

Summary of Admissions Process for Chemistry, University of Oxford 2020-21

Summary

In total 861 (774 *last year*) applications were received in 2020 for Chemistry. Of these 596 (630 *last year*) applicants were shortlisted for interviews. In all 195 (230 *last year*) offers were made, including open offers. To even out the chances of admission between Colleges 62 shortlisted applicants had their first-assigned Colleges reallocated and 52 shortlisted applicants had their second-assigned Colleges reallocated.

The school backgrounds of those given offers are as follows:

State school: 106 (54%)

Independent school: 45 (23%)

Other (including unknown): 44 (23%)

The gender breakdown of those given offers is as follows:

Female: 94 (48%)

Male: 101 (52%)

Throughout the process all UCAS forms, contextual information, application and interview grades were easily accessible to all College tutors involved via a web-based database.

Shortlisting

In light of the competition for places, the purpose of shortlisting is to provide time, during the December interview window, to guarantee that all shortlisted applicants receive at least two interviews. There was a substantial increase in applications this year, which meant that some applicants who might have been shortlisted in previous years were not shortlisted this year.

Shortlisting was performed by the Chemistry Admissions Coordinators and the College tutors in accordance with the stated admissions criteria (<http://admissions.chem.ox.ac.uk/admissions-criteria.aspx>), based on all available and relevant data: in particular these data include all aspects of the applicant's UCAS form and any further relevant contextual data specific to the application. Each application was graded on a scale of 0 to 9 against agreed descriptors. All recommendations from College tutors to modify the shortlist were submitted, with reasoning, to the Chemistry Admissions Coordinators for scrutiny. The proposed list of all applicants not to be shortlisted was available to all Colleges for a period of 5 days before the shortlist was finalised. A small number of applicants were brought back into contention at the request of a College.

The Colleges then sent letters and/or emails to all applicants, informing them of the outcome of the shortlisting exercise.

Interviews

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, admissions interviews for the University took place remotely this year via Microsoft Teams. The University Admissions Office produced new guidance for remote interviews and corresponding advice on their website for applicants.

All shortlisted Chemistry applicants were interviewed remotely over a two-week period in December. The timetable of interviews by subject was readily available on the Undergraduate Admissions website well in advance of the dates.

Each applicant had a first-assigned College. This was either the College to which they applied or a College assigned by the Admissions Office or by the Admissions Coordinator in such a way as to even out the competition for places across Colleges. Each applicant was also assigned a second College by an algorithm in order to equalise across Colleges the interview load per place ratio.

Applicants had at least two interviews at their first-assigned College, and may have also been interviewed by their second-assigned College and other Colleges. Interviews were academic in nature. Applicant performance was judged according to the admissions criteria. The interviews were graded on a scale of 0 to 9 against agreed descriptors.

Decisions

The Chemistry Department operates various procedures in a coordinated effort to ensure that the strongest applicants are admitted to the University irrespective of College choice. These include transparency of all application grades, interview grades, and UCAS forms amongst all tutors involved with admissions, and a final meeting of tutors at which the strongest unplaced applicants are collectively discussed and final offers, including open offers, are made.

Decisions are deemed to be official at the end of the final meeting. These decisions are then communicated to the respective College offices for dissemination to shortlisted applicants.

Standard offers are stated in the University Prospectus for those taking A-levels, the International Baccalaureate or Advanced Highers. College tutors seek advice from Admissions tutors or the Admissions Office in making other offers.

Feedback

Feedback, other than decisions, will not automatically be sent out, but applicants may seek feedback from their first-assigned Colleges about any aspect of the admissions process. Feedback will not be sent out until January, once the admissions process is complete.