

Mansfield College

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Theology Admissions Feedback 2023-24

Summary¹

	<u>Theology & Religion</u>	<u>Philosophy & Theology</u>
Applications	121	159
Shortlisted	73	77
Offers for 2024	37	31
Offers for 2025	2	0

Offers for 2024 include seven [open offers](#).

Mansfield made 11 offers for 2024 entry, including two open offers.

Shortlisting

Candidates were shortlisted using their UCAS applications, contextualised GCSE score and written work, and for Philosophy and Theology applicants, their scores on the Philosophy Test. 150 applicants were shortlisted for interview, which was approximately 2.2 applicants per offer made.

All figures below include applicants for both Theology and Religion and Philosophy and Theology, except for the section on the Philosophy Test.

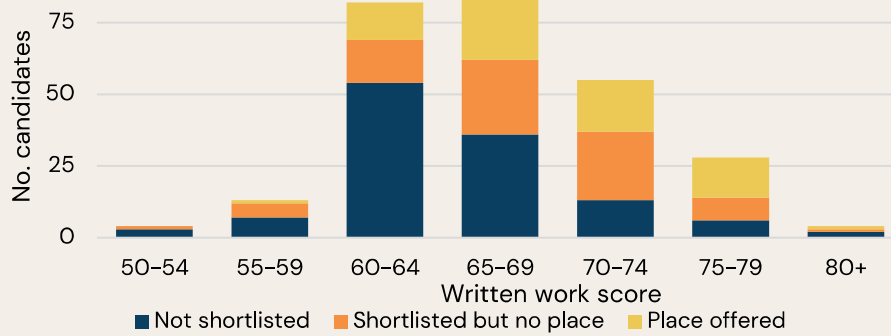
Written Work

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. Work was marked centrally on a scale of 0-100, using the following criteria:

- ability to think clearly and to reason coherently
- evidence of independence of thought
- ability to structure work and arguments in a logical way
- ability to write clearly (and grammatically) with clear expression of thought

The mean written work score for all applicants was 66.3. The mean for shortlisted applicants was 68.7, and 69.4 for those who went on to receive an offer. The distribution of grades was as follows:

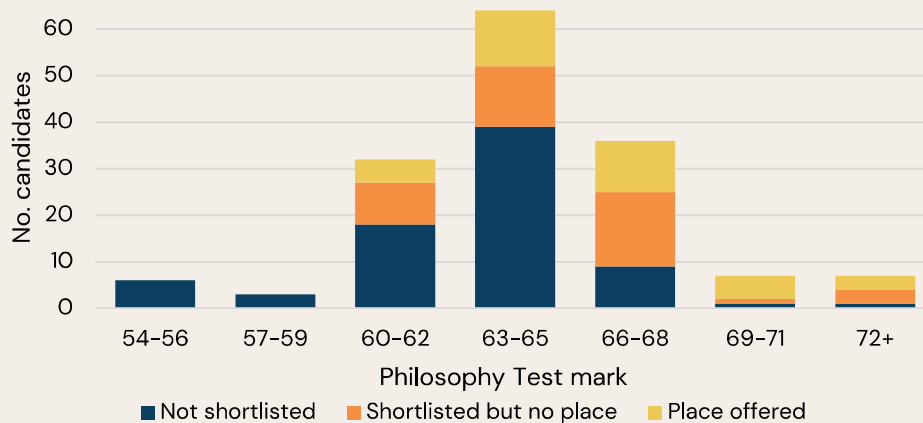
¹ Some applicants for Philosophy & Theology were shortlisted or made an offer for Theology & Religion only.



Philosophy Test

As part of the application process, candidates for Philosophy and Theology were asked to sit the Philosophy Test in October 2023. The Philosophy Test is a 60-minute test designed to assess a candidate's philosophical reasoning skills. The test ordinarily involves a comprehension exercise and a short essay or answer a structured question.

The mean Philosophy Test score for all applicants (excluding those who did not sit the test) was 64.5. The mean score for applicants shortlisted for was 66.0, and 66.9 for those who went on to receive an offer for either Philosophy and Theology. The distribution of marks was as follows:



Note: graph excludes candidates who did not sit the Philosophy Test (n=4). Applicants who applied for Philosophy and Theology but were shortlisted or made an offer for Theology and Religion are included in the graph.

Contextualised GCSE score (UK applicants)

The contextualised GCSE score provides information on how well an applicant performed at GCSE, given the performance of the school at which they sat their GCSEs.

For candidates who did not do GCSEs, or for whom it was not possible to calculate a score, the written work, Philosophy Test (if applicable) and UCAS application were given more weighting during the shortlisting process.

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 (AAA+) or equivalent; a reference recommending the applicant as outstanding among their peers; a personal statement demonstrating strong evidence of

interest and enthusiasm for the course, extending beyond what they had done at school. Each candidate's individual circumstances were considered when assessing their application.

Candidates were reviewed by a faculty admissions panel of tutors from across colleges, and a final shortlist was agreed. Some 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.

A small number of Philosophy and Theology applicants were shortlisted for Theology and Religion due to the greater number of places available for Theology and Religion.

Interview

All shortlisted candidates were asked to attend remote interviews. At Mansfield, each candidate had an interview of around 30 minutes. The interviews centred on the candidates' written work, general reading and an unseen text.

Candidates for Philosophy and Theology were also asked to attend a 20 minute interview with the Mansfield Philosophy tutors, where students were asked to think critically about a question or puzzle relating to philosophy. No prior knowledge of philosophy was expected.

Applicants also had one or more interviews at a second college.

In the interviews tutors looked for evidence of:

- ability to understand complex concepts
- ability to form sound arguments
- ability to listen to and respond to counterarguments
- openness to learning
- ability at close textual reading and interpretation
- dedication and diligence in work
- independent thought and reading
- ability to develop ideas presented in written work
- oral communication skills

Offers

Offers were made to candidates who demonstrated the most potential to perform well on the course on the basis of their UCAS form, contextualised GCSE score (where applicable, submitted written work, performance in the Philosophy Test (where applicable), interview performance and any other relevant contextual information. The list of candidates to be made open offers was agreed at a meeting of Theology tutors from all colleges.

41.1% of Theology and Religion and Philosophy and Theology offer holders 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 the [Theology course page](#).