

Corpus Christi Admissions FAQs

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General Admissions FAQs

Average number of students admitted per subject each year

Subject	Number of students
Biochemistry	4 per year
Biomedical Sciences	2 per year
Chemistry	4 per year
Classics and joint schools (including CAAH)	10 per year
English	6 per year
EP/PPL	4 per year
History and joint schools	9 per year
Law/Law with Law Studies in Europe	6 per year
Materials Science	7 per year

Subject	Number of students
Maths and joint schools	6 per year
Medicine	5 to 6 per year
PPE	7 per year
Physics	6 per year

Do different colleges specialise in different subjects?

Different colleges do offer different subjects, purely based on the academics that are at that college. If a college doesn't have anyone to teach a subject then it can't accept students for that subject. However, of all the colleges that offer any particular subject, there isn't one that would be 'better' than the others. You might share research interests with one of the tutors and be particularly interested to work with them, or you might have other reasons to choose one college over another, due to size or location, or facilities for example. The best place to look at which colleges offer the course you are interested in, and also to see the facilities and information about different colleges, is [here](#).

Do tutorials only take place in your college?

Tutorials are arranged by your college and you might have them with tutors from your college, but you also might go and have tutorials in other colleges too, depending on the research specialisms of the tutors and the topics you are studying. Tutorials might take place in a tutor's room or in a teaching room within a college.

Do you have to apply to a specific college?

No, if you don't have a preference you can submit an 'Open' application. This means your application will be allocated to a college by the computer after you have submitted it. The colleges don't know which applications were made directly or which are open so it doesn't affect your chances of success.

Do you only study at your college or can you have lectures/ lab work etc. at other colleges?

Your college arranges your tutorials, although you may still have tutorials with academics in other colleges too. Lectures and lab work are arranged by the departments, so those elements are the same for every student no matter which college you attend.

How can one become the tortoise keeper?

It is one of the roles as part of the JCR (Junior Common Room i.e. the undergraduate students) committee. All undergraduates are part of the JCR, then one person has the role of tortoise keeper each year! A very important role!

How can we prepare for interview this year?

Although there will not be face-to-face interviews in Oxford this year they will be conducted in the same way as normal. We are used to carrying out remote interviews for some international students who are unable to travel to Oxford. You should therefore prepare in the same way as normal. Make sure you have read all the material in your application, including anything you refer to in your personal statement. It is also a good idea to get used to talking through your ideas and 'thinking out loud' as this is what tutors are looking for. There is more information [here](#).

How is accommodation given at Corpus Christi (is it randomised, based on grades etc.)?

First years are allocated accommodation together, just across the road from the main college site. Special considerations, such as disability, would be taken into consideration too. In subsequent years, there is a ballot system. For more information, please see the [JCR \(Junior Common Room i.e. the undergraduate students\) website](#).

How does the open offer scheme work, and how will it be affected by cancelled exams?

Any Open Offer holder who meets their grades is guaranteed a place at Oxford. If students at other colleges miss their grades, then Open Offer holders are sometimes moved to those colleges. However, if students across the University all achieve their offers then you would be confirmed at the college who made the open offer. Oxford will accept all the grades awarded to students this year, however we do not yet know the full consequences of the cancellation of exams and possibility of autumn resits. More information will be posted on the University's [dedicated web page](#) when it is available.

Is it possible for an offer to be deferred by two years?

We would be happy to consider applications from students who wish to request a deferral for two years due to national service or similar.

[COVID-19](#)

September Open Day

It has now been decided that the Open Day on 18 September 2020 will be a virtual open day. Unfortunately, colleges and departments are currently closed to visitors and it is not possible to visit independently.

2020 Interviews

We are currently planning for interviews to be carried out online in December. Oxford routinely hold remote interviews for certain candidates who are unable to travel to Oxford in a normal admissions round, and it is expected these processes and procedures will apply to all candidates. Further information will be announced on the [website](#) shortly. Once we have more detail we will make further announcements and share information on our website and in our prospective applicant newsletter and teachers' newsletter. If you are considering an application now, all our advice for interview preparation is still valid and further information is available on our [interview webpages](#).

Admissions tests 2020

At the moment, we fully expect admissions tests to go ahead on schedule in schools and test centres. We appreciate that schools will be focused on catching up after so much disruption to normal delivery of teaching and learning, so we are working to understand what support or flexibility we, and our partners at Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing, could offer. The deadline for registering for Oxford admissions tests will be 6pm on 15 October as usual. Please note there is an earlier deadline for BMAT and LNAT. Candidates are advised to make arrangements to register and prepare for tests in good time. Full details of how to register are available [here](#). Any new test centres need to register with CAAT by 30 September. Please note that the HAT, PAT and TSA will now be taken on 5 November 2020. See further information and the latest updates from Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing [here](#).

How has it been doing university online?

Obviously it's been different, and an odd change to adjust to, but it was easier than I expected. Lectures have all been recorded and online so honestly don't end up much different than term time, and tutorials have still been held over video calls. For me, obviously labs are impossible but there were coding-based practicals that were planned that we have done. The biggest issue was probably getting books for reading for tutorials, however the department and the college provided some good resources for digital books. - David, Chemistry

For a humanities subject like Classics, we don't have that many contact hours in a week anyway, so doing everything virtually has been difficult in terms of motivation. I found life got very monotonous during term time. But for Freshers, everything will be new and hopefully so exciting that you won't need to worry too much about that if you're learning online. - Augy, Classics

Did you experience a lapse in motivation as a result of lockdown? How did you deal with this?

Yeah, not being in the academic environment that is the University/college did make it harder to get into the right mindset to do work as efficiently. It helped that lectures could be watched whenever, meaning that if I wasn't in the mood for really working I could just get ahead on a few lectures instead, and tutors were extra understanding when it came to difficulties with work. - David, Chemistry

I must admit that working from home did not feel the same as working in Oxford, and so there were times where perhaps I didn't have as much focus as otherwise. I found it useful to only work in my kitchen rather than in my bedroom, as it helped provide a sense of work/life balance and got me into a working mindset. I am someone who never really works in their room in Oxford, aside from essay writing, and I prefer the libraries as a workspace so, whilst not perfect, this helped recreate that experience somewhat. Otherwise, I must echo David, especially as regards the tutors. - Andrew, History

[Student Ambassador FAQs](#)

Why did you apply to Corpus Christi?

Corpus really stood out to me during the open days. The atmosphere of Corpus is super friendly and welcoming: every student I met talked so highly of Corpus, so it really felt like a lovely community. The location is also perfectly central, which is very convenient for the Medical Science Faculty! - Lucy, Biomedical Sciences

I was lucky enough to be able to attend an open day in person and, cheesy as it is, fell in love with the general feel and atmosphere; it is a very welcoming place. We are known as a small and friendly college, and that reputation is very much deserved. As a History student specifically, Corpus is also very conveniently placed, close to the centre of the city and the various libraries and other buildings I need, whilst not being directly on a busy main road. I would recommend reading the [Subject Ambassador guides](#) to get a good feel for the college. - Andrew, History

How did you find moving away from home?

It's definitely a new experience living by yourself without parents, but it's definitely one which allows you to have freedom and be responsible. I really enjoyed the new freedom and having to learn to look after myself, it also allowed me to spend more time with friends. While, of course, it is quite

natural to miss home and your family sometimes, a lot of students return home for a weekend to see their family and this is something I try to do at least once a term. But, overall, it's really positive and makes you feel like an actual adult. - Tyrell, Experimental Psychology

How did you find settling into Corpus?

I found it really easy to settle into Corpus as it's so small and friendly. By the end of Fresher's week (the week before term begins), I felt comfortable around the college and had a good group of friends. Most of the people from the college that I have talked to have had the same experience. - David, Physics

I think most people come into Oxford with preconceived notions of what it's going to be like, and that's perfectly okay! I also had a good experience settling in, and while some of those I met in my first few days at College are my closest friends now, I found many other close friends along the way. Freshers' week can be quite awkward and overwhelming, but I think Corpus is small enough that you quickly get over it! As an international student, I was slightly worried I wouldn't fit in, but I've had a great time at Corpus! - Sampada, Law

I was actually shocked at how quickly Corpus felt like home. Within probably two weeks I had made friends that I just had the feeling would be friends for life, and I felt that I had become part of a community that understood me, valued me and welcomed me like never before. I was calling my room 'home' by 3rd week. - Augy, Classics

What's your typical day like?

I'm a Physics student so it depends on the day of the week if I have practicals or not. For a normal day without practicals, I would go to lectures from 9 am. These lectures last an hour each, and there can be between one and four a day. After having lunch, I have a tutorial in the early afternoon for one to two hours a few days a week, depending on the work we are covering. After a tutorial, I would head to the library and start work on either my notes, some extra reading or the next problem sheet. Normally, I'd finish work at 6 pm then head for dinner in the college hall. In the evening, I'd usually hang out with my friends or go to a society, depending on the day. If it was a practical day, the practicals last from 10 am to 5 pm with an hour lunch break at 1. However, if I finish the lab early I can leave earlier, and relax a little earlier than I normally would. - David, Physics

For Medicine, a typical day for me would usually be waking up at 8.30 for a 9 am lecture or practical in the medical sciences teaching centre and I would normally be there until about 1 pm with lectures, practicals or DR (demonstrating room, where we learn anatomy). I would probably then walk back to college just in time for lunch (finishes at 1.15). Then, in the afternoon, I would probably have a tutorial and I may spend time researching for or writing an essay after that, perhaps stopping for a game or two of FIFA in between (we have a TV room in college for this which anyone at Corpus can use!). I would then have time to meet friends or get involved in societies such as the Christian Union in the evening, working around dinner (which I may eat in college, or cook myself). On Fridays, I generally delay doing an essay so I can play for the Corpus football team. - Joe, Medicine.

As a Law student, I usually have an hour or two of lectures a day - sometimes in the morning, but equally often in the late afternoon too. The rest of my work day is spent in the library where I read or write my essay for the upcoming tutorial. I'm someone who works into the night, despite starting the day at 9 am, but that's because I tend to take ample breaks through the day, often to attend talks around the city, play badminton, or even just eat dinner and chill with friends for a while after! Very

often, there are social events organised by students in college post-dinner, so I return to work after that. - Sampada, Law

In my first year of my degree, I had a 10 am language class every weekday, then I would often have a lecture or two during the day, and maybe a tutorial. Now that my Mods (second year exams for classicists) are over, I don't have as many contact hours - some days I won't have any at all. The rest of the time I spend either working in the library or doing other extra-curricular things, or else just hanging out in college or with my friends. I tend to stop working after dinner, though sometimes it's nice to spend the evening working with friends in the library. If you want to learn more about our days you should check out the [JCR Instagram page](#) (@corpuschristioxfordjcr), where all of us Subject Ambassadors did a 'Day in the Life' recently! - Augy, Classics

As an English student, I usually have between one to two essays a week, or sometimes none at all. Tutors recommend going to around five lectures a week. We usually have one to two classes per week (in Corpus, class sizes are around six to eight students) and a tutorial (you, your tutor, and another student in your class) if you have written an essay that week. I usually go to the library five times a week, from around 11 am to 8 pm, with many breaks in between to go for lunch, coffee or a chat. Then I usually go to the college beer cellar with my friends, or some other pub in Oxford, or if I'm tired just watch a film and fall asleep. - Anna, English

As an Experimental Psychology student, you will have around one to three hours of lectures a day, three hours of labs and three tutorials a week. I normally wake up 10 am, go to lectures 11 am to 1 pm and then go grab some lunch in college or the High Street. Next I would go to the library for a few hours to type up notes from the lectures and try tackle some of the reading list. I would then take a break to meet my friends and chill for a bit. Then if I have an essay due or statistics sheet, I will work on that up until dinner. Normally after dinner, I will relax, watch TV and meet up with friends. - Tyrell, Experimental Psychology

What is the accommodation like?

It's all very nice! The rooms are all a good size and have a large desk very suitable for working, and ample storage space. In first year you'll be in accommodation right across from the college itself, and in later years you get to choose from a variety of accommodation sites so you can prioritise what's important for you: closeness to college/your department, ensuite vs shared bathroom, whether or not you have a kitchen with oven/hob. - David, Chemistry

What is the food like?

Generally pretty good quality! The catering team make a real effort to make it varied, healthy and tasty, and they almost always succeed! As a vegetarian, Corpus definitely caters for my needs most of the time, though I haven't tried many other colleges' food so I can't really compare. Formals at Corpus are a really high standard. The food's also pretty cheap! - Augy, Classics

What social events are there in college?

The main events are 'bops' (three a term), which is like a big party with everyone from college, but there are also loads of things happening in the Beer Cellar (our college bar), such as music nights, pub quizzes etc. Also, every day there is a JCR (Junior Common Room) tea, which is a lovely opportunity just to chat over free tea and biscuits of an afternoon! Every week we have Welfare Tea, which is a load of free food and a great chance to meet people and catch up. Things are probably going to be a bit different next term with COVID-19, so we might be doing more things like virtual pub quizzes etc., but I'm sure there will be plenty of social stuff going on still. - Augy, Classics

How do you find the tutorial system at Oxford?

It is 100% the reason I applied and what I consider one of the best things about Oxford. Weekly sessions with world leading experts in their fields in such small groups is a real privilege and promotes understanding of my degree in a completely different way to reading textbooks and watching lectures.
- Lucy, Biomedical Sciences

I find it the most useful part of teaching: lectures are good for having an overview, but ultimately not every lecturer's style will suit you and they don't exactly stop for questions. For science, tutorials allow you to get some practice with problems in the work you do for them, then in the tutorial itself the discussion can really focus on what you have trouble with and help you understand the topic more deeply for sciences. - David, Chemistry

Whilst at first I found the idea of the tutorial system rather daunting, as much as I loved the sound of it, it quickly developed into one of my favourite aspects of studying at Oxford. Being able to discuss your work and subject with some of the leading figures in your field is a great privilege, and the tutorials can be very useful for helping you think about things in a different way, might perhaps bring up questions you had never thought about, allow you to develop your own arguments further, and, in general, can allow for a greater understanding and a more engaging experience, where, as the others have said, lectures and reading alone might not potentially cut it. - Andrew, History

How do you find the workload?

I think the workload at Oxford can be challenging at times but is generally manageable (I found that I soon learned to manage my time better). Whilst the workload can sometimes seem discouraging, it means that it is very rewarding to be on top of work and also means that you can go more in depth with your subject and thus discover the aspects of your subject which interest you most, perhaps to a greater extent than some other universities. I would also add that there is still normally plenty of time to relax, meet up with friends and get involved in societies! - Joe, Medicine

For Law, I find that the workload is quite high, but definitely manageable! There's about 40 hours of work to do per week (that is also what the faculty suggests), and the good thing about university is that you get to arrange your schedule as you please (especially in a subject like law that does not have many contact hours). It is definitely a step-up from school, but I think it's a learning curve with its ups and downs. You'll find what works for you, and how to take the most effective breaks that leave you refreshed and re-energised! - Sampada, Law

For Physics, in general, the workload is large but manageable. We get set between two and three problem sheets a week during term time, which is a reasonable amount of work with about eight to ten hours expected for each sheet. I spend about eight hours a day working (including labs and lectures), so I find I can keep on top of it. The workload was definitely something that worried me initially, but I soon found my own methods for keeping up with everything, so it's nothing to be worried about. If you love your subject, you'll definitely be okay with the workload as you'll enjoy doing it. - David, Physics

Classics is probably more chill than some other subjects, though if you're starting a new language or if you aren't so strong at translation or Prose Composition it can be quite a lot of work. At Corpus, at least, the tutors don't expect huge amounts of work each week, but will be firm yet encouraging if they ever feel that you need to step up a bit more (I have never heard of this happening actually!). For example, this term, I have had to write an essay or commentary every week, and then read for another

tutorial and write a report every other week. Though, for other people, it's not that unusual to do two essays a week. - Augy, Classics

How do you find tutorials?

At the beginning of first year I was a little bit nervous going into tutorials, but soon I came to enjoy them as they are usually relaxed but challenging sessions to expand your knowledge and ability/reasoning (especially for Physics). In Physics, the tutorials are split between maths, classical mechanics and relativity, and electromagnetism in first year, so there is a great variety of tutors teaching you, all of whom I have found really friendly and knowledgeable in the area of study. Tutorials usually consist of initially going over the previous week's problem sheet, followed by extra questions about the topic, enforcing your understanding of it. - David, Physics

I particularly enjoy tutorials, especially because Law doesn't offer many contact hours, so you often end up learning much of the material on your own. So the tutorial serves as a great opportunity to discuss a topic in depth and hear others' (both your tutor, as well as tutorial partners) perspectives on the topic. It's also a chance to ask questions you might have. For me, a tutorial represents satisfaction, because it is the culmination of about 30 hours of work. They can take a little getting used to, but they're definitely a place where you can grow and explore your identity as a thinking Law student. - Sampada, Law

I personally really love them! They might seem intimidating at first but you soon realise they're not at all. I get on really well with my tutors and always really enjoy discussing my essays: there is always so much to talk about even if I've found it a hard week. They just want you to do your best, so it never really feels like you're being scrutinised or tested; it's usually just an hour full of ideas and discussion, with some constructive criticism at the end. - Anna, English

Tutorials were definitely a new experience for me and introduced me to a new way of learning. I think the tutorial system is one of the best things about Oxford and I have grown to love them. At the start they may be a bit daunting because it's such a small group, but you soon realise that this gives you the opportunity to bring up topics specific to you that you are struggling on or want to learn more about. Overall, I think it's a great way to better understand topics and receive direct feedback on assignments and essays that help you get better at your discipline. - Tyrell, Experimental Psychology

What welfare does Corpus provide and do you feel well-supported?

Welfare support at Corpus is really good. The welfare team includes college staff (e.g. the welfare dean, college nurse and more) and students (welfare officers, peer supporters) so there are lots of different options and people available to talk to. The JCR (student body) welfare team also has events throughout the term with the aim to maintain welfare of students through broader outreach, such as with welfare tea each week (free food!) and a welfare week in the 5th week of each term (lots of activities put on e.g. arts and crafts, music nights, puppy-petting). Overall, I would say that the welfare team, along with the general environment at Corpus (among students and tutors) helps me to feel well-supported. There's some more information [here](#). - Joe, Medicine.

How well is pastoral care catered for?

Oxford University offers free counselling to all students which is of a decent quality. In college, we have a paid college counsellor, a team of three student welfare officers (as well as other elected roles with a welfare component) and an effective system of signposting you to resources when you need help. There are also lots of 'peer supporters' in our college, students who are trained in active listening and who are always there for you to listen. Aside from that, I find the fact that all the other

students are so supportive and understanding at Corpus (we don't really go in for competitiveness!) really beneficial. – Matt, PPE

There are various points of call when it comes to wellbeing in college. Firstly, everybody has college tutors who are there to support you. They are always willing to listen and if it is something particularly course-related they can most definitely help and, if they feel unable to support you for whatever reason, they will be able to signpost you to somebody that would be able to help. We have a Dean of Welfare in college who you can email and they will arrange to have a chat with you very informally and again will help in any way that they can. If you need extra help on top of a welfare check, the college also has a college counsellor who is able to meet with you regularly during term time and there is also a University counselling service. Alongside all of this, there are also peer supporters who have been trained to listen, alongside college welfare officers who we now have three of! All of these people will be able to point you to the best person whatever the situation. - Beth, Experimental Psychology

What clubs and societies do you do?

I personally am involved in lots of different societies, mainly at a college rather than a University level: rowing, women's football, JCR Committee (undergraduate committee), Law Soc at both college and the Uni, and the Oxford Union (a society which hosts interesting debates and talks about lots of different subjects). There is always something to get involved in, regardless of your skill level or interest and other people will probably have completely different answers! - Rhiannon, Law

I used to chair for a society called 'Champagne and Socialism', which is essentially a light-hearted left-wing-themed discussion group. More recently I've been more involved in the feminist society, which hosts 'Liberation and Liquor' and a couple of reading groups. There's a lot out there to suit pretty much any possible niche, from fan clubs or LARPing (live action role-playing games) to boxing and archery. - Matt, PPE

I have been quite involved in college rowing which is super fun. I had never rowed before Oxford and was worried it would be a really elite thing, but you can learn here and it's quite a fun thing to learn to do even if you don't want to be competitive. There are different levels, so if you are good you can train for the first boat (even if you'd never rowed before) and you train a bit more regularly and a bit more intensely, whereas, if you just want to do it for fun, you can train with the second or third boats and they are much more relaxed! - Beth, Experimental Psychology

I get involved with the College Christian Union, Just Love (a student-led social justice group), Corpus JCR (Junior Common Room i.e. undergraduate) Committee, Oxford Cross Country, and Oxford Swimming. There are loads of different groups and communities to get involved in! - Adam, Biochemistry

What do you get up to outside of your work?

I play badminton for the University team, and am on the committee of the Oxford South Asian Society. I also really enjoy being involved in activities in college itself, both on the governance as well as social fronts! I also find it quite informative to attend talks held by various societies in Oxford, so I attend a couple of them a week. Walks in university parks, and ice cream trips to G and D's are my other favourite things to do! - Sampada, Law

Personally, I am involved in a couple of societies, namely the Christian Union (I'm a college rep for Corpus) and the Corpus football team (we have matches against other colleges on Friday afternoons).

I also spend time with friends in Oxford when I'm not working, both at Corpus and at other colleges, and tend to go on lots of walks to get out of the city centre - 'Port Meadow' is a favourite spot for many Oxford students! There are also opportunities to go on nights out in Oxford. In my experience, 'Bridge (one of the clubs) Thursdays' is a favourite of Corpus students! - Joe, Medicine

Outside of work, I often like to relax with TV, or with my friends around college. Other than this I am the treasurer for Oxford Lego Society, which is a society I didn't know existed until I joined the University. It is really nice having a separate group of people in the society that I have been able to become friends with, and be able to get involved with something a little different from what I'd expected at Oxford whilst I'm not working. At Corpus, I help run the college Minecraft server, which is open to any members of the college. This has a really good community too, as it allows me to relax and do something which is vastly different from my degree. Also, the server runs during the holidays (vacations) so the community on the server can stay alive during the time not at Oxford. - David, Physics

I spend a lot of time watching films with friends, cooking, going to pubs. I'm also really heavily involved in student journalism, and love writing articles in my free time. - Anna, English

What's it like living in Oxford as a city?

I really enjoy living in Oxford. It is a really pretty city and there are lots of green spaces, as well as the river, which are nice if you need to escape from the busyness. Whilst it isn't the biggest city, I find that, for me, there is still plenty going on and the nightlife is still pretty good! Most people I know love living in Oxford- as long as you don't mind dodging lots of tourists to get to lectures! - Joe, Medicine

Oxford is such a beautiful place to live, and I always feel so enchanted and fortunate to call it home for half the year. I live in Canterbury, which is an interesting but small and quiet town, so Oxford really feels like a big step up in terms of size, stuff happening and grandeur. One of my favourite things about Oxford is all the green spaces that there are: Port Meadow, Christ Church Meadow, Aston's Eytot, University Parks, South Park... I could go on. As a result there's a surprising amount of wildlife around! Red kites fill the skies, and I have seen woodpeckers, badgers, muntjac and roe deer just chilling very near my accommodation. I also find that the people in town are more interesting and willing to chat than in many other places, which is nice. One of my favourite places in Oxford is the Cowley Road, which is full of shops, restaurants and cafes, representing a huge range of cultures and cuisines. - Augy, Classics.

I personally love living in Oxford as a city. Whilst everything is really close to each other, it still manages to feel big. Oxford is really a historic city so it's full of beautiful monuments and landmarks that makes walking through Oxford a really great experience. In addition, due to its size, most students walk everywhere in Oxford, but it is also a popular biking city so some students decide to bring bikes up with them in later years. Despite coming down from London, Oxford does not feel small in comparison and I was still able to appreciate the beauty of the city. - Tyrell, Experimental Psychology

How far away is the town centre?

Corpus is actually situated just off from the main High Street so it is a very central college! It takes less than a minute to get to the Main Street and a couple of minutes to the Westgate Shopping centre! So the city centre is definitely in walking distance. It is a great location for anything central! Tyrell – Experimental Psychology

How does Oxford help you for careers?

Oxford has a dedicated careers service which graduates can access for life and offers tailored support from the start of your time at Oxford to allow you to make choices for your future career. They put on a lot of insight talks and careers fairs to help connect you with employers. There are also so many societies who put on talks and events which provide opportunities to find out what you are interested in, network and gain experience! - Adam, Biochemistry

There is also a specific internship office within/separate from careers which entirely focuses on finding internships in the summer or other times for students- even virtual ones! - Rhiannon, Law

I've personally been to a couple of careers fairs and find that they are really informative and useful!
Beth - Experimental Psychology

How would you describe student life at Oxford University?

I think it's definitely what you make it, there is no limit aside from how much you can physically do in a day (while keeping up with your workload of course). There are so many clubs and opportunities, and if there's one you can think of that isn't there you could probably get funding and support to create it! It's different for every single person, come with an open mind and you'll have an amazing experience. - Effie, Classics

Do you feel there are any disadvantages from being in a smaller college?

I think the answer to this question is very dependent on the individual: some people prefer to have their own small group in a big college and some people prefer to know everyone at a small college. For me, I prefer to be in a smaller college where I feel comfortable enough to talk to everyone in my college and get to know them really well. However, I do also have a lot of friends in different colleges so I feel like I have a good balance between the two and am really happy in my college. - Tyrell, Experimental Psychology

How would you sum up the college in three words?

Cosy, hilarious, welcoming - Effie, Classics

What are your tips for interviews?

For Physics, I'd say make sure you're able to talk through everything that you are doing for the problem, as this allows the tutor to know how you think through a problem, which is what they are most interested in. They don't mind if you can't finish a problem, they just want to see how you tackle it. Also, make sure to ask for help if you need it: the tutors don't want to see you struggle. For the most part this goes for other subjects too. - David, Physics

For Law, I found it useful to remember to be confident about the arguments I was presenting, but at the same time paying heed to the counter-arguments being made by the interviewers, and drawing a balance between the two. Most importantly, enjoy the experience: it's a great chance to get a feel of what tutorials are like. Even if you're thrown curveballs in the interview, try to make your way around it, and embrace the experience anyway! - Sampada, Law

The interviews are meant to resemble an Oxford tutorial setting, so this means that they are interested in seeing how you think and respond to information. The best thing you can do is think out loud and lead your interviewer through your logic and thought patterns. It's also okay to take time to think through a problem but try to balance it with being transparent about your thoughts. If you're worried about getting something wrong, try to think of the different possibilities and logical ways you could

work it out. For Psychology, try to take your time with graphs and understand what they are showing. Lastly, just try to enjoy it and speaking with leading experts in their fields. - Tyrell, Experimental Psychology

What are your top tips for personal statements?

The first thing I did before starting mine was to read a few (there are loads online) just to get an idea of the sorts of things people talk about in them and ways to structure it. I personally would focus on one or two key areas of interest in your subject and really explain why those things interest you, rather than listing off a load of different aspects of the subject that you've heard about, as it would highlight more interest in the subject. For example, I'm a Psychology student and was really interested in the use of facial scanning technology and how we could train people to be better at recognising faces, so I made that one key aspect of my personal statement. I would also suggest not to worry too much about extracurriculars as I found that you can go more in depth about the actual subject with some more interesting things to write about. - Beth, Experimental Psychology

The main idea is really just to show that you are genuinely interested in the subject, and keen to learn more. The tutors don't expect you to know everything from the outset, the main skill is just a willingness to learn and explore ideas in depth. If you study the subject at A-level or equivalent, find which parts really interest you and try to research further into them, and think critically. If you don't, think about what drew you to the subject, and find something there that interests you. - Rhiannon, Law

It sounds simple and obvious, but don't lie! Only mention books you've actually read, as it will soon become very obvious if you haven't. Otherwise, just show that you are interested and enthusiastic to learn more about your subject: the tutors are looking for people they would like to teach. - Imogen, Materials Science

Make sure that whatever you talk about, you somehow link it to your subject or why you'd be a good candidate. There's no point just saying 'I did DofE' but not explaining how it informed your thinking or something. For instance, I like singing and applied for Classics, so I talked about singing in Latin in church! That way you avoid talking about irrelevant stuff, but also can convey something of your character and interests, which is really important. Remember that the people interviewing you are going to be teaching you for the next three or four (or more!) years, so it helps if you come across as interesting and likeable. The best way to do this is usually to be yourself! If you read it back and it sounds like someone else has written it, you should probably change something. - Augy, Classics

Does it matter how original the first sentence on your statement is?

I would focus more on the entirety of the personal statement. I know that my teachers also put an emphasis on being individual and standing out, but I think how the statement comes across overall is much more important than the first line being particularly impressive. I think something that is fitting with the rest of the statement is more important than being something completely unique, interesting etc.! Beth - Experimental Psychology

The first sentence of your personal statement won't be considered in isolation, so the most important thing is to make sure that it flows well with the rest of what you are saying. I think what people mean when they say it must be original is that you shouldn't use a quote, which is certainly something I was told when I was writing mine: mainly because the tutors don't want to see someone else's thoughts, they want yours! - Rhiannon, Law

I'd agree and also add that you shouldn't waste valuable words having something fancy just to 'catch the tutor's eye' or something, just dive straight into why you love the subject etc. If it's something you've written, and it sounds like something you would have written, then it's probably original enough. Augy, Classics

What is your favourite thing about Corpus?

I think the sense of community in Corpus - from the porters to students to tutors - is really strong. I love that it's a small, little college tucked away amidst traditionally larger colleges, and I like to think that it is almost like one of Oxford's best-kept secrets! - Sampada, Law

I think personally my favourite thing about it is its size, which is quite funny as when I applied to Oxford I tended to check off the smaller colleges because I was worried about not meeting the right people. I think with it being smaller it means people integrate much better between the years and lots of people describe it as having a more family feel to it compared with other colleges. You always recognise everyone who is walking through the quad and everyone tends to be really nice and friendly, so I do think that its small size makes it particularly appealing! - Beth, Experimental Psychology

For me my favourite thing is how quickly it felt like home: quite similar to Beth, I think because of the size, and everyone being friendly it was very easy to settle in to a routine. You can easily learn your way around and where things are, and when you don't know there's always a friendly face around to ask! - Rhiannon, Law

My favourite thing about Corpus is definitely the people. The community at Corpus is one which I definitely feel a part of and accepted by. Everyone is so friendly and just easy to get on with, which makes it so easy to make friends with everyone (from any year). They have definitely made my experience at uni so unforgettable. - Tyrell, Experimental Psychology

I enjoy the small size of Corpus as it means that I can get to know my year (and other years) better. The college and gardens are also really pretty. I particularly enjoy it for Medicine as the tutors are great and the Corpus Medical Society is very active: the termly dinners and talks are fun and a great opportunity to get to know tutors, other students, and alumni! That's more than one (sorry!), so take your pick! - Joe, Medicine

[Subject FAQs](#)

[Biochemistry - Dr JP Kiappes](#)

How many Biochemistry tutors are there and what do they specialise in?

Four or five of us depending on how you count! Dr Mark Wormald (who you might have seen in the Departmental Admissions Q&A video) is the Senior Tutor at Corpus. His research focuses on using Nuclear Magnetic Resonance to look at the structures of biomolecules. Professor Mark Sansom does work in computational biochemistry studying membrane proteins. Dr Struan Murray looks at epigenetics. Dr Kerstin Timm is a lecturer whose research focuses on human metabolism. My own work is at the interface of viruses and medicinal chemistry: trying to identify ways in which we can inhibit viruses, as well as designing and synthesising molecules to interfere with those pathways.



What are you looking for in a Biochemistry applicant?

The most important thing is an enthusiasm for the subject! Especially as Biochemistry is not something you can study as a subject at GCSE or A-level, many applicants will have done something outside of school to learn more about the subject: reading an article online or a book, watching a talk - lots of different things. We look for this both in the personal statement and when discussing things in the interview, and especially if you can tell us why you did (or didn't!) find a particular topic interesting. In terms of requirements, you have to have studied Chemistry and at least one other science or maths (Physics, Biology, Maths, Further Maths) to A-level or the equivalent. More details about the requirements can be found on the departmental website.

What characteristics would make you deem the student teachable and having potential?

For Biochemistry, we are looking for students who are able to apply knowledge they have to think about a new problem. It's not so much about a "right" answer as the thinking to get there.

How many Biochemistry applicants are interviewed?

For Biochemistry, we organise admissions coordinating between colleges. This means that everyone will be interviewed by at least two colleges. As a department, we try to interview approximately three applicants for every place on the course. So across the whole university, we interview slightly more than 300 people each year. Because everyone has two interviews, this means at Corpus we will normally interview 25-30 applicants (some of whom will have Corpus as a first college, some who will have Corpus as second interview).

Is it beneficial to read textbooks before Biochemistry interviews?

I would never discourage someone from reading up on something that interests them! Having said that, we try to ask questions that we don't think you will have come across before, but will be able to figure out based on things you know or that we tell you. So, these questions don't typically have a single "right" answer that you could have read or seen in a book. More information never hurts, so I don't think it's a bad idea to read textbooks. However, we are more curious to see how you think about problem and how you problem-solve rather than checking for specific knowledge.

How many words does a typical essay assignment have for Biochemistry?

This can vary substantially! The main reason it can be so variable is that most Biochemistry essays contain diagrams that help to clarify the topic. Often a good diagram can take the place of many words. A typical length might be somewhere around 2000 words, but it will depend greatly on your writing style and the specific requests of each tutor.

How important are key words and phrasing to score well for Biochemistry exams?

In general, there is more emphasis on your interpretation of information, rather than looking for specific key words or specific facts. The questions will often be a bit more open-ended, and you can have a wide range of information and examples to pick from. Two equally good answers might look very different from each other, rather than aiming for specific phrases.

What careers have Corpus Biochemists gone into?

A wide variety of things! Many continue studying: pursuing a PhD either in Biochemistry or related fields, or graduate Medicine courses. Some have gone on to work as consultants, in banking, civil service, teaching, and patent lawyers. The Biochemistry course emphasises skills in problem-solving, logical thinking, and communication (both essays and presentations). These skills prepare the

students for a wide variety of possibilities. The important thing is knowing that you want to study Biochemistry for the next four years - after that there are many paths onward!

What is your favourite thing about teaching Biochemistry at Corpus?

For me, the best part is getting to work together with the students over the course of their whole time at Corpus and in Oxford. To see which aspects of the course someone is interested in when they arrive, and how their interests evolve and change, or develop and deepen, is really rewarding. The tutorial system allows us to have discussions, and everyone brings a new perspective: students often ask questions I've never thought about before. They challenge me to think about things in a new way, and sometimes we even figure out the answer together. In their fourth-year projects, students often develop more expertise than we have in the field of their project, and I end up learning from them! As a subject within Corpus, we also try to have events (dinners, game nights, scientific talks) and it is always fun to see students in these contexts too.

What are the main differences between Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences?

At present, Biomedical Sciences (BMS) is a three-year degree and Biochemistry is four years. BMS will become a four-year degree at some point. BMS covers more than Biochemistry, e.g. there is behavioural neuroscience, whereas Biochemistry is more focused on cells and molecules. BMS is more strongly tied to medicine - in fact, you will study the same options as medics do in Year 3 - and for many lectures in Year 1, you are in the same lecture theatre as medics. Biochemistry is much more autonomous and stand-alone. But the closeness of BMS to Medicine means that you have a strong appreciation of what the major medical challenges are that science can address. Since BMS has a wider spectrum, it also goes into material in less depth in Year 1. So, if you love antibodies and surface receptors, you are probably better-placed to do Biochemistry - an excellent degree at Corpus. But if you can't make up your mind, or genuinely like integration, BMS is the natural choice. - Professor Pawel Swietach, Biomedical Sciences

Are there any Biochemistry tutorials on COVID-19?

So virology is part of the main course, and so there are some tutorials about viruses. Generally speaking, the students and tutors work together to develop the tutorial plan: we will make some advice and arrange things, but students give lots of input. This past term some of our remote tutorials (at the request of the students) have covered the coronavirus: the biology of the virus itself, vaccines, as well as tests and potential therapies. I actually work in one of the labs testing potential treatments so we were able to discuss the research that is happening as well!

Lehninger or J.M Berg? (Two famous biochemists)

An impossible question!! Both? :)

[Biomedical Sciences \(BMS\) - Professor Pawel Swietach](#)

What makes Biomedical Sciences at Corpus stand out?

In truth, you will find that there are big similarities between colleges. We all follow the same course, have the same admissions criteria, and set the same exams. If you need a tutorial in a topic we don't offer, we will outsource it to another college. But you should choose Corpus, because our Biomedical Sciences community is big. We admit around 70 undergrads a year, of which there are 2 biomedics, 5-6 medics, 3-4 psychologists - so a large fraction: I think the highest percentage of any college! We have a rich history in medical research, and many fellows with a medical research

background. The community is thriving and we have exciting talks on BMS. We like to get you all together as a group and make you think big-picture science.

Are the facilities for Biomedical Sciences good at Corpus (labs etc.)?

Labs are all central - they belong to the University. My labs are in DPAG ([Department of Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics](#)), not at Corpus. College provides accommodation, a library, sports, etc. but not labs. Medical research in Oxford is ranked highly, and some fields like mine (physiology) are number one in the world.

What are the specialist interests of Biomedical Sciences tutors at Corpus? Do you do research here?

I'm a cell physiologist, which means that I'm interested in how cells work in health and disease. More specifically, I'm interested in acid/base disorders which are relevant to a large number of diseases, from cardiovascular to cancer. I like being able to combine chemistry, biology and physics. I'm super keen on using the latest technology and am constantly learning. It's also great being at the crossroads of scientific disciplines (cells are important for everyone) so I meet a lot of fascinating people and get to hear what they know.

How many Biomedical Sciences tutors are there at Corpus Christi, and what do they specialise in?

We have a good-sized Biomedical Sciences community at Corpus! I'm a physiologist, interested in acid/base disorders and their effects on cells and tissues. I'm the lead in BMS. I'm supported by two excellent colleagues who are also fellows: Robin Murphy, a psychologist, and Colin Akerman, a neuroscientist. Additionally, we have two medical research fellows who work in more clinical areas. We also have tutors specialising in Biochemistry.

By how much would bad performance at GCSE reduce my chances of being accepted on the course?

To get to interview, you need a good combination of GCSE score and BMAT score. BMAT is an exam that will happen in November. Many of our students get invited for interview with a weaker GCSE score if they excelled in BMAT. If you are worried, make the best of the summer to study for BMAT. There are courses and past papers, and you can ask current students for learning tips! If invited for interview, GCSE is then part of the equation - interview performance is the third part. So don't worry: there are opportunities to make up for any weaker performances before!

Do different colleges have different preferences for A-level subject combinations?

No, we have a very centralised system and all criteria are identical across all colleges.

What do you look for in a Biomedical Sciences applicant?

1) You have to show evidence for academic excellence, which is true for all subjects. 2) You must be interested in biomedical research: we want to see evidence that you've read about a topic and can talk about it, and get us (tutors) excited about your findings. 3) You must do well in puzzles at the interview and the BMAT exam.

What kinds of things make a Biomedical Sciences applicant stand out?

Before interview:

- 1) A strong academic record, e.g. GCSE score.

- 2) A personal statement which makes it clear you are keen on research and have read more about a topic, or even been involved in some relevant research.
- 3) A strong interview performance i.e. evidence for good problem-solving, being able to articulate observations based on some data shown at the interview; being able to engage in discussion e.g. ask us questions, see flaws, identify control experiments etc.

Note that the BMAT score is not disclosed to us at interview: we only use that information once we rank students by interview performance, and input these into an algorithm.

What can I do to boost my application?

Many things! Firstly, you need to show academic excellence and a good BMAT score in November. This will determine if you are invited for interview or not. For your UCAS form, we want to read about exciting interests you have in biomed. This is where you can boost your application. For example, have you read about something interesting - did you follow it up? Can you defend an idea in public i.e. at an interview? Perhaps you had an opportunity to shadow someone in research or healthcare (we know this is now very hard to do)? Did you do a project in school you are proud of? Have you got an idea about what you want to do in the future? What area of biomedical sciences is important and why are you keen on it? The best way is to read - think of journals like *Nature*, *Science*, *Student BMJ* (British Medical Journal) - read the editorials. Read science blogs but follow up the most fascinating topics.

Do you recommend any textbooks or information texts to read before starting Biomedical Sciences?

BMS is broad so you should read material that is interesting to you. This can range from COVID-19 to memory in monkeys - we don't really mind! We love to see people with genuine interest in solving problems relevant to health and wellbeing, and keen to learn how the body works. You can find a lot of material online, although much of that can be quite a difficult read at this stage. I personally recommend that you browse through some journals: *Student BMJ* (British Medical Journal), *Nature* or *Science*, and find things that interest you. Then, follow up on the reading. If you learnt something interesting, we want to know about it in the UCAS form. We'll likely ask you about it in the interview.

When reading around the subject, what should I really read or watch or form opinions on?

It's important you start early so that you find something truly fascinating. Don't leave it late and try not to necessarily go for popular things at the moment e.g. COVID-19 is big, but if you are more interested in hearing disorders, please follow your interest. The best thing is to browse some journals, e.g. *Nature*, *Science*, or student versions of *BMJ* (British Medical Journal). Find a topic you found interesting and follow it up. Sometimes editorials in *Science* and *Nature* are the best as they are easy reads.

What do you look for in the personal statements of prospective Biomedical Sciences students?

Evidence that you are academically excellent. This can be captured in grades, but you may want to explain any other achievements. Have you participated in challenges outside school? Won awards? Next is proof that you are interested in biomedical sciences. What have you read about recently that caught your attention. Which is your favourite topic, and why? If you have any hands-on experience e.g. shadowing/talking to a researcher, we want to hear about it. Finally, capacity. The course is demanding, so we want to see that you can handle the tasks. Have you done lots of things, and done them well? E.g. volunteering work on top of academic duties.

For the statement, should I show a large range of academic interests or to focus on a select few?

The course is unique in giving students a lot of breadth in teaching in Year 1. If you apply for BMS, you should be prepared to study molecules involved in metabolism, to behaviour of fruit flies (as a model organism). In Years 2 and 3, you make choices based on the strengths you discovered in Year 1. I want to assure you, the depth in Year 1 is realistic: you can't expect to study everything in *great* detail, but you can later in the course.

Would talking about our future aspirations or visions in the personal statement be good?

Yes! We look for evidence that you have an interest in BMS. Putting this in context of a future career in research or healthcare makes the point very strongly!

Will not doing A-level or AS level Chemistry reduce the chance of getting a place?

The offer relates to a combination of science/maths and the extent to which you pursue chemistry does not matter (please note that, for Medicine, Chemistry at A-level is necessary but not for BMS).

How do you show your passion for the subject to the tutors during the interview?

It takes time to develop an interest in some finding related to biomed. You will need to read about many discoveries, developments, to find a few that are totally your interest. Once you identify such a niche, you need to read further, so you are comfortable when talking in public about it - at least to a level expected from a school leaver. Don't memorise things - we just want to see genuine passion. I suggest you look through journals like *Nature*, *Science* or *Student BMJ* (British Medical Journal) - read editorials. If you are bored after the sixth sentence, go to the next. There's plenty on news/blogs to get you excited.

Can you do a year in industry with the Biomedical Sciences course?

We don't have a scheme specifically for this, but many of our students opt for a summer in industry between Years 1 and 2.

Will you ever have tutorials outside college?

In college, the broader biomed community is Colin Akerman (neuroscience), Robin Murphy (psychology) and myself (physiology). We also have medical fellows who support more clinical issues. So the scope is big, but of course there is more out there in other colleges. In Year 1, subjects are pretty basic so we handle teaching in house. But, after that, students participate in exchange schemes: so someone who develops an interest in antibodies will go to, say, Oriel for a tutorial with an expert on immunology, and in exchange someone from Oriel could join me to learn about cardiac arrhythmia. At Oxford, you really have access to cutting-edge research and the expertise that comes with it. The opportunities are immense!

Does most of the learning for Biomedical Sciences happen at the college?

Lectures and practicals are at central level, provided by the University. Tutorials are college-based. I would say a third of your time is tutorial-based.

Does the content of the Biomedical Sciences course change depending on the college you are at?

No, the degree is the same across all colleges. We follow the same programme.



What mathematical and statistical skills are you taught during Year 1 of the degree?

Maths and stats are essential tools for a modern scientist, so we teach things in context. This means you will only learn maths/stats through specific examples, rather than theory. This makes things easier to conceptualise. It's usually one seminar a week, and we break the groups into those who had maths/stats in school before, and those who haven't. If you enjoy maths/stats, there will be an opportunity in Year 3 to select a project which might be, for example, bioinformatics-based.

Will struggling with maths disadvantage me in the statistics parts of the course and interview?

The maths/stats is part of the course in Year 1. The intention is to provide you with skills to tackle scientific questions. As scientists, we all rely on such skills. However, the course is relatively basic and, well, applied. You will be taught in an exciting way, using problems that are biomedical, rather than abstract. Also, we divide the class at the start of the year into those who had maths/stats at school e.g. A-level/IB/Highers, and those who didn't. In the end, all people converge on the same result. Most people find the course very good indeed.

How diverse is your community? What fraction of all students are international?

BMS is probably the most "international" of subjects. A large fraction of our intake is outside the UK, and we are very keen on that, as it brings together people from different systems e.g. IB, European Baccalaureate etc. Oxford remains committed to attracting the best talent from the world. We recognise there will be major challenges ahead so please read [guidelines relating to Brexit](#).

How do I know who will be my tutor given more than one being available?

In college, there are usually one to two main tutors who offer pastoral care, in addition to teaching and they will be your point of contact. For BMS, for example, it will be me at Corpus.

How much flexibility is there within the Biomedical Sciences course?

In Years 2 and 3, a lot: you select options. For example, in Year 3, you have 11 options to select 2 from. That's quite a lot of choice, but also many different combinations. In theory, each student can end up with a bespoke course at the end. You can also end up with a cell & systems biology degree OR a neuroscience degree, depending which options you take. Year 1, in contrast, follows the same scheme so that you all start Year 2 with an identical skills set and a fair start.

Is any work experience necessary? If so, what would you recommend?

If you mean during the course: it's not compulsory, but many students go for placements in the summer of Year 1. These can be arranged locally in Oxford labs or in the labs of our collaborators, or through special programmes. If you mean before the course: it's again not necessary, and most students we see at interview did not have work experience in a relevant area. But if you manage to get a placement in a lab before coming here - how wonderful! We would like to know all about it in your UCAS application. Even a few days in a lab, talking to scientists, holding a pipette, understanding what is being done would be great - but, of course, we understand this is often difficult. Other ideas are a placement in a GP: even help with paperwork shows you are keen on pursuing a degree in a field affiliated with medicine. Some pharmaceutical companies offer summer placements too. There are of course restrictions with age, which mean many opportunities will not be available to you at this stage.

Can you do a three-year Biomedical Sciences course or has it switched to a four-year course?

This is ongoing, but the idea is that once it's a four-year course, it will remain a four-year course, just like Biochemistry or Materials Science are.

What are some examples of the practical skills that will be taught in Biomedical Sciences?

Some universities offer a Biomed course that is very much steered to the healthcare industry - but our course, unlike those, is science/research-driven. The skills you will learn relate to techniques/approaches used in modern research. That includes maths/stats, experiments in cells, animals and humans in Year 1. In Year 3, you will undertake a research project in a lab - there, the choice is massive. Over 200 labs offer placements, and these range from child psychology, to molecular biology of viruses. It's so much fun!

What career progressions are there for BMS? Is it possible to become an NHS biomedical scientist?

Many of our students go on to working in NHS careers e.g. radiographers, doctors etc. You would need to follow up the degree with appropriate training (e.g. a Master's), but an Oxford BMS degree puts you on the right track!

What do BMS students generally go on to do after completing the Biomedical Sciences degree?

The course has been running for almost ten years so we have some data on this. Many undertake a PhD in an affiliated area, often the area in which they did their third-year project. Another big cohort do graduate-entry Medicine or training towards working in health care e.g. sonographers. The remaining third are a mix: policy with government, work with research charities, work for medical start-ups, and pharmaceuticals.

What resources and facilities are available to Biomedical Sciences students?

Much of your learning will be based in the central science area which I am sure you know is world-class, world-leading. In particular, a highlight of the course is the research project which will be undertaken in a lab of your choice. There, you have access to the best facilities and expertise! Exciting!

Given the pandemic, will a lack of relevant work experience affect your chances of an offer?

We are aware that the pandemic will have affected applicants in lots of different ways. There is more information on our [website](#).

Is BMS the human side of biology and the Biology course is the animal and evolution side?

I believe this is true, although I don't know much about the Biology course: we don't offer Biological Sciences at Corpus. BMS is focused on humans, but a lot of what we know about human biology is borne from studies on animals. So you will come across a lot of references to mice, squid, fruit flies, but that will be put into context of how the human mechanisms operate. Ultimately, we are training you to understand health and disease in humans, but having said that, some of our BMS grads end up being vets after appropriate DVM (Doctor of Veterinary Medicine) degrees.

Compared to Biochemistry and other science courses, is BMS more intense?

All science courses at Oxford have a similar intensity, as judged by hours of tutorials. What makes BMS different, is scope: you have a lot more to cover, but you cover it in less detail in Year 1. After Year 1 you specialise in topics: so you narrow down but go in greater depth. I would say this makes BMS more demanding because you must remain excited about many topics in Year 1: from molecules of the Krebs cycle to hearing in ferrets, all of these topics must gain your attention. We believe this makes you a more complete biomedical scientist, who then can make more informed choices in Year 2 and their future career!

Are labs fun?

They are awesome! In Year 1 you have a range of practicals. They are all very cool. I run a practical where we stick electrodes, and measure your electrocardiogram (ECG). We do things like put your head into cold water so see how the heart rate decreases. It is very hands-on and closely matches the lecture course. At end of Year 2, you undertake a research project in one of 200+ labs. You will be part of a cutting-edge research lab: part of a team, working on important stuff, using the latest technology, making a difference.

[Chemistry - Professor Peter Hore](#)

What does a Chemistry tutor look for on the personal statement?

We look for evidence of motivation and enthusiasm for studying Chemistry. Many candidates talk about the books that have influenced them (*Why Chemical Reactions Happen* by Keeler and Wothers is a popular one) or courses they have attended at local universities, or school projects. Describe anything you think demonstrates your fascination with all things chemical.

Are there any opportunities for research experience as an undergraduate?

If you do Chemistry, you will spend the **whole** of the fourth year doing an original research project.

For Chemistry, you no longer require candidates to sit the Thinking Skills Assessment. Why is this?

We stopped using the Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA) for Chemistry because it wasn't telling us anything we couldn't learn in other ways.

What reading would you recommend for Chemistry applicants?

Probably the most popular book is *Why Chemical Reactions Happen* by Keeler and Wothers, but there are plenty other excellent texts at a similar level. Magazines such as *New Scientist* and *Scientific American* are also useful. And, of course, there's a vast amount on the web. Your teachers should be able to guide you in this.

How can you demonstrate your love for Chemistry at interview?

In a Chemistry interview (for example), you can demonstrate your love for the subject by being enthusiastic about, and motivated by, all things chemical. If you have done a Chemistry project or have attended some kind of course at your local university, be prepared to describe knowledgeably what you have learnt if asked in the interview.

Are you disadvantaged if you've read lots of papers at school but none outside of school?
All reading about matters chemical is highly recommended, whether in school or not.

How does Chemistry teaching work online? What has happened for lab sessions?

Lectures next term will be pre-recorded as videos. We hope it will be possible to conduct tutorials face-to-face. The teaching labs will be closed next term but there will be online "practicals" and plans are afoot for experiments that can be done in colleges.



How does pooling work? Is the pool University-wide?

Certainly in Chemistry, and I think in all other subjects, the pool is University-wide.

How long does a Chemistry interview usually last, and is it one-on-one?

At Corpus, Chemistry candidates get two interviews which typically last 25 minutes each and are always two-on-one.

Do individual colleges tend to be stronger in terms of teaching organic/inorganic/physical?

All 28 undergraduate colleges offer Chemistry. The number of places varies from college to college but that's a reflection of the overall sizes of the colleges rather than an indication of strength in Chemistry.

I feel I'd be greatly disadvantaged by an online interview. Can I have a face-to-face interview?

I'm afraid not. We are currently planning for all interviews to be carried out online in December. Tutors are aware that many candidates will find online interviews challenging. We will be very careful to take this into account in the way in which we conduct the interviews.

How will 'picking up the pen' and working through the interview problem occur online?

Good question. It's something we're still thinking about. For tutorials, I use my tablet or mobile phone as a visualiser so that the undergraduates can see what I'm writing as well as see and hear me. This seems to work well. We'll probably do the same in interviews and ask the candidates to do something similar so we can see them work through the problems we set.

Do you ask many maths-based questions in interviews?

At Corpus, one of the two interviews that all shortlisted Chemistry candidates get covers physical chemistry and maths. The other covers organic and inorganic chemistry.

If don't secure a place at Corpus, what is the process for gaining an offer from another college?

During the interview period in December, many candidates are interviewed, and may be made offers, by the Chemistry tutors at colleges other than their first choice. We do this to ensure that candidates at over-subscribed colleges are not disadvantaged and that the best students are successful.

Are you expected to type up all work? Would it be useful to be comfortable with LaTeX?

For Chemistry, we expect all work to be handwritten (preferably legibly!). It wastes too much time to draw chemical structures and write out mathematical proofs using software. Last term, I got my undergraduates to photograph their work using an app like Microsoft Lens and then email it to me as a single PDF.

Do you look at results from the Chemistry Olympiad and the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge?

We consider very carefully all the information on the UCAS form.

If you have studied IB, will you need to know A-level Chemistry/Maths content (not covered at IB)?

In the interviews, we try to ask questions that can be tackled by bright students irrespective of the courses they have followed. Our teaching, both in lectures and tutorials, takes into account the varied backgrounds of our undergraduates.



[Classics and joint schools - Professor Constanze Güthenke](#)

What is Classics like at Corpus?

Classics at Corpus, I like to think, is marked not only by its fairly big community, but also by its community-minded, collaborative spirit. Lots of people who enjoy thinking and talking about ancient things together, and a good number of subject tutors all in one college.

What sets Corpus apart from other colleges when it comes to Classics?

Of course, the course as a whole is the same across colleges and a good deal of teaching will also be done at the faculty level. That said, I would like to think a number of things make Corpus Classics what it is: for one thing, the College, despite its overall small size, takes a fairly large number of classicists, usually eight per year. This means that there is a real community, within years and between years. The fact that we have four tutorial fellows in the subject adds to this strength. But beyond numbers, Corpus Classics is collaborative, community-minded, and marked by intellectual enthusiasm AND a critical and self-critical spirit about how and why to do Classics.

What are you looking for in Classics applicants?

Most of all, curiosity and enthusiasm about studying texts and materials that are both very alien and oddly familiar. A willingness to engage - often simultaneously - with historical, literary, artistic, and philosophical questions, with a fresh eye. And a willingness to spend some long hours learning or improving a language (or two). We are less focused on how much Classics you have done already, and more interested in what questions about antiquity excite you.

What should I read to strengthen my Classics application?

I would say it is more important THAT you read than WHAT you read. That said, to get a good sense of what the course will throw at you over the four years, doing some reading not only of ancient texts but also about ancient history might give you a stronger sense of the subject overall. Mind you, readings can come in many shapes: whether it is a graphic novel about Athenian Democracy (*Democracy*, Papadatos and Kawa, 2015), reading some Lucian of Samosata (*True History* - including a journey to the moon and an encounter with Homer, who doesn't like talking much), or some Roman love poetry. Or some modern poetry, for that matter.

How many contact hours would I have for Classics?

That depends a little bit on your year of study, but the long and short of it is: plenty. In your first year, you would have at least one weekly tutorial (towards the end of the Year 2), plus language classes (depending on whether you begin a language from scratch up to six contact hours a week, mostly at the Faculty), plus some study skills sessions, and general Classics socialising. Plus lectures. In the second half of the degree, you do two main options concurrently each term, so normally at least two weekly tutorials and/or classes (and lectures).

What A-levels do you recommend for Classics?

There are no strict recommendations or requirements. Importantly, you do **not** need to have an A-level in a Classics subject (Latin, Greek, Classical Civilisation). I think study in the Humanities (Languages, Literatures, History, Philosophy) might prepare you for the kind of work you will be expected to do as part of the course, and we will want to see evidence in your writing and thinking

that you have an ability and willingness to analyse cultures and languages; but having focused so far on other subjects is certainly not a deal-breaker.

What are you looking for in written work?

An independent piece of homework that you had some time to think about (rather than, say, a timed text analysis in the classroom without us having the text at hand) gives us more information about your thinking and writing. That said, we take what we can get. As for Classics, the written work does NOT need to all be in Classics, but something from History, other literature, other humanities subjects that show cultural analysis will do fine.

How much history is there in Mods (Moderations i.e. exams taken in second year)?

There is currently no designated History-only requirement in Classics Mods, but knowing some ancient history and thinking about "how historians think" helps a great deal with most of the other options too, to build up the larger picture. We as tutors are always happy to recommend reading, and there is a good amount of introductory ancient lectures as well.

What careers have Corpus Classics alumni gone into?

A wide range, actually. Some of it predictable, some less so. A good number go into jobs, eventually, in law, business, civil service, journalism, consulting, finance, education, publishing, arts, charities, sustainability, and politics. Many will have additional training and/or carry on beyond the first degree to do graduate work and a number pursue careers in academia. But aside from the lawyers, teachers, and consultants, we also had stand-up comedians and hairdressers!

Do you have any Latin/Greek into English vocabulary lists which you can recommend?

My students tell me that there is a whole family of quizlets for various ancient texts out there... There are some old (but still useful) word lists (by frequency) for Homer (by Owen and Goodspeed - on google books). But more or most importantly, making your own as you read is still unbeatable...

I'd love to study Classics & Computing but this isn't possible. Is there time for other interests?

I hear you: sometimes I would love it if the system were more like the US Liberal Arts one where you could simply take a course here or there in a (completely) different subject. Still, there is time for other interests and, if anything, we think having diverse interests is a good thing. And did you know, by the way, that the "Digital Humanities" are a real growth area? Classics and computing are not mutually exclusive. Check out, for something really fascinating, [this recent project](#) by my colleague Jon Prag and our recent graduate student Thea Sommerschild on using AI and commuting algorithms for reconstructing and deciphering ancient inscriptions.

Does the Classics Faculty or colleges ever fund and/or organise study trips to sites of antiquity?

They don't normally organise trips, but there are funds and bursaries for travel both at the college and the faculty level. We do what we can to encourage and facilitate travels since we think seeing the places is important and makes a difference. Many of our students have found ways to go travelling and some have organised trips together, especially after the first set of exams. Probably a good thing we the tutors don't come along in this case!

What would you say the best thing about studying English at Corpus is?

The English degree is standardised across the University, so the course itself will be mostly the same whichever college you attend. But some brilliant things about us here at Corpus are: we have a particularly committed tutorial team, so you'll get the highest standard of academic support and guidance; we are a relatively small college, and that makes us a friendly and supportive community; we have a beautiful library that includes lots of early printed and rare books that you'll get to look at; we're right in the centre of the city, so nothing is very far away; the college itself was founded in 1517 so you'll get to live and work in a genuine early modern environment; our students are proudly academically excellent, and finally the food is top-notch!

What qualities do you look for in English candidates?

First and foremost, we look for people who are enthusiastic about studying English! Beyond that I would also say there is no typical 'Oxford student': our students embody all kinds of attitudes and skills. But things that help include being a sophisticated reader; an ability to think critically and explore how a particular text works; and your general attitude towards the subject - we hope you will enjoy spending time reading books, and talking, thinking, and writing about them. You can read more about 'what we're looking for' [here](#).

For English, is it better to talk about less famous books to stand out on a personal statement?

It's true that certain books come up a lot on personal statements. That doesn't mean you should avoid them, necessarily, but I think be aware that the tutors who read your application will have worked through many, many applications! And by the end of that we often feel quite familiar with the texts that come up on the most common A-level curricula. So my advice here would be that if you loved the book you read for A-level - great - tell us about it, by all means. But why not also tell us about how you ran with the feature that you loved and pursued that feature in your independent reading? So - you went and read more by the same author, or you found other texts that did similar things. That kind of thing. Evidence of independent commitment to and interest in English Literature is important, so if a person only talks about famous books they've encountered in A-level work, that is a more limited statement than someone who can show us greater range.

What is an English interview like?

Typically, you would have two interviews as an English applicant to Corpus. Each one will be around twenty minutes long. One interview will focus mainly on close-reading a poem, which you will have been given to look at for about twenty minutes before the interview begins. So that interview might typically start by us asking you what you made of the poem - did you like it? What does it seem to be about? And then circling in on more specific moments to explore their interpretive potential. The second interview is a bit more wide-ranging, and will talk about your own interests as a reader and draw on things you've told us in your personal statement. Both interviews are, as much as possible, organised as relaxed conversations where you can show us your abilities and tell us a bit about your interests. One last point! This year, because of COVID-19, our interviews will be conducted online, rather than in person as we would usually do.

In an interview, do you get asked about your written work?

Yes, you probably would. You will have two interviews: one that's a close-reading of an unseen poem, and one that's a bit more discursive. That second interview typically draws on your personal statement and might well include discussion of your written work, which the tutors who are interviewing you will have read as part of their assessment of your application. So it's a good idea to re-read that written work as part of your interview preparation and re-familiarise yourself with what you wrote about.

For HENG, would you just get one English interview covering a poem, written work and statement?

Well, this can vary, partly for the reasons you suggest: that it can be a lot of ground to cover in the interview. We address this issue in different ways. So for example, it might be that your History interview is a bit more discursive, and focuses on your personal statement and written work, whereas your English interview concentrates on close reading a poem. Or vice versa. On occasion, we might ask you for a third interview. But in all cases, the rough format of the interview (circa twenty minutes of conversation, based around close reading a historical source or a literary poem, or a more discursive interview based around your personal statement and written work) will be the same.

Are option choices dictated by tutors' specialisms or will it be entirely the student's decision?

The English degree at Oxford mingles some optional courses with a range of courses that are mandatory, so everyone has to take them. Some of those optional courses do reflect the research interests of the Oxford English Faculty at large. For example, in your third year, you will take a course we call 'Paper 6', (each course is numbered), and here you can choose from a list of usually about twenty different possible courses. The English Faculty members write those courses, and they are often based in some way around the research interests of the member of staff who wrote the course. But here you aren't limited to your college tutors (there are just three college tutors) -- you can choose from all courses available across the faculty (there are about ninety English Faculty tutors, but not all of them will offer a Paper 6 course). For 'Paper 7' - your dissertation - you can write on anything you like, and we will find you an appropriate supervisor. Your college tutors will influence the ways in which the compulsory courses are taught, and you would probably see their research interests feeding into the teaching. But the courses are designed to be wide-ranging, and so at no stage would any of the compulsory courses be dominated by any tutor's research interests. You can read more about the structure of the degree, and how much flexibility is built into it, [here](#).

Is Corpus very intensive and competitive with academics? Especially humanities like English?

Corpus has high standards for its students' academic work, there's no doubt about that. And we typically do well in the 'Norrington Table' (which is a sort of league table of Oxford colleges based on academic performance). And there can sometimes be an element of friendly competition among a particular class, as students work together to develop their thinking around a particular text or tutorial issue. But these things don't create an unpleasantly intense or competitive environment - quite the opposite. It's not easy to win a place, of course, but once you are here, you will find yourself in a group that is hard-working, but very supported and surrounded by many people who are invested in your making the most of your degree. English and the Humanities in general are no different to other subjects in this regard at Corpus.

[Experimental Psychology \(EP\)/ Psychology, Philosophy and Linguistics \(PPL\) - Professor Robin Murphy](#)

How much does the college you reside in affect your learning with a course like PPL?

The tutorials you receive in the first year will be based in college. In Years 2 and 3, the tutorials are distributed between tutors in different colleges. So, your learning experience will be more different in the first year and less so in subsequent years.



How many contact hours are there in a week? How many assignments per subject per week?

In the first year (up to March) you will expect three tutorials per week, with a corresponding assignment: so three assignments for each week of two 8 week terms. You will also have lectures. In second year, you might only have two tutorials but also have some practical class work so the assignment load shifts in subsequent years.

How many tutorials are there per week? How long is each tutorial?

Normally three per week (50 minutes long): in the first two terms here you would have one tutorial in Psychology, one in statistics and one in either Neuroscience, Linguistics or Philosophy (number of tutorials varies a little in the subsequent years depending on module choices in second and third years).

What does an average PPL tutoring session look like?

An average session in the first year of study is 50 minutes (starts five minutes after the hour and ends five minutes to the hour). Involves you, one other student and myself, and will be 1) discussing a piece of work that you have prepared (and essay or problem sheet) 2) discussing the content of this week's lectures and other material. In the second and third year, the tutorials are similar. In the final year, when you are working on your independent project, you will have individual tutorials because we will be talking about your specific project.

What are the main things to consider when deciding between PPL and EP?

You will have more scientific training with the EP programme. However, both EP and PPL can lead to a career in clinical psychology if you choose the correct options while here.

In PPL do you study all three disciplines a bit, or only the two you have specifically chosen?

Only the two you have chosen.

What are the main differences between the combinations possible with PPL?

Psychology, Linguistics and Philosophy are the three components and you can choose any pair of these, making them quite different.

How much of a science background is needed for PPL (Psychology and Linguistics)?

You do not need a wide background, but you need to be interested in science, understand what science is about and how it 'works'. So, for example, this is not a course about counselling (even though you may go into counselling after this degree) and requires three years of study about the scientific basis of psychology.

Psychology is my only Science A-level. Is this a disadvantage?

It would not be a disadvantage. If you have strong GCSEs then that will really show you can do that aspect of the course.

Is it necessary to have a firm grasp of Psychology A-level or will it be taught from the basics?

We don't require Psychology at A-level for admissions so there is no expectation of any of the A-level Psychology content and we teach it from the start. However you need very high grades at A-level to get an offer so I would assume that you would have a firm grasp of your specific A-level courses.

How many Psychology courses would you not take if you go to PPL? Or is that a minor difference?

It partially depends upon your choices but you can reduce between 20-60%, or so.

In my personal statement should the philosophy and psychology content be 50/50?

You should address both areas, but it doesn't have to be 50/50: you can stress one or the other discipline and show interest in your less developed discipline.

How many books should I read for my personal statement?

There is no number of books that you should read. Read what you are interested in and find rewarding.

What extracurriculars besides reading can be included in your personal statement?

Some students will have either had some experience working in a laboratory setting, or in a helping profession (charity work), but these things would only help you decide whether you enjoy psychology, we are not looking for extracurriculars: academic performance and potential are the key characteristics.

What recommended reading/super-curriculars can you recommend for Psychology (Experimental or PPL)?

We send all candidates a reading list in the summer before the student arrives in October.

I'm applying for Phil&Ling here but non-Phil courses elsewhere. Do I mention philosophy in my PS?

Yes, do talk about philosophy in your statement.

If I choose Psychology and Philosophy (for PPL), should I talk about Linguistics in my statement?

No it is not necessary to do so, but if it interests you then yes. Linguistics is highly relevant for both psychology and philosophy.

For PPL interviews, are applicants interviewed separately for each of the subjects they've picked?

You are interviewed by the tutor from each subject separately; you need to satisfy the subject requirements for each tutor.

What do candidates that blow you away in interviews do?

There is no single thing. When I ask candidates why they want to study Psychology, I am looking for a thoughtful answer, showing me that the reason for choosing the course is convincing. Answers to the set questions should show interest and engagement rather than avoidance.

For PPL interviews, are you looking for depth under one subject matter or breadth?

You will always be interviewed by a tutor from each discipline and you need to satisfy each component of your subject choice. So depth in one will not compensate for a lack of interest in the other. Remember that we are not looking for knowledge in these areas: that is why you are coming to university. Rather, we are looking for engagement with the topic.

What would you say is the most difficult part of studying PPL?

It is very individual: some students find statistics difficult...but for others it is the easiest part of the course. Linguistics, psychology and philosophy each have difficulties.

Are there any opportunities for research experience as an undergraduate?

All the labs in the Psychology department are active and students are very involved in the science that is conducted in them as part of the course. There are some full-time jobs (but these would not be appropriate for students) and some summer jobs available. But generally there is no opportunity for a full time student to have paid work until they graduate.

Can the EP degree help you to progress onto a Master's in Clinical Psychology?

Yes, in fact you need a BPS-recognised (British Psychological Society) psychology background to go into clinical psychology (but you can take PPL and also be certified).

Can you take a foreign language as a PPList from a beginner's class?

You can take a beginners class from the language centre at the university. Linguistics in PPL is the study of Language (with a capital L) not the study of any particular language. So any specific language study you take will not count towards your degree.

How does studying Experimental Psychology here help to progress into clinical Psychology?

To get on a graduate programme to become a clinical psychologist or counsellor you need an undergraduate degree in psychology and the degree needs to be certified by the British Psychological Society. Oxford's programme is certified (as are most programmes in the country). So the programme is highly suitable and we have some of the most prominent psychologists working in the field (look up [Professor David Clark](#)).

Are work experience opportunities part of the EP degree?

We don't offer work experience as part of the programme.

How much freedom are students given when choosing books to read for essays?

We encourage reading around topics. For an assignment, we would normally provide reading lists which provide structure and guidance, but at University most of the assignments are not about summarising a specific paper but trying to develop a position or argument with relevant literature that you have discovered. In the latter years of the programme (for example if you choose a library dissertation in your third year) then you would be required to completely generate your own reading list (with advice from your advisor).

Would the Psychology modules in PPL include scientific study too?

The Psychology modules you take as part of PPL are the same ones that EP takes, so yes all the Psychology modules you take will involve scientific study. If you study Psychology and Linguistics, you are talking modules in Psychology and modules in Linguistics...separately.

If you have more of a humanities background, would it be better to do PPL rather than EP?

Not necessarily better to apply for PPL, for EP you should be prepared for being interested in science and the method of conducting experimental work. Your background is less an issue than your interests. However if you apply with only humanities experience it will require some explanation as to why you are switching. The standard student in EP comes with some science background and PPL will have more humanities. But your choice of course should be driven by your interests.

If you study PPL, can you go on to do a Master's in Psychology?

Yes, as long as you get the second class honours required for BPS membership.

Could you go into education after studying EP or PPL? If so, which course would be better?

Yes you could and I don't think there is a better option. You should choose what you are interested in and what you would like to do after.

If you like both the scientific and humanitarian aspects of psychology, is PPL a good choice?

PPL allows you to take some modules in Philosophy or Linguistics; if these topics interest you then yes it is a good choice. I think I would want to know more about what you find interesting in 'humanities' to answer this question more definitively.

What is the statistics course like for PPL? Would you recommend studying statistics at school?

The course in the first year is quite general. Probability theory, descriptive statistics (measures of central tendency etc.), visualising data, and the start of inferential statistics (hypothesis testing). Some grounding would be helpful, minimally some or all of these topics are covered in Maths and Science that you would have in your GCSE and A-levels, so yes we do recommend some background to support your understanding but don't require that you have taken a statistics course.

Is there a specific reason why Oxford accepts less than 50 EP students a year?

The reason for a small number of students (50 EP and 30 PPL approximately) is the tutorial system means that you spend time with the professors in the department in smaller groups. I have worked previously at UCL and a new university in the UK and it is definitely the case that at Oxford, students have more access to the professors in the department... which is why we only admit a small number.

On the EP course, how much freedom do you have regarding the content of your research project?

There is a huge range of areas covered by the professors in the department, but you could even do something outside their specific expertise as long as you found an advisor who was willing and prepared to advise you: so you can't choose anything you want, it needs to be part of somebody's expertise.

What does this career allow you to do in the future?

There are university graduates with psychology in most businesses and science environments in the world. So there are lots of opportunities.

What brought you to choose Psychology?

I started studying Physics and realised that it was too boring (for me). Psychology offered an interest in science and a pathway to understand people and how to help people.

What characteristics does a student need to have?

There are no specific characteristics. Each student is unique and comes with a different profile. An interest in learning, a curiosity for the science of human and animal behaviour, those sort of general characteristics.

What is the best way to prepare for the EP course?

You are sent a reading/preparation list in the summer before you are admitted. Before even being interviewed - other than doing well in courses that you are taking now and reading about the issues that you find interesting whether that is clinical psychology, animal behaviour or artificial intelligence (for three different examples) - there are no specific preparation exercises.

What is the most popular combination of PPL?

Psychology/Philosophy and Psychology/Linguistics are both popular. Philosophy/Linguistics is less popular.

What SAT subjects would you recommend American students for PPL take?

We don't recommend a particular SAT. I would encourage students to follow the subjects that interest them.

Would students with less of a scientific background be disadvantaged during the course?

You would need some evidence of scientific understanding, so usually minimally this comes from excellent maths performance. Most students will have one other topic related to science, but many students do not. During the summer before arrival we provide some guidance on what aspects you need to consider. But it should be highlighted that we do not expect psychology exposure before coming to University so that in your first two terms the content is designed to expose all students to the relevant material. The support then comes from the tutorial system.

[History and joint schools - Professor John Watts](#)

What stands out about History at Corpus?

I did my degree somewhere else, and I only came to Corpus as a tutor and lecturer, but there may be some things I can say. One is that we have a really good History collection in the College Library: it's easy to get books here, and most topics are very well-covered. Another is that we put a strong accent on students finding their own voice and doing their own thing: we let you choose whatever papers you want to study (within the rules set by the faculty), and we encourage you to develop your own interests, so Corpus students are quite diverse and independent-minded. Because Corpus is quite a small college, it's also a highly supportive one, and the historians tend to look out for one another, which is something I appreciate.

Do you have lots of History students at Corpus as it's a small college?

Yes, it's one of the larger subjects in Corpus. There are nine historians in each year-group normally (plus a tenth student who's a visitor from the University of Missouri), so 27 overall. Of the nine, two are usually doing History and Politics, one or two Ancient and Modern, and one History and English. There are usually about five to ten graduate historians too, so we're quite a big group.

How many applicants are there for History and English every year, and how many are accepted?

This varies quite a lot, but we usually get something like five or six applicants for History and English. We normally take one person, who sometimes comes from the candidates who've applied to us and sometimes comes from the candidates for another college (you probably know that there's a lot of sharing of candidates between colleges). We really like the History and English school: the two disciplines have elements in common as well as many constructive differences.

How many applications does the college receive for Ancient and Modern History every year?

This is a bit like my answer on History and English. Corpus usually gets about half a dozen Ancient and Modern History (AMH) applicants, but we always make an offer to someone, and sometimes to more than one. Those people might be Corpus applicants or they might be applicants to another college whom we see at second interview. Because Corpus has such a big Classics school, and we have Late Roman and Byzantine historians in our fellowship, as well as a medieval historian, a Greek historian and access to a Roman historian at Christ Church, AMH makes a lot of sense here.

How is time split between tutorials, lectures, independent study, etc.?

A lot of History is independent study time: reading, thinking and writing. A typical first-year student would have three to four hours of lectures a week (more if they want, but those are the basic ones), and something like three tutorials a fortnight (as students take one main paper/course a term, plus another one that runs alongside every two weeks: normally something that's more methodological or historiographical). We recommend that students work for around 35-40 hours a week, so that leaves something like 25-30 hours for independent study.

How many lectures/tutorials can be expected a week for History joint courses?

It depends on the course, but the overall burden should be roughly similar to the single honours course, so something like four hours of lectures a week and three hours of tutorials a fortnight. In some terms, though, you might have two tutorials a week, and in others only one. Also, some courses have more lectures and classes and others less. Most joint school students find they have to juggle a bit, and also 'manage upwards', but it all works out.

How much choice do you get with the modules? Are they based on what the tutors are interested in?

In History, we as a college give students a free choice, but the faculty lays down some requirements which everyone has to follow (e.g. in single honours History, you have to study at least one pre-1400 paper and one post-1750 one, and one in between). Some colleges add other restrictions, usually because they want students to work in groups, especially in the first year.

Do you have any specific advice for applying for the History and English course?

First of all, I'd say think about how much you really want to do a joint school, rather than either History or English (that's not at all to put you off, but just to say it's important to be sure about what you're doing. It's possible to study a lot of historical writing within the English School, and there are heaps of courses in History that enable you to look at literary texts in a historical manner). Then, if you're still sure you want to do History and English, think about your reasons, and think about some examples you could cite to illustrate your ideas about the two subjects and how they fit together (or challenge each other) - that'll be useful at interview. And then the third thing I'd say is that it's a good idea to read around whatever subject you apply for: interesting novels, especially ones that bear on history (Graham Swift's *Waterland* is my favourite!); history books that touch on literature (Marion Turner's new biography of Chaucer is a good read).

Does it matter if books mentioned on the statement aren't strictly History books?

No, that's fine. We're glad to see wide reading: novels, current affairs, economics, politics, and science - whatever you're interested in.

Can I refer to books about historiography in my personal statement?

Quite a few candidates mention historiography books. A controversial, but interesting, one is *Re-thinking History* by Keith Jenkins: it takes a very different line from Richard Evans...

How significant is the History Aptitude Test (HAT) compared to interviews, personal statement etc.?

The HAT, alongside contextualised GCSE scores, plays a really important role in determining who gets interviewed (across the whole University, across all the History schools, we interview at a ratio of about 3 per place, and we get about 6 applicants per place). In the end, though, the decision is based on everything we know: UCAS form, written work, interview, HAT, exam results etc. - it's made in the round.

Regarding the HAT, what is the best way to structure my written response to the source?

That's a difficult question, and I'd encourage you to look at the advice and past papers and marking-schemes that we put on the History Faculty website. The main things are to read the source carefully and thoughtfully, check you've understood it, and think about what it's saying and what it implies. Then, if I were you, I'd scribble down a rough list of all the points I know I want to make about it, and then group them into related themes. We're not expecting a hugely polished or argumentative piece of writing: more an organised, thoughtful and relevant one.

For a straight History PS, can I mention my interests in Roman history? Would tutors ask about it?

Yes, I think you should be honest about what you're interested in. And yes, it's quite likely that the tutors will ask about it (though of course not everything you say can be covered in a 20-minute interview). It would be good to think about what it is that interests you about Roman history, and how it helps you in your study of other periods.

Would class, gender, and post-colonialism work as themes for a joint honours statement?

That sounds like a History and English joint honours degree? The topics you describe sound fascinating, and could work very well for a joint honours personal statement. But I'd suggest using your statement to tell us about things that you're genuinely interested by and perhaps excited to study more, rather than worry too much about trying to select the 'right' themes for the statement, if you see what I mean. For one thing, we will use your personal statement in interview! So, you should make sure you've written about things you'll be happy to talk about in some detail. If class, gender, and post-colonialism are topics that excite you and have featured in your reading and thinking, then by all means tell us about them in your statement.

For submitting written work, can I submit part of my History coursework?

We really prefer an individual homework essay, because it shows us how you go about constructing an argument in response to a question and on the basis of your own reading, but we know it's not always possible for candidates to provide that, so we will work with whatever we are given.

How are the History interviews structured?

We do two interviews for History and all the joint schools including History. In single honours, there will be one interview focused more on the personal statement and the written work and another centred on discussion of a text which you get to read half an hour or so beforehand. In History and English and History and Politics, one interview is History-focused (mainly essay and UCAS form), the

other is focused on English/Politics. In Ancient and Modern History, the modern History interview tends to focus on the personal statement and submitted work, and the ancient one tends to focus partly on the UCAS form and often partly on an object, text or image from the ancient world. All the interviews will be discussions: we ask questions, but we seek to get into an exchange of ideas and views.

How many interviews are there for History & English, and what is the structure for them?

This can vary, but usually you would have two interviews: one with the History tutors and one with the English tutors. It's possible you might have a third interview, but if it happens, it doesn't mean anything particular either way, and you shouldn't read into that. As for the structure: usually an interview lasts for about twenty minutes. I believe that History interviews typically focus on an unseen source that you'll be given prior to the interview, just as in English we typically give you an unseen poem for a short while before the interview, which then forms the basis of an interview discussion. So in English, we would usually start with broader questions like, 'What did you make of the poem?' or 'What does it seem to be about?' or 'Were there any moments that seemed interesting to you?' and then move into particular features or problems within the poem as we continued. This year, because of COVID-19, our admissions interviews will be held online, rather than in person. - Dr Ben Higgins, English Tutor

What do History tutors look for at interview, and what would be big mistakes?

There are lots of things we're looking for - you can find a list of selection criteria on the [History Faculty website](#) – and they include things like imagination, capacity to analyse, subject knowledge, flexibility and so on. Big mistakes? Not really: the most important thing is to be yourself, but people sometimes get into deep water if they try to perform rather than listening to the questions and trying to answer them. We see the interview as a conversation, a dialogue, and that means both sides focusing on what the other is saying, thinking and exchanging ideas.

Will the text used for History interview be primary or secondary?

We usually choose a piece of secondary writing, partly because the HAT focuses on primary sources, and we want to see how you read a piece of history critically.

Would you say a foundation knowledge of politics is useful for History interviews?

Yes, if you're into political history - as I am. But historians are very different creatures: some are very interested in culture, the arts or literature; some are interested in social patterns or in the workings of the economy. I think the important thing is to build outwards from what you're interested in: so, if you like politics, by all means build up your knowledge of it, and read some good-quality current-affairs journalism - like *The Economist*, or *Prospect*.

Can tutors tell if candidates are nervous at interviews and do nerves hinder performance?

Usually, yes - or I think so. I think we're all a bit nervous in interviews: the interviewers as well as the students! The important thing to hang on to is that it's an interaction, a discussion of a subject that we're all interested in, not a performance, so most people lose their nerves quite quickly, because the subject matter is absorbing, and you can lose yourself in thinking of answers and debating points. In my experience, most people relax into the interview in the first five minutes: so there's plenty of time for interviewees to feel comfortable and able to do their best.

For AMH, will both interviews feature unseen sources and discussions of my personal statement?

The pattern will vary from college to college. At Corpus, we'll often discuss things from your personal statement in both interviews. We'll probably discuss your written work in the modern history interview, because most of the submitted essays we get are on post-classical topics. The ancient history interview often includes an unseen text or an image or object to discuss with the interviewers.

If I have to sit autumn exams to improve a grade, will I be disadvantaged?

I don't think so, no. We take decisions about whom to interview mainly on the basis of HAT scores and contextualised GCSEs, so if you did well on those indicators and less well on a calculated grade, that shouldn't count against you - particularly if you're re-sitting to challenge it. We would be making our final decision on the basis of a wide range of indicators. You might have to get a certain result in your autumn exam, but that's all.

Are there any extracurricular clubs/societies for History at the college?

Not currently, no. We'd be very happy for someone to start one, though!

Is a post-qualifications application less competitive if it meets but doesn't exceed the offer?

No, that would be fine. We take GCSE and A-level achievements into account, but we also take note of any comments about results in school reports and we assess candidates on the basis of their written work, HAT results and performance at interview, so qualifications are only a part of the overall picture.

Is there a good sense of community between History students both within Corpus and the University?

I think there is within Corpus, certainly (but you could ask [Andrew](#), our student ambassador for his view). Within the University, that's harder to say. History is a very big subject: around 300 students a year, including all the joint schools, so historians are a very varied bunch, with lots of different interests and opinions. On the other hand, it's common to have tutorials and classes with students from other colleges, and - in my experience - students work really well with other students whom they don't particularly know, and lots of students make friends with people they've met at other colleges in tutorials, classes and lectures, so, overall, people do tend to get on pretty well. There are also various representative bodies for historians, such as the Undergraduate Historians Assembly, and there's a University History Society, as well as several bodies based in colleges.

In how much detail do first-year European/world modules explore the Holy Roman Empire?

Our first-year outline courses, like European and World History, are really broad, and pretty thematic, so you might do an essay on (say) the state, or 'composite monarchies', and look at the politics of the Holy Roman Empire as an example. Equally, you might do an essay on the Reformations, and look at Lutheran Germany as an example. So you'd have several opportunities to touch on the Empire, but you wouldn't study it in depth week after week. In a second-year European and World History course, that might be more possible, but the main way of studying a given topic in depth is either through an optional, further or special subject (there is one on the German Peasants' War of the 1520s, for example) or in the thesis that you can write in the third year, where you choose your own topic and problem.

What would you do if students during first year felt like they struggled with the course?

Adapting to university life is challenging, in all sorts of ways, and doing history at university is different from doing it at school, but there are lots of other people in the same boat, wrestling with similar or parallel challenges, and figuring out their own ways of making it work. Tutors are supportive, and willing to listen and make helpful suggestions, and there are lots of other sources of support too. If a student came to see me and told me they were struggling (and they do do this), I'd ask them to talk through the difficulties they're having and we'd see if, together, we could think of solutions. We usually can, but there is more support available if it's needed.

[Law/Law with Law Studies in Europe \(LSE\) - Dr Matthew Dyson](#)

Do some Law tutorials take place at other colleges?

Yes, some do. In Corpus, we currently teach six of the ten core papers in College, and you'd be taught by tutors at other Colleges for the other four. Then the two options are organised by the Faculty. Six out of ten is quite a high proportion, but basically the core idea is to be taught by people who really know your subject. So we then "swap" our knowledge of our subjects with tutors from other Colleges who excel at their subjects.

Do you need language qualifications to take Law with Law Studies in Europe?

Sort of. You will be tested for language ability during the interview period. You would do the normal Law interview, and at some point in the two days, you would go over to the language centre to be tested in the relevant language for the LSE course. But the reality is that in any case you need a solid level in the language from when you start, as you will have a few classes in that language in addition to the normal work, to start to get you ready.

How much choice do you get with the modules? Are they largely based on the tutors' interests?

It really depends on the subject. In Law, everyone has to do ten core subjects (nationally everyone has to do seven, and Oxford requires a few others) and then there are two choices. Tutors might advise or discuss, but it's entirely a student choice for the options.

Is the College Library well-stocked for Law?

Yes. It's got the major works from reading lists; only specialist texts, mostly for graduate students not undergrads, are left for the main University Law Library to hold. A lot is online now as well. We have a loan scheme to help out with core textbooks too.

Can tutors tell if candidates are nervous at interviews and do nerves hinder performance?

Everyone has some kinds of nerves, but everyone (including the interviewers) want the experience to be as open and engaging as possible. Nerves might hinder a performance, we just do our best to reduce nerves and to try to see past it if it remains.

Is essay-writing closer to A-level English or to A-level History?

That's very tricky, I wish we could talk about that for a while, rather than short answers on here. Law has a number of different activities. For example, in interpreting cases and statutes, English has some similar ideas, but law has many others as well (particularly in claims of authority, but many others; there's a lot of material on how we do it). But another example would be in arguing what the law should be, such as what the law of murder is first, but then, what it should be, and there we share something with philosophy, linguistics and others. Third, we might have work on what why the law

poses a particular problem, or why society finds that a law is difficult, and that might be more like history, economics, sociology etc. As a student you'd have to do all of these things, and we'd work with you to develop skills in all areas.

Does Corpus have a Law society?

We absolutely do. It's called the Frederick Pollock Law Society, after a professor at Corpus about a century ago who revolutionised the way much of law teaching worked in England, and was a huge influence on the development of the law. It is a student-run law society, with an annual dinner for everyone, a book loan scheme, mentoring, and for current students, four events in the year.

How does the open offer scheme work? How will it be affected by cancelled exams?

The Open Offer scheme is available for Law, yes. And Corpus has used it for many years. If more students meet their offers, then those on the scheme aren't affected for this year. Their offers have been made, and if you are on the Open Offer process, you are guaranteed a place if you make your grades; there might be a higher chance of Corpus taking you, as more people at other Colleges might have made their offers, but it's too small numbers to say for sure since Corpus only makes one Open Offer. There will be an interaction with clemency rules, with more students making offers, while at the same time wanting to make space for those who have underperformed because of disruption caused by COVID-19. For next year, we are working on how to help as best we can. Interviews have been announced to be online-only already.

How many international Law students do you typically take in one year?

We don't have quotas for students from any particular backgrounds, but we accept six Law students each year. Either for the three-year Law course, or for the four-year Law with Law Studies in Europe course.

What is Law like at Corpus? Is it near the Law Faculty? Are there any law societies/clubs?

What really stands out about Corpus Law for me is the community: we have termly events with the students, grads, tutors and visiting fellows all together and play law-related games as part of our college law society, which are really fun. There are only about 20 Law undergrads at Corpus in total so there's a very friendly and supportive atmosphere between years as well as within them. There is also a University-wide law society which hosts regular events in term time. The Law Faculty is about a 10/15-minute walk from college. - Rhiannon, Law student

[Materials Science - Professor David Armstrong](#)

What makes Corpus a good college to study Materials Science at?

I like the fact we have two tutors and a lecturer in college which means we can teach all the first- and second-year tutorials in Corpus. This means we really get to know you and how you learn best, and can really make sure you are getting the most out of the course.

How big is the Materials Department at Corpus?

We take around seven students per year (that makes us the biggest of the undergrad Materials colleges).



How many students applying for Materials Science get interviews each year?

Typically, we interview about 25 students at Corpus. A mixture of people who applied to us and people who applied to another college. This is because for Materials everyone gets two interviews at two different colleges.

What A-levels do you recommend for Materials Science?

Three A-levels are required. It is essential that two of these be Mathematics and Physics. Chemistry is highly desirable as the third A-level, and it is strongly recommended that if it is not offered at A-level it is offered at AS level. Our standard minimum entrance requirement is A*AA with the A* in any one of Maths, Physics or Chemistry.

What differentiates successful applicants from the others?

For Materials, when we ask questions we aim to ask things that no student will have come across before, but will know enough underlying science to tackle them. We are looking at how they approach the question, and how they communicate their thinking to us. It is not about having the correct answer but how you approach the question. It is good to have done some reading around the subject and be able to explain what materials science is.

Would you say the course was more geared towards chemistry or physics?

It takes aspects of both. Initially, more of the solid state physics. But also aspects you might consider chemistry such as polymerisation, and spectroscopy characterisation. You'll soon find the idea of physics or chemistry is very arbitrary anyway and they have lots of cross over.

What makes a Materials Science candidate stand out at interview?

We are looking for potential not polish. We know different candidates have had different opportunities to engage with materials. So we are interested in how our candidates approach the problems we give them: these will be based on maths, physics and chemistry studied at school but are not going to be things they have seen before. The candidates that stand out are ones that can take some information we give them, use the knowledge they have and solve the problems we set.

Are there many essays to write in the Materials Science course?

In a typical week, you have two to three problems sheets to attempt. Some are mathematical, some require writing - although not essays exactly - more like notes and explaining the science behind concepts. In the second and third years, there are some group projects with more extended writing. Then, in the fourth year, you write a 10,000 word dissertation on your research project

Can you give any examples of the sort of lab work you do for Materials Science?

In the first year, you do four labs which take two afternoons each term. They are done to reinforce concepts you will do in lectures so maybe some mechanical testing, some preparing samples, some using optical microscopes. In the second year, it is four labs which take three afternoons each per term. Again they are linked to the lecture but you might use more advanced methods like electron microscopes or X-ray kit. In the lab, I run we take a motorbike engine to bits and work out what it is made of using chemical analysis and some online research. In the third year, you do some projects which take two weeks: one individual and one as a team where there is some lab work or computational work. The fourth year is a nine-month research project which can be in any part of materials science.

What is your favourite thing about Materials?

I love how wide-ranging the subject is. I work on materials for power plants, aeroplanes, batteries and geological materials. Some is fundamental science and some is applied engineering.

What are your tips for interviews?

For the interviews you can't really prepare much. We are looking for people who can think clearly on new problems, not just regurgitate what they already know.

How much crossover in content is there between the Materials and Engineering degrees?

There is some. We both have a solid maths foundation and in the first year there is some cross over in mechanics. But obviously our course then focuses more on the materials aspects: for example, parts of solid state physics that the engineers don't cover and also characterisation methods such as X-rays, electron microscopes and spectroscopy that engineers don't do. Lots of our students go onto be professional engineers.

After studying Materials Science, could I go on to do Biomedical Engineering?

Our graduating students go on to do many different things. Biomedical materials is one of them. Some go to engineering companies (both big and small), some do further study, some teach. It's a degree that doesn't close many doors and opens lots.

What aspect of Materials Science are you most excited about at the moment?

I'm really interested in solid state lithium ion batteries. We have to combine metals, ceramics and polymers together with adequate mechanical and electrochemical properties. And they are really complicated to study - so lots of fun science for my research group to work on.

What reading materials on mechanical properties of alloy are recommended?

Mark Miodovnik's book *Stuff Matters* is a good starting point for general materials science. I think there is a section on alloying iron to make steel (my copy is locked in college so I can't check). J.E. Gordon's *The New Science of Strong Materials* is a bit (lot) older but also has some stuff in. Also try some websites, DOITPOMs hosted by Cambridge Materials has lots of good material which we cover in our first year but would be good background reading.

What's your favourite material?

It changes all the time. I work on everything from batteries to jet engines, via geological materials and bits of power plants. At the moment I am very interested in ceramic composites but I always have a soft spot for tungsten.

[Maths and joint schools - Dr Paul Dellar](#)

How many Maths tutors are there at Corpus?

Two, Pier Palamara and me (Paul Dellar). We also have several college lecturers.

Do students get sent to other colleges for any tutorials in first/second year?

Some of the "short options" at the end of the second year are taught through swaps with tutors at other colleges, but we normally teaching everything else within Corpus.



For you, what would make a Maths applicant stand out?

We look at test scores and performance during the interview. The interview usually starts with some easy questions followed by slightly more difficult questions. It is good to be able to discuss the problem effectively and describe what the reasoning is.

What do you look for in Maths & Philosophy applicants?

We are looking for applicants who are committed to mathematics but also have a strong desire to retain a balance and explore the world of philosophy. You need to be good at both subjects to read Maths & Philosophy, and in particular to be comfortable writing essays that explore philosophical concepts. For more, please look at the [Corpus Maths page](#) and the [Corpus Philosophy page](#). I also recommend the section on 'what are tutors looking for?' under the 'admissions requirements' tab of the University's [Maths and Philosophy course page](#).

Do I need to take Further Maths for A-level? Would you recommend it?

It is very strongly recommended, though not essential. The Maths Institute website has some resources to assist students who have only take one Maths A-level. However, the same website also has some admissions statistics about the last admissions round in December 2019. 95% of the UK applicants taking A-levels were taking Further Mathematics as a full A-level. Very few of the remaining 5% were offered a place.

Would I be disadvantaged if my predicted grade for Further Maths was A instead of A*?

You would need to do well enough on the Maths Admissions Test (MAT) to compensate for a lower predicted grade, since we are making shortlisting decisions about who to interview based on the MAT and your UCAS application (we cannot possibly interview all applicants as we receive around ten applications per place). Although we realise that predicted grades are imperfect, our experience shows that anyone who has difficulty meeting our standard offer is likely to struggle with our course.

What is your advice for preparing for the MAT?

You will find lots of useful [information here](#) and a [syllabus here](#). You should approach it as other examinations you have done in the past and prepare by solving problems related to the material in the syllabus.

How would an online interview for Maths work?

It would be like a normal interview: we usually start introducing ourselves and asking a bit about the candidate, then we discuss a few maths problems. There will be a way to see what the candidate is writing (e.g. a whiteboard). There is usually a fair amount of discussion on how to make progress on the problems we discuss: the candidate tends to describe what they are thinking while tutors provide feedback.

Can you change from Maths to Maths & Stats or vice versa once you've started your degree?

Yes. The first years of the two degrees are identical, and the second years are almost identical (Maths & Stats students have to take certain courses that are optional for Maths students, and can take one extra option in statistical simulation). It's therefore very easy to change from one to the other during the first two years. It becomes more difficult later as Maths students can take at most a quarter of their third-year courses from Stats, while Maths & Stats students have to take at least a half. At Corpus, we treat the two degrees as interchangeable for admissions.

Do you have to take the fourth year in Maths?

No. You can choose to finish after three years, but we encourage everyone to start on the four-year degree because it's easier to finish a year earlier than planned than to have to ask for an extra year's funding arrangements (where these are available). Many students feel that three years is enough, and they want to do something else. It's also quite common that a student takes an internship over the summer at the end of their second year that turns into a job offer. You can also find more details on how that decision works [here](#).

Do you loan Maths students books that they will need for the whole year?

No. We typically have one or two copies of each book, which students can borrow for a few weeks at a time, but the whole year group (typically six students) needs to share them. There are comprehensive online lecture notes for almost all courses. We have a very well-stocked college library, and we encourage students to browse to find books that suit them rather than sticking to a small selection of books recommended by course lecturers. Different people find different books suit them, and one person may prefer different books at different points in their studies. Some people will like a book that explains things slowly at first, then find it exasperating that it doesn't get to the point and prefer something terser.

How far is Corpus from the Maths Institute?

The Maths institute is 15-20 minutes (walk) or 5-10 minutes (bike) from Corpus.

What proportion of Maths teaching is done by graduate students in first/second year?

Roughly half. This is part of a trade-off so that third- and fourth-year students, including Corpus students, can be taught by tutors, rather than graduate students, in intercollegiate classes.

What would you do if students during first year felt like they struggled with the course?

Being really confused before becoming unconfused is a vital part of the learning process. Borrowing something I read somewhere (and not to be taken at all literally) I tell my tutees that that's what it feels like to grow new brain cells. A big part of the college's, and the tutors' role, is providing a supportive environment where this can take place.

[Medicine - Professor Colin Akerman](#)

What makes Corpus great for Medicine?

Great question - although as one of the medical tutors, I may be a bit biased! In my opinion, Corpus is strong in Medicine because we have a very good range of tutors, who are able to provide in-depth tutorial cover across the syllabus. We also have great interactions across our year groups which are helped by social events such as our own medical society dinners and summer picnic. There are also generous funds to help students with the costs of their elective trip during clinical years. I think all of these things contribute to a strong Medicine community in Corpus and explains why we have such a good retention of students between the pre-clinical and clinical phases of the degree.

What research areas are the medical tutors at Corpus Christi particularly interested in?

There are quite a number of medical tutors at Corpus, and our research interests include neuroscience, cellular physiology, cancer biology, neurological disorders and cardiovascular science. You can look us up [here](#).

What are you looking for in a medical student?

Great question. I think the best idea is that I send you to the following [web pages](#), where this is discussed in detail.

What are Corpus in particular looking for in stand-out applicants?

The best place to look is the web pages, where this is discussed in detail: [here](#) and [here](#). The Medicine Tutors at all the colleges use the criteria discussed in these links.

Have you ever had an applicant "wow" you? If so, what did they do?

Lots of the candidates "wow" us at the admissions interviews! Places are offered according to a ranking process that incorporates performance at admissions interviews, examination results and BMAT scores. The elements we look for at the admissions interviews can be found [here](#).

In terms of making a competitive application, is Further Maths or Economics A-level better?

The entrance requirement for subjects at A-level is Chemistry and one or more of Biology, Physics, Maths or Further Maths. So in terms of your question, it will partly depend on what other subjects you are doing. If you are already doing Chemistry and Maths, the choice between Further Maths and Economics is not going to be relevant to meeting the requirement.

I would recommend comparing the Medicine course with the A-level Further Maths and A-level Economics courses side-by-side and seeing which one you feel links better. I would also consider your other subjects and whether it would help to add an essay-based subject (Economics) or spend more time doing Maths. Oxford medics write lots of scientific essays but statistical methods are also important. So both subjects have their use and it depends what you want to get out of the one you choose. - Laura, Assistant Outreach Officer

What makes a Medicine personal statement stand out?

I think my advice would be to consider how you can best start to communicate why you believe you are well-suited to the course. This really means a personal statement that speaks to the selection criteria that are outlined on the university website, and relate to both your academic potential and suitability for medicine.

How much weight is put on the personal statement for Medicine interview selection?

This is quite a difficult question to answer in a quantitative sense. I would recommend that you view the personal statement as an opportunity to start a conversation with your interviewers about your intellectual curiosity and your suitability to study medicine. Sorry I can't be more specific!

Should I avoid mentioning common fields of interest in my personal statement?

I would not avoid mentioning subject areas in your personal statement if you are genuinely interested in them. The personal statement is a good chance to start to demonstrate that you have the intellectual curiosity and commitment to study medicine, so highlighting your interests makes sense.

Do you like to see a lot of linking in the personal statement?

I think I know what you mean. Sometimes it is easy to write a personal statement with a narrative that shows your "journey" towards Medicine and how one thing has led to another. But I don't think that is always the case for candidates. Sometimes, candidates have a single strong reason for wanting to study Medicine, or they may have lots of parallel interests/experiences that they now

realise have directed them towards Medicine. So I think there are lots of different and equally good ways to write a personal statement.

At interview, how do you gauge how well a student has done at working through the problem?

One way to gauge how well a student has worked through a problem is to consider how the students is able to understand information that they are provided, how they are able to make inferences from this information and how they are able to apply this information to their existing knowledge.

How will the content of interviews change given that they will be conducted online?

At this stage, we just know that the admissions interviews will be conducted online. We have not received any further details yet, so I'm sure more information will be released as the time approaches. From my perspective, I would be confident that many aspects of the "normal" admissions interviews could be translated to an online format.

Would I be asked in the interviews about topics mentioned on my personal statement?

Interviews typically cover a wide range of questions and ideas, so I would certainly not think that the content of your personal statement would form the basis of the entire interview. However, as I have mentioned in other replies, I recommend that you view your personal statement as a chance to start communicating why you are keen to study medicine, both in terms of your intellectual curiosity and commitment to the subject.

Do medical students tend to stay in college for the whole degree?

It varies across colleges. At Corpus, we are very fortunate to have a very high proportion of our students that choose to stay at our college when they transition from the pre-clinical to clinical phase.

Do you get allocated one Corpus Medicine tutor or would you have tutorials with all/many of them?

For Medicine, as with all courses at Oxford, you would have tutorials with multiple tutors. Your tutorials would primarily be with Corpus tutors such as Colin and held in Corpus, however you may also have tutorials with tutors at other colleges, particularly as you specialise. Please refer to the 'Medicine' section of the [Meet the Tutors Video](#) to hear more about the other tutors at Corpus. You can also access profiles of the Corpus Medicine tutors [here](#).

Should I include my music certificates in my personal statement?

You can certainly put all your previously achieved qualifications on your UCAS form, which will give tutors more information when looking at your application. However, given space is so limited in your personal statement I would only talk about things that are directly relevant to strengthening your application. You might mention music but in such a way to explain why it demonstrates your strength as an applicant. - Katherine, Outreach and Admissions Officer

For 2022 entry, how much work experience and volunteering is ideal?

As you might expect, there is no "ideal" amount of work experience and successful applicants vary enormously in how much exposure they have had with healthcare environments. Our interest is whether you are able to reflect on how you have assessed your own commitment to medicine, so this can be demonstrated in many different ways and does not necessarily need to involve work

experience. We are also very aware at the moment that the pandemic will be having a significant impact on opportunities for candidates to volunteer or experience the health profession. You might like to look at this helpful [website](#).

Will an increase in deferrals this year affect the available places in 2021?

From an admissions point of view, we are expecting to welcome a full cohort of students this year, and do not currently have any deferrals. - Katherine, Outreach and Admissions Officer

Has Corpus got a medical society?

Corpus does indeed have a medical society! There's a medical society dinner (dinner and a talk related to medicine) each term. Corpus students can also get involved in the [University Medical Society](#). - Laura, Assistant Outreach Officer

Have you ever offered an unconditional offer for Medicine?

I've been a medical tutor for ten years in Oxford and I've never seen an unconditional offer made to a candidate in Medicine.

How many essays are given every week?

During the pre-clinical course (Years 1 to 3), students average approximately two essays per week during term time. Sometimes it will be a little higher than this, sometimes a little lower.

How much clinical exposure is provided in the first three pre-clinical years?

The course includes what is called a "Patient and Doctor" course during the first two years of the pre-clinical phase of the degree. This runs across terms and is an opportunity for students to reflect on aspects of patient interactions, through teaching sessions run by clinicians.

How much work experience is ideal? How much volunteering is ideal?

We are aware that it might be more difficult to gain work or volunteering experience during the current situation. More information is available [here](#). You may also be interested in advice from the [Medical Schools Council](#) on relevant experience to study medicine during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If I join the Medicine course, what will be the assessments involve at the end of my Year 1?

There are a set of exams at the end of Year 1, with two exam papers for each of the three main subjects (Organisation of the Body, Physiology and Pharmacology, Biochemistry and Medical Genetics). Within each subject, one paper is a multi-choice exam and the other paper is an essay exam.

Is the Oxford course more suited for applicants interested in pursuing a research/academic career?

There are lots of excellent medical schools, but they do differ in terms of how they structure their teaching and so these are likely to suit students differently. In my opinion, I think the Oxford Medicine course is very well suited to students that have a strong intellectual curiosity in medical questions and the science that underlies them. There are key elements of the course, such as the integrated BA degree in Medical Sciences, which encourage the medical students to really develop their scientific thinking. As you can imagine, these are traits that are also important in medical research.

What are some COVID-19 related questions could medics be asked? What are we expected to know?

Hi, thanks for your question. The science and medicine that underlies Covid-19 is certainly a very interesting topic, and it has been fascinating to see how research and healthcare have been placed centre-stage (where I believe it belongs!). Of course I am very unlikely to be able to say much about the specific questions you may or may not be asked on any topic. Instead, I would recommend that you go back to the more general criteria that tutors are looking for, and can be found [here](#).

What super-curriculars/academic curriculars do you recommend for medicine?

There are no specific things that we look for in terms of extracurricular activities. I think my advice would be to think how you might be able to demonstrate your suitability for the course, in reference to the selection criteria outlined [here](#).

In the Medicine course is there an opportunity to work in the medical profession?

As part of the A100 course, the students complete a student-doctor course in the first two years of the pre-clinical phase of the course, where they have the opportunity to learn from a general practitioner. And obviously, there will be lots of exposure to work in hospitals and clinical settings during the clinical phase of the course (Years 4 to 6). Students also often take on voluntary roles during their vacations.

How much guidance is there for students studying Medicine?

Medicine follows a syllabus set by the GMC. As a result, we must ensure all students have the minimum necessary training. This is tested in exams in Years 1 and 2, and then in the clinical course. We follow progress very carefully, and you are monitored for performance so that if there are problems, we are aware of these very early. Unlike other degrees, you have a syllabus which makes it easier to keep track of progress. The natural way of getting academic support is tutorials. There are, of course, additional layers of support concerning wellbeing.

[Physics - Professor Michael Johnston](#)

What are good reasons for choosing Corpus Christi for Physics?

Studying physics will not depend too much on your college choice. All colleges offer similar provisions. This is very much a personal choice. Most students will enjoy any college that they choose or are allocated to. For a student perspective, you can contact the [Physics Ambassador](#).

What are the advantages of studying Physics at Oxford as opposed to another university?

All universities offering an Institute of Physics approved course will provide you with a similarly excellent degree. The slight difference at Oxford is that there are relatively few lectures and more emphasis on small-group (two or three students) tutorial teaching. Some students prefer this system, and other prefer being less supervised. This is very much a personal choice.

What areas do the Physics tutors specialise in?

I am a condensed matter physicist, and specialise in semiconductor physics, terahertz photonics and photovoltaics. Professor Kraus is a particle-astrophysicist and he specialises in Dark Matter. Together, our specialisations cover the majority of the undergraduate Physics course.

What are you looking for in applicants to Physics at Corpus Christi?

We are looking for academic potential, independent of how well you have been taught physics or maths. We also are also looking for people who are interested in and enjoy the subject, as then they tend to excel at it.

What characteristics does a Physics student need to have?

A physicist should be inquisitive, and enjoy the subject. If you don't enjoy physics, you are unlikely to excel. An ability to solve problems and make appropriate approximations and describe problems mathematically are also useful. What we are looking for at interview is the academic potential of applicants, independent of how well they have been taught.

What is a Physics tutorial like?

Physics tutorials will in general be related to the lecture courses. About a week before the tutorial, you will be set a number of questions. Your tutor will mark your answers to the questions prior to the tutorial, so they know the areas to concentrate on in the tutorial. The tutorials consist of two or three students and one tutor, and involve discussions about the material in the question sheets and wider context. Tutorials help a lot with understanding and are a place where you can ask questions and discuss aspects of the work that you didn't fully understand, and/or want to know more about.

How many tutorials are there per week? How long is each tutorial?

Physics students generally have 2 (occasionally 3) one-hour-long face-to-face tutorials per week. Tutorials are usually in groups of two or three students. In addition, you will have laboratories and lectures in the Department of Physics. Corpus admits six Physics students into the first year each year. This is typical of most colleges.

How is the course split in terms of time between teaching in college and in the department?

Lectures are held in the Physics Department (approximately ten hours per week) as is practical work/labs (approximately one day a week). The rest of the time is college-based: usually two sets of hour-long small-group tutorial (usually one tutor with two or three students), and self-reliant study/preparation for these tutorials (approximately eight hours per tutorial, but this will vary) which many students like to do in the College Library.

What do tutors look for on the personal statement when shortlisting for interview?

Shortlisting for interviews is based on results of the Physics Aptitude Test (PAT), not the personal statement. The PAT is sat in schools or testing centres and will be running this year as usual. Please see the [Physics Department website](#) for details of the deadlines for the PAT.

What should I talk about in my personal statement?

The personal statement may form a point for brief discussion in the interview, so mention something you are interested in and would be happy to talk about. Most of the interview will concentrate on physics problems, so please don't worry, the personal statement does not have to be perfect and we understand the some applicants get help with it while others do not.

What is the best sort of evidence to put in a personal statement for Physics?

There is no "ideal" personal statement, and it does not form a major part of the selection process, as different applicants have different amounts of help writing it. I would suggest including something you might be happy to talk about in an interview. Thus, write about something that interests you, and don't worry too much!

How can I prepare for my Physics application over the summer?

I would suggest first taking a break after school finishes. For the Physics Aptitude Test, I suggest trying some past papers under timed conditions. Past PAT papers are publicly available [here](#). You could then revise any topics you had difficulty with when doing those past papers. For interview there is no preparation needed. Avoid coaching for interviews as it usually shows and distracts the candidate. We are not looking for a polished performance in an interview, we are looking for academic potential.

What would you recommend doing to explore physics and demonstrate your interest in it?

I would suggest following what interests you personally. It could be reading up on an area of physics that interests you, or trying to understand or observe something in nature that puzzles you. We don't expect you to have read research papers, specific books or to have undertaken internships etc.

How do you find out if you have a genuine interest in Physics?

The types of questions you could ask yourself are: are you interested in your surroundings and how things work? Do you actually enjoy the process of solving a problem as well as the end result? Do you like solving puzzles and learning new ideas and concepts?

Apart from the Physics Aptitude Test (PAT), past papers how can you prepare for the PAT exams?

PAT papers are designed so that no specific preparation is required, beyond what you will have learned at school. You could look back over some of your school work and I would suggest doing some PAT papers under timed conditions.

What happens in a Physics interview?

Physics interviews primarily to assess your academic potential in a way that written tests cannot. We try and make you feel comfortable and we do understand that you will be nervous. Most of the interview consists of the interviewer asking you physics/maths questions and working through the problems with you as if it were a tutorial. You are not expected to get these questions correct and we do provide help as you go along. What we are looking for are your thought processes not the end result.

What kind of Physics questions are asked at interviews?

Please have a look at the [Oxford Physics website](#), which has some example questions and a video of a mock interview.

How long would a Physics interview typically last?

25 minutes per interview. Usually, you will have two 25-minute interviews at Corpus and a third 25 minute interview in a second college.

In a Physics interview, what proportion of the questions are pure maths vs physics?

We aim to have a mix of maths and physics questions in interviews. Usually, more than half would be physics-related, but physics problems often require application of maths to solve them.

Can you change from the four-year course to three years, and vice versa, once you've started?

Yes, the transfer four to three years is possible and not difficult. It would best to apply for the four-year course and, if needed, transfer to the three-year course. The other way round might be difficult regarding your funding.

Do you have an open door policy for Physics where you can speak to your tutors between tutorials?

As tutorials are already in very small groups of two or three students and happen at least twice a week, the formality of "open door" periods are not usual. This is because most issues can be addressed in the tutorials. We are always happy to arrange a meeting though.

Do you teach coding and computer skills as part of the Physics course?

Yes. This is taught as a section of practical course in the computing laboratories. There are also specific courses on numerical methods and analysis.

Does Oxford have an observatory which students can use?

Yes, Physics has an observatory dome and a 0.4m optical telescope on the top of one of our main buildings (the Denis Wilkinson Building). We also use this for outreach events. For more information see the [website](#).

Does the Physics department have a lot of links with CERN or other large research institutes?

Yes, Oxford Physics is a major player in CERN and has been for many years, including designing and building detectors and data analysis - for example the [ATLAS detector](#) and [LHCb work](#).

I am interested in studying astrophysics. Is that an option on the Physics course at Oxford?

To study Astrophysics you should choose the Physics course. In the fourth year, you then specialise in Astrophysics as a major option and can choose an MPhys project in that area.

For online tests, exams etc., how will you ensure the student's authorship in Physics?

All finals exams have been conducted online this summer so the University has lots of experience in administering exams in this way. Software is used, as it would with coursework, to confirm if text has a high risk of plagiarism. It is currently expected that admissions tests might be held in schools and test centres as normal. This would allow the usual identification processes to apply. More information and any updates will be posted [here](#).

If you were struggling with a concept or a question where would you go for support?

This is exactly what the small-group tutorials are for. As you will be in a group of just two or three students, it allows for really personalised teaching. Tutorial work is marked by your tutor prior to the tutorial so they will have a good idea already where you might be struggling. However, tutorials often venture beyond the original topic to make sure you understand a concept or to explore it at a higher level.

What are the assessments like? Will I have to write essays (other than writing up labs)?

Most examination questions are problem solving and mostly involve some maths and logic, but also written explanation. Occasionally some questions may be more essay-like. There is also an assessed scientific paper-like task in the third year, and also the MPhys or BA project report which are also assessed.

In experiments, are students expected to use their initiative or follow strict instructions?

Laboratories progress throughout the course, and you become more independent in the later years. We do provide detailed instructions for labs, including risk assessments, but have options for using your intuition to extend or modify experiments (after being checked by a demonstrator for safety reasons). In the third year, there is an extended practical which allows significant self-reliant work. BA and MPhys projects involve research which is obviously not scripted at all.

In Physics, will having a disability (e.g. mobility issues) interfere with doing practical work?

Access arrangements will and have been made for students with mobility issues. Specific arrangements are made with the individual students under professional guidance from the disability office.

Is there a lot of textbook work in Physics?

The problems we set for tutorials are generally not from textbooks, and require problem-solving skills. A range of textbooks as well as information from lecture are useful for gaining the knowledge to solve such problems. Questions are also asked and discussed in face-to-face small-group tutorials.

What are the options for work experience during the summer or the academic year?

A number of our second- and third-year students do summer placements at places such as CERN or in government or university labs. We do also have a limited number of funded summer placements in Oxford Physics. Placements are generally not possible during term, as term time is very busy at Oxford. There is plenty of time between terms for such placements though.

What brought you to choose this subject?

I chose the subject as it interested me and I enjoy trying to solve problems and designing experiments to solve such problems.

What is the best thing about physics?

The great thing about physics is that every physicist will have a different answer to that question!

What does Physics allow you to do in the future?

Our Physics graduates go on to a wide range of careers: research, teaching, government/policy, banking, IT, consulting, industry, start-ups, fintech... What many employers like is the problem-solving skills that are developed as part of a Physics degree.

What are the class sizes like for Physics?

At Corpus Physics, we have two or three students in a tutorial with one tutor. Typically, you will have two of these tutorials a week. On some occasions, you may have a longer class of six students.

[Philosophy, Politics and Economics \(PPE\) - Professor Mark Wrathall \(Philosophy\)](#)

Also includes answers from Dr Scot Peterson (Politics). Answers are from Professor Mark Wrathall unless named.

Why should I study PPE at Oxford?

PPE began at Oxford (100 years ago), so we have a lot of experience with the degree. You'll receive personalised instruction in tutorial settings from professors in our world-class faculties in philosophy, politics, and economics. Perhaps as important are the connections you'll make with an outstanding cohort of fellow students.

How many hours of contact time is there per week?

In PPE, you'll average about two tutorial hours per week, and two to three hours of lectures.

How should I prepare for the Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA)?

I'm by no means an expert on that. They try to design the exam to test "skills and aptitudes" rather than specific knowledge. So at a minimum, I'd make sure you are familiar with the format and past papers and would recommend taking some practice exams. There is lots of good advice [here](#).

How important is the essay part of the TSA? What would you be looking for in these essays?

The essay is the least important part of the test. The MCQ (multiple choice questions) part of the test allows objective ranking of all candidates. The essay is used to evaluate English writing ability but plays a much smaller role in the ranking system. In evaluating the essays we look for clarity and coherence of argument.

As a PPE tutor, would you rather see depth or breadth in a personal statement?

I use the personal statement to get some insight into the candidates' intellectual interests, and some sense of the subjects they've studied. Speaking for myself, I prefer not getting a laundry list of topics. I learn more from a more detailed discussion of issues about which you are passionate.

I agree with Mark. And as an extra pointer I would say that you should be sure to have read all of the books that you mention. Sometimes people put down books they haven't actually read, which can be embarrassing in the interview if they are asked about them. - Dr Scot Peterson, Politics Tutor.

Is it worth discussing non-PPE-related work experience (in computing research) on my statement?

It can't hurt, and it will give us a better picture of who you are. But don't let it crowd out the more directly relevant information.

What is the interview structure like (how many interviews etc.)?

At Corpus, we usually hold two interviews: one interview will be a single subject interview; the other interview combines the other two subjects.

What would make a good PPE interview candidate?

A good candidate is able to articulate their thoughts, and to question their own assumptions.

The same is true for Politics. We are not looking for candidates who know particular bits of information, although it's good to have a general knowledge of current politics events. But we want to be able to see how students work through a problem: whether they can adapt to changing information and think about problems carefully and perhaps in new ways. - Dr Scot Peterson, Politics Tutor

How can you prepare for Philosophy interviews?

It would probably help to read some introductory philosophy: something like Simon Blackburn's *Think* or Thomas Nagel's *Mortal Questions*. And get some practice discussing and debating philosophical ideas.

Are there any resources for the kind of problems that you might encounter in a PPE interview?

For the philosophy portion of the interview, I try to find questions that you won't be prepared for. I want to see how you think on your feet. To prepare, practice talking about ideas with your family, friends, teachers, and classmates. Work on explaining your reasoning, and questioning your own assumptions.

What is the best thing I can be doing right now for a PPE application besides reading?

Engage with the world around you; follow ongoing debates regarding current affairs; participate in the conversation.

Are there any specific books I should read prior to applying for PPE at Oxford?

No, I don't think we expect you to have read anything in particular. I'd suggest reading widely and following your passions. It's good to come into the interview knowing something about each subject: philosophy, politics, and economics.

Is it more work if you study the three strands of PPE instead of two in your second year?

You'll be examined on 8 papers, regardless of whether you take two or three subjects.

For PPE, when do you do your dissertation?

A thesis is optional, but not required for the PPE degree. If you do write a thesis, you would start working it near the end of your second year, and complete it in the third year of the degree.

As a tutor, what is the key characteristic among your most successful PPE students?

I think our most successful students are intellectually curious. They argue forcefully for the positions they believe in, but they are not afraid to be wrong and accept correction. And they work hard.

Can I make a competitive application to PPE without Maths A-level?

Yes. But if you are accepted you might need extra tuition to bring you up to speed.

How much of a mathematical component does the Politics aspect of PPE have?

Politics is not very mathematical at the basic levels, although it can be at the more advanced levels, depending on the papers that you take. Economics, however, which is required for PPE, tends to be quite mathematical (including basic calculus), but Maths is not required for admission. If you have not had Maths at A-level, then you will learn it in your first year (although it can increase your workload a bit!). - Dr Scot Peterson, Politics Tutor

How much of a mathematical component does Philosophy have in PPE as I don't have Maths AS/A-level?

There's no maths per se in the philosophy side of the degree. But you will be required to do at least a little formal logic. Maths A-level is not necessary for that.

Is there less maths involved in PPE than in the History & Economics degree?

The economics part of the course is exactly the same.

Is the Politics content in PPE theoretical rather than current themes?

Politics is, I think in your terms, theoretical. Current themes can be a part of what we study (there is a topic on Brexit on one advanced politics paper that I know of), but much of what we do is more fundamental: what makes a strong state; what is democracy; what is the difference between a presidential and a parliamentary system, for example. It's not about current developments in politics, except to the extent that they may be relevant to the more 'theoretical' topic under consideration. - Dr Scot Peterson, Politics Tutor

I would like to study economic inequality. Can you study it as part of the Economics in PPE?

The basic components in economics are microeconomics, macroeconomics and quantitative economics. There is a paper on labour economics at the advanced level, and economic inequality is a part of microeconomics at both the first-year and the advanced, core level. (You can also study it in Comparative Political Economy, which is an advanced paper in politics). - Dr Scot Peterson, Politics Tutor

Should I apply to PPE even if I don't like politics? I really enjoy economics and philosophy.

Could you handle the first-year politics? After the first year, you could focus exclusively on econ and phil. But, having said that, students often get here and discover they like a subject much more than they thought going in.

I have read the majority of the Oxford recommended reading list for PPE. Any other recommendations?

I'd want to know more about your interests before recommending anything else. But in general for philosophy - if you've already read most of the things on the reading list - I'd suggest following up with some of the classic works in philosophy. For example, Plato's *Apology* or *Meno*, Descartes' *Meditations*, Camus' *Myth of Sisyphus*.