree level. Each candidate’s individual circumstances were considered when assessing their application.

**Contextualised GCSE score**

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.

An initial ranking was created using a combination of the PAT score and the contextualised GCSE score (where applicable). Candidates who came higher in the ranking were more likely to be shortlisted for interview, and those lower in the ranking were 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.

**Interview**

All shortlisted candidates were asked to attend interviews remotely. Candidates had at least one interview at their first college, and one at another college that had been assigned to them.

In the interviews tutors looked for evidence of: a real interest and strong desire to learn physics; ability to express physical ideas using mathematics; mathematical ability; ability to analyse and solve problems using logical and critical approaches; ability to see how one part of a physical system connects with another; ability to predict what will happen in a given physical situation; ability to give precise explanations both orally and numerically.

**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 PAT, contextualised cGCSE score (where applicable), interview performance and any other relevant contextual information.

30.9% of candidates who were made offers for Physics 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.