



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

A decorative banner consisting of a series of colorful chevrons (arrows pointing right) in yellow, blue, red, green, and orange, arranged in a repeating pattern.

OXFORD ACCESS: WHAT WE'RE DOING

INTRODUCTION

Oxford's students and staff come from every background imaginable. There are around 23,000 students from over 140 countries at Oxford, studying here as undergraduates and postgraduates. Their amazing range of stories and interests helps make Oxford one of the most exciting learning environments anywhere as well as one with extraordinary resources to offer its students.

Some groups are still under-represented in our university and we want this to change. We want to attract potential from wherever it is found, and to be a magnet for talent regionally, nationally and internationally.

We know that some of the most talented students in schools in the UK think of Oxford as out of reach, and many people have a completely false view of who studies here, what it costs, and what it is like. Outdated stereotypes can put off candidates from choosing a university they would enjoy and which would give them fantastic opportunities for the future. If great candidates don't apply, we're missing out, and we think they're missing out too.

“They genuinely wanted us to apply, regardless of where we came from.. they really wanted to push us.. that was what really encouraged me, hearing that from people who are currently studying what I wanted to study... *Fis*”

We've been making enormous efforts to bring Oxford to those who may not have thought it was for them, to show what we offer, and to encourage high-achieving students to apply. More and more people from the groups we have been working to attract have been applying here, and many are now studying here. To help us increase the pace of change we have two announcements: the first to expand the number of participants on our very successful UNIQ summer school and the second to remove financial barriers to attending admissions interviews by offering travel expenses to those students most in need of support.

This document tells you about some of our initiatives, the things we'll be doing in the future, and the progress we're making. It focuses on undergraduate study. If you're a potential candidate, or know of one, why not find out more and look at ox.ac.uk/study

“Oxford ACS (African Caribbean Society) was the most crucial aspect in bridging the gap by helping me to realise that my cultural background could co-exist and in fact add value to Oxford. *Renee*”

“I was a bit nervous applying as I'm the first in my family to attend university but my time here has been incredible. *Holly*”

OUTREACH

Our outreach programmes are designed to encourage talented students to think of applying to Oxford; to work with schools to raise levels of attainment; to mentor and support students in schools; and to encourage students everywhere to be curious, inquiring, and to enjoy learning.

We spend about £7m each year on outreach. Very few universities in the country do as much.

OUTREACH IN NUMBERS

We host visits from hundreds of students from under-represented backgrounds:

- Our biggest initiative is the UNIQ Summer School and this year we are increasing the number of places on it from **850 to 1,350 – an over 50% increase**. UNIQ targets students from state schools and backgrounds under-represented at Oxford. They spend a week in Oxford living in a college and learning about the life of an Oxford undergraduate. They take tutorials, lectures and some even take lab classes. Students who come on UNIQ who apply to Oxford have **a much better success rate** than the average applicant. About **5,500** state school students have attended since 2010 and more than **1,200** have gone on to become our students.
- In 2016, **537** UNIQ participants applied to Oxford and **179** from disadvantaged backgrounds were made an offer – a success rate of **33%**. Five per cent of all the UK undergraduates who came to Oxford last year came through UNIQ.

We travel the length and breadth of the United Kingdom to reach potential students:

- Our colleges visit schools in all the regions and nations of the UK. More than **75%** of all schools with a sixth form have contact with Oxford every year.
- Last year our staff reached **3,100** schools across the UK. Our current undergraduate students also visit schools nationwide to talk about their experiences of Oxford.
- Nearly **10,000** prospective applicants attend the Oxford-Cambridge student conferences each year, guided by **150** Oxford academics and Oxford's student ambassadors.
- We work with thousands of teachers: more than **2,000** teachers from **1,000** schools have attended our regional teachers' conferences since 2009 and many more are invited to events in Oxford.
- We seek out and honour Inspirational Teachers across Britain. The University of Oxford has recognised **57** 'Inspirational' teachers since 2011 through our Inspirational Teacher Awards.

“There is no type of student at Oxford, it's beautifully diverse and you will find your place. Aditi

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OUTREACH IN NUMBERS CONTINUED

We support learning in schools. We have set up a free website called **oxplore.org**, packed with academic-based educational resources to fuel the curious minds of students aged 11 to 18. From departments and colleges, we offer a variety of study days for schools across a range of subjects, including Computer Science for Girls, Modern Languages, Women and PPE, Further Maths – What next?, FE and Sixth Form Open day and the list goes on.

There are more than **60** committed staff working on access and outreach across Oxford University. Each college is linked to a region in the UK, and the schools in the region have a college contact, from whom they can request information, a visit or just get some advice on applying to Oxford.

The Annual Access Conference – launched in 2014 – led by Oxford's student African Caribbean Society, with the University, attracts over **150** British Black students from state schools each year.

In 2015 a similar conference targeting students from British Asian backgrounds was launched and held in Slough – more than **100** students and their teachers and parents attended.

A new partnership with the organisation Target Oxbridge includes a three-day residential in Oxford for students of British African and Caribbean heritage, as well as ongoing mentoring support. The Target Oxbridge programme had 45 fully funded places in 2017, and in February 2018 Oxford and Cambridge announced funding supported by several colleges to grow the programme to **160** places in 2018.

This year, Target Oxbridge had its greatest number of successes, with **35** Black and mixed heritage students securing offers from Oxford and Cambridge. This represents a success rate of **41%** for those taking part in the programme – more than double the average success rate for all candidates.

Regional hub scheme OxNet aims to raise progression to selective and other universities. OxNet has **6** Hub schools in London and the North West, and a new Hub in Sunderland opened in 2017. The Hubs focus on the physical sciences (Cheshire), Modern Languages (London), Classics (East London), and Theology and Religious Studies (Greater Manchester), and aim to showcase the interest and benefits of studying these subjects. A Hub in Luton is working with younger students to show the benefits of starting at an earlier age to help realise aspiration and potential.

There are many other outreach events and more details can be found at **ox.ac.uk/outreachevents**



STUDENT SUPPORT

We have a simple but ambitious aim; that no student who is capable of winning a place at Oxford should be stopped from coming here by worries about money.

Nearly a quarter of our undergraduates get some form of financial help from the University.

STUDENT SUPPORT IN NUMBERS

We allocate millions to ensure every undergraduate can afford to study here:

- Around one in ten students benefits from the highest level of bursary support.
- Since it was launched in 2012, the Moritz-Heyman Scholarship Programme has provided financial support and on-course assistance to more than **600** new UK students with household incomes of £16,000 or less. In 2018/19 we will spend almost **£1.8 million** on fee reductions for students who receive Moritz-Heyman Scholarships.
- Last year we made over **£8.5 million** of financial support available to undergraduates – one of the most generous packages of any UK university. The University and colleges offer hardship funds for students experiencing financial difficulties.

“Listing Oxford as one of my five choices on the UCAS form was simply a ‘have-a-go’ moment. *Adam*”

“There’s a niche and place for everyone – yes there are some posh people but that’s only a small part. There’s also sporty people, groups who love drama, people who don’t go out and love a quiet evening in, people who like to party every night, people who play Quidditch... Basically, whoever you are and whatever you like, you’ll find people like you. *Daniela*”

“I suppose one thing that is surprising is how normal most people are here. Although everybody is a geek in some way or other. *Ihsaan*”

OUR ADMISSIONS PROCESSES

In addition to all the work we do to encourage potential applicants and support them in their applications, we also monitor our admissions processes closely to ensure that they are fair, transparent, and focused solely on the academic potential of students to succeed at Oxford.

FAIRNESS IN SELECTING STUDENTS

Our admissions process is designed to ensure consistency and fairness for all candidates:

- All colleges and courses operate according to an agreed Common Framework to ensure consistency of treatment of all candidates University-wide.
- Admissions to each course is coordinated at subject level across all colleges to ensure that the best candidates are admitted to the University regardless of which college they happened to choose.
- We use contextual information to weight candidates' prior academic achievements, mainly GCSEs, to take account of the possible impact of educational disadvantage.
- Contextual information is also used to highlight candidates who come from areas with low progression rates to higher education, areas of socio-economic disadvantage, and from under-performing schools, to ensure they are considered very carefully at every stage of the process. We also pay particular attention to applicants who are, or have been, looked after children.

- One of the main purposes of interviews is to seek out potential in applicants who don't have flawless track records. Interviews are an opportunity for candidates who have been less well supported prior to application to demonstrate that their academic potential may be greater than their grades suggest.
- We know that attending interview can be expensive and so, from 2018, we'll be meeting the travel expenses of the most disadvantaged candidates.
- We don't give lower conditional offers to candidates from under-represented groups; we ask for the grades we believe are needed in order for students to be able to succeed with the course. Our offers are broadly in line with those at other very selective universities.

For more detail on how to apply see ox.ac.uk/apply

We keep all our access and admissions activities under review. The expansion of UNIQ and the introduction of paid travel for interview candidates from low-income backgrounds are amongst the actions we have introduced in the wake of our most recent review.

THE FACTS

WHO GOES TO OXFORD?

Here are some facts about who goes to Oxford as an undergraduate:

- There are more than 11,500 undergraduates at Oxford in total, usually studying on three or four-year courses.
- Every year we admit around 3,200 new undergraduates.
- Almost four fifths of those places go to UK students.
- Most of the UK intake went to state schools (last year it was 58.2%), and that proportion has been rising.
- The proportion of the UK intake from a Black or minority ethnic background is just under 18% and has been rising markedly.
- Admissions from low-income neighbourhoods are up by 50% over the last four years.

WHO IS UNDER-REPRESENTED AT OXFORD?

Getting into Oxford is very competitive and when we make someone an offer it will be at least AAA at A-level, or the equivalent in other qualifications. Some of our science degrees require one or more A* in specific subjects.

We hope to attract applications from a significant share of the school students who are expected to achieve at these levels. But the evidence suggests that in some cases we don't.

Our data suggests that we should be attracting more applications than we have in the past from some groups and communities, particularly:

- Regions outside the South of England, and other nations of the UK.
- State schools.
- Low-income neighbourhoods.
- Some ethnic minority communities.
- Young people in care, or who are caring for a family member.
- Young people who identify with several or even all of these categories.

We recognise that there are reasons why Oxford won't be attractive to some people thinking of university. We may not offer the course they want to do. They may prefer a different part of the country or somewhere closer to home. It's especially hard for us to attract candidates from Scotland and Northern Ireland who face lower fees to study at home than they would if they studied in England. But we still want to ensure that all potential candidates know what we offer and know they would be most welcome. Increasing our diversity will bring benefits for Oxford and all our students, as a wider range of backgrounds, perspectives and experience will encourage more open, creative and reflective learning.

There's much more detail on this in the *Annual Admissions Statistical Report* available at ox.ac.uk/adstats