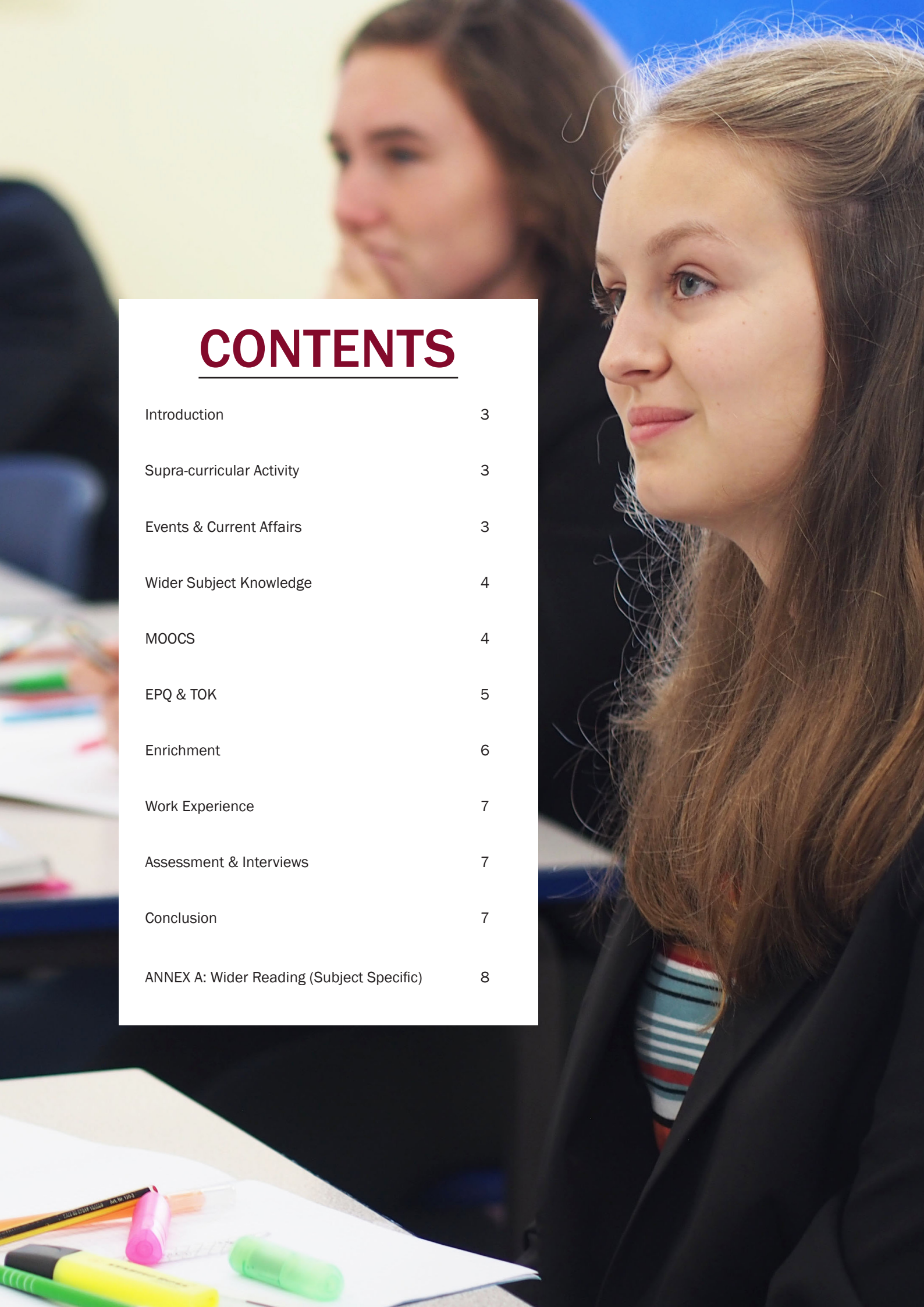


De Lisle College

SIXTH FORM

UCAS EARLY ENTRY PROGRAMME





CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Supra-curricular Activity	3
Events & Current Affairs	3
Wider Subject Knowledge	4
MOOCS	4
EPQ & TOK	5
Enrichment	6
Work Experience	7
Assessment & Interviews	7
Conclusion	7
ANNEX A: Wider Reading (Subject Specific)	8

INTRODUCTION

If you are considering applying to study at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and for most courses in medicine, veterinary medicine/science, and dentistry you will need to submit an application earlier in the year than for a standard UCAS application.

Along with an earlier application you are likely to have to sit extra assessments for many of these courses and attend interviews. Success in these is imperative if you are to secure a place on these competitive courses and at the most prestigious of universities.

To prepare you for this, De Lisle College has a programme of support, mentoring, guidance and advice to help prepare you

for the UCAS early entry process. You should embrace every opportunity provided to you and engage with the advice offered, as this will help you to achieve your personal aims.

Remember that De Lisle has a wealth of experience supporting students with their applications to medical, veterinary and dentistry schools along with applications Oxford and Cambridge, so ask questions and take benefit from what is available to you.

Mrs H Tyers
Director of Sixth Form

Miss E Priestley
Assistant Director of Sixth Form

Mr C Greenwood
Careers and Guidance Officer

SUPRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITY

Strong applicants to medical, veterinary and dentistry schools, and competitive universities have often explored their chosen subject through wider reading and enrichment work outside of their A Level studies. This is called 'supra-curricular' activity, rather than 'extra-curricular', as it is primarily academic exploration, building on and going beyond what you are studying in school or college.

A couple of hours each week spent on this material can really help you to explore your subject in new ways and to develop

your knowledge and understanding of your field. The great thing is that there is no set formula or 'required reading': you choose the topics you will explore based entirely on your own interests. It is also a good way to scout out subjects you might want to study at university. After all, this sort of exploration should be enjoyable, so if you are not enjoying reading about it, you probably wouldn't enjoy studying it at university.

EVENTS & CURRENT AFFAIRS

Perhaps the best single thing you can do to help you prepare in Year 12 to apply to competitive courses and universities is to keep up to date with events and current affairs as they pertain to your subject. The simplest way to do this is to ensure that you regularly read quality journalism and search within this for articles related to your academic interests.

Some suggestions include:

- Broadsheet newspapers: The Guardian, The Times, The Daily Telegraph
- BBC News online: www.bbc.co.uk
- The Economist: www.economist.com
- Reuters: <https://uk.reuters.com> (change edition for international news)
- The New Statesman magazine: www.newstatesman.com
- New Scientist magazine, news section: www.newscientist.com/section/news
- Al Jazeera English: www.aljazeera.com

Strong applicants display the ability to think critically when presented with new information and to assess it in the light of their existing knowledge, making connections between the familiar and the unfamiliar and using their existing knowledge to assess the validity of what they have been shown. Use these different sources of news to develop your ability to do this. Assess their arguments and weigh their evidence. Consider why one source, e.g. Al Jazeera or Fox News, might present something differently to another and engage critically with the media you encounter.

WIDER SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE

Another excellent way to stay up to date with recent developments in your field of interest is podcasts. There is a wealth of academic podcasts available online, covering virtually every subject or topic you can think of. The beauty of these is that they are usually free to download and are completely low-hassle for you. Listen to them at your convenience: on the bus, in the gym, or whenever and wherever you please. See the individual subject listings for subject-specific podcasts, but for general resource banks see:

- Cambridge iTunes U: <https://itunes.apple.com/gb/institution/cambridge-university/id380451095>
- Cambridge YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/cambridgeuniversity>
- Cambridge online lectures at the University Streaming Media Service: <https://www.sms.cam.ac.uk>
- Cambridge resources at TES: <https://www.tes.com/member/UniversityOfCambridge>
- Oxford University podcasts: <https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk>
- UniTalks podcasts: <https://iai.tv/education/podcast>
- Times Higher Education podcasts: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/academic/opinion/podcasts>
- BBC Radio 4 podcasts: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/podcasts/radio4>
- Educational podcast lists: <https://www.opencolleges.edu.au/informed/features/50-educationalpodcasts-you-should-check-out> and <https://networks.h-net.org/node/84048/pages/111820/academicpodcast-roundup>

Another option is to explore free online courses and university-level teaching material, much of which is published online. This can include entire undergraduate courses available for free with online lectures, downloadable course notes and academic discussion groups. Sites providing this material include:

- Cambridge's own HE+ website: <http://www.myheplus.com>
- The websites of several American universities - see: <https://see.stanford.edu>; <https://ocw.mit.edu/index.htm>; <http://online-learning.harvard.edu>; <http://oyc.yale.edu>
- The Open University's free courses: <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/about-openlearn/try>
- Other free online courses: <https://www.futurelearn.com>; <https://www.khanacademy.org>

There is also a wealth of other non-subject-specific material available online. Examples include:

- Hay Levels: <https://www.youtube.com/user/HayLevels/featured>
- Villier's Park Extension Activities: <https://www.villierspark.org.uk/online-activities>



MOOCS

A MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) is an online course aimed at unlimited participation and open access via the web. They are a great way of trying out a subject area that you might be interested in studying at university. They may also provide you with useful knowledge that could help in an interview. There are thousands of courses available online and many can be found by simply searching a keyword or theme (e.g. medicine).

Some useful places to start researching MOOCs include:

- My MOOC: <https://www.my-mooc.com/en/>

- Unifrog: <https://www.unifrog.org/know-how/what-are-moocs-and-why-should-you-take-one>
- The Uni Guide: <https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/advice/choosing-a-course/moocs-massive-open-online-courses-explained>

Before choosing and studying a MOOC it is worth discussing with your subject teachers or a member of the Sixth Form Team whether it is suitable. An alternative might be better suited to the subject/theme you are interested in or want to learn about.

EPQ & TOK

Extended Project Qualification

EPQ is short for Extended Project Qualification. An EPQ is an independent research project which involves writing an essay of 5000 words, or creating a product, which might be anything from an art object to an iPhone app. As the project evolves, you must complete a production log to record specific stages of the project and this also contributes to your project result. The third component of the project is an oral presentation. It is a formal 'level 3' qualification that attracts slightly higher UCAS Tariff points than a new AS-Level.

The benefit of completing an EPQ is that it teaches you some key high-level skills that individual A-level courses don't have time to include, and many students say it adds considerable interest to their sixth-form programme. In addition, there are also several major benefits to completing an EPQ when it comes to applying to university. At its simplest EPQ helps you with UCAS points - EPQ is valued at 50% of a full A level in the UCAS tariff.

But perhaps the greatest advantage of an EPQ is in helping convince top universities to make you an offer.

EPQ provides very clear evidence of that you have interests and ability which go beyond the A-Level curriculum. It demonstrates clearly that you are capable of undertaking the kind of independent reading, research, and essay writing that is the mainstay of most undergraduate degrees. This is hugely important in the UCAS application process where universities often have little to distinguish between students with similar predicted grades.

Additionally, an EPQ provides highly relevant material for your UCAS Personal Statement and for you to talk about in university interviews. Most of the top schools in the UK have made the completion of an EPQ (or an internal equivalent) compulsory for all Year 12 students so your competitors are likely to have them!

Theory of Knowledge

Theory of Knowledge (TOK) is one of three core elements in the International Baccalaureate (IB). What distinguishes the TOK from other subject lessons is that it is not a study of a specific body of knowledge. Instead, TOK gives students the opportunity to reflect on the acquisition and production of knowledge, question the claims that we make about knowledge and inquire into the nature of knowledge itself.

TOK involves "critical thinking and inquiring into the process of knowing". The process of knowing is the way in which students and 'knowers' in general acquire, produce and gain knowledge. TOK is designed to allow students to analyse and evaluate the process of acquiring knowledge in the different domains, disciplines or branches of knowledge, known as the Areas of Knowledge (AOK) (mathematics, natural sciences, perception, human sciences, the arts, history, ethics, religious knowledge systems and indigenous knowledge systems). Each AOK is distinct in the knowledge that it claims to produce and the methods it uses to arrive at that knowledge. This means that when examining AOKs, students will analyse a range of methodologies,

called Ways of Knowing (WOK) (language, sense, emotion, reason, imagination, faith, intuition, memory). TOK students investigate how these ways of knowing function in the process of acquiring knowledge within the different areas of knowledge.

The investigations of TOK students are based on examining knowledge claims by way of knowledge questions. Knowledge questions are good quality inquiry questions. They are open ended and general questions about knowledge itself. These questions are at the heart of the TOK inquiry process as they frame student's inquiries in the TOK essay and presentation.

Although Year 12 students at De Lisle do not study the IB, we recommend that any student wishing to apply for early entry without having completed an EPQ, give consideration to completing the TOK element of the IB to support them in their interviews. (Please note that completing just this part of the IB will not result in a qualification being awarded).





ENRICHMENT

Enrichment is an important part of your time at Sixth Form, that's why we encourage all our Year 12 and Year 13 students to partake in as many opportunities as they can both inside and outside of college.

Prestigious universities and high calibre degree courses are looking for sociable, self-motivated students who have more about them than just outstanding academic performance. Engaging in enrichment activities gives you the chance to meet new people whilst learning something new. 'Extra-curricular' activities show that you are able to balance your academic studies with other interests, and getting used to being under pressure is good preparation for the real world because there will be many times when your degree studies will be put you under pressure. This experience could be what sets you apart from the tens of thousands of other students applying for the same place as you.

There are many enrichment opportunities that can be linked to particular degree courses (e.g. medicine) which will help to show your dedication to a subject or career in interviews and on your personal statement or CV.

Good enrichment activities to consider include (but are not limited to):

- Duke of Edinburgh
- Being part of a respected organisation (e.g. Scouts, Army Cadets)
- Sport teams (especially if you hold a leadership position e.g. Team Captain)
- Entering challenging competitions
- Studying for an extra qualification (e.g. a language)
- Volunteering (e.g. Charity work)
- Being a member of a Society or Club (e.g. Debating)
- Music and Drama
- Employment (especially if its linked to the subject you want to study)

Whatever your future plans may be, if you are applying to the best universities and competitive courses, these additional experiences are extremely valuable as they can help you stand out from the crowd!

WORK EXPERIENCE

Appropriate work experience linked to a subject can be an excellent way of showing your commitment to a particular career path. Some courses stipulate that you have to have had relevant work experience to be stand any chance of being shortlisted to study a course (e.g. medicine, law).

It is imperative that you find out if specific work experience is required for a particular course, but to also recognise that work experience is a highly valued enrichment activity anyway. Thoroughly researching the courses that you are interested in studying at university and speaking to a member of the Sixth Form Team will help identify the type of work experience that would benefit you most.

Medical work experience in particular is vital for anyone considering applying to medicine. It helps you to decide if medicine is right for you and shows that you are committed to the cause. Medical work experience is the best way to see what being a doctor is really like. Plus, it will give you plenty to talk about throughout your medical school application.

Suitable work for medicine includes (but are not limited to):

- Hospital placements
- General Practice (GP) placements
- Employment or placements in a care setting (e.g. Care Homes)

A good resource to use to identify the work experience requirements for particular Medical Schools is The Medic Portal: <https://www.themedicportal.com/application-guide/work-experience/medical-school-requirements-medicine-work-experience/>

ASSESSMENT & INTERVIEWS

Some universities require you to sit an admissions test and/or attend an interview as part of the application process. It is very important that you take ownership of the dates, times and expectations of the assessments and interviews as these will be a critical element to complete well.

If you apply for a course that requires an admissions test, you'll need to check the registration deadline for the test, when you will sit it, and what it includes, as well as the deadline for your UCAS application.

Many universities and courses require you to complete the assessments by a 15 October deadline, but your course may be different, so it's important you check key dates and deadlines. Most admissions tests happen between August and November the year before you're due to start your studies – some even earlier, before you've sent your UCAS application! Remember to check the date of your admissions test as some take place before the final UCAS application deadline.

The resources below are some useful links to course-related admissions tests:

Law

- [Cambridge Law Test](#)
- [LNAT – National Admissions Test for Law](#)

Mathematics

- [Mathematics Admissions Test \(MAT\)](#)
- [Sixth Term Examination Paper \(STEP\)](#)
- [Test of Mathematics for University Admissions](#)

Medical courses

- BioMedical Admissions Test (BMAT)
- Graduate Medical School Admissions Test (GAMSAT)
- Health Professions Admission Test (HPAT Ulster)
- University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT)

Thinking Skills Assessment

- Thinking Skills Assessment Cambridge (TSA Cambridge)
- Thinking Skills Assessment Oxford (TSA Oxford)
- Thinking Skills Assessment University College London (TSA UCL)

If you're considering a course at the University of Cambridge, you will need to check whether you need to sit an admissions test. It may be that you have to sit an assessment before your interview, or at the interview stage of the application process. To do this, you'll need to register separately to your UCAS application – the deadlines for these vary, so make sure you check the university's website.

The University of Cambridge runs the following assessments as part of their application process:

- Cambridge Admissions Assessments
- BioMedical Admissions Test (BMAT)
- Sixth Term Examination Paper (STEP)
- Thinking Skills Assessment Cambridge (TSA Cambridge)
- Cambridge Law Test
- Other course-specific admissions tests
- In addition to your UCAS application, you will also need to complete a Supplementary Application Questionnaire (SAQ).
- All other pre-interview assessments

If you're thinking of applying to the University of Oxford, there's a very high chance you will need to sit an admissions test as the majority of courses require them.

The University of Oxford runs the following assessments as part of their application process:

- LNAT – National Admissions Test for Law
- Classics Admissions Test (CAT)
- English Literature Test (ELAT)
- History Aptitude Test (HAT)
- Mathematics Admissions Test (MAT)
- Modern Languages Admissions Test (MLAT)
- Oriental Languages Admissions Test (OLAT)
- Physics Aptitude Test (PAT)
- Philosophy Test (PHIL)
- Thinking Skills Assessment Oxford (TSA Oxford)

A full list of other course providers' admissions tests can be found here:

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/admissions-tests>

