
Philosophy, Politics & Economics (PPE) at Oxford



A Guide for Prospective Applicants

Why PPE

Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) is a multidisciplinary degree which allows you to draw connections between political, economic, and social phenomena. It offers a social science-based education underpinned by philosophical rigour. The degree has produced numerous eminent philosophers, political scientists, and economists, as well as heads of state, distinguished public servants, industrialists, journalists, and a host of other professionals who think critically and creatively about issues of public significance.



Image: Susan Taylor

Why Oxford

PPE at Oxford is a highly flexible course which allows you to shape your own path through the degree: you may choose to specialise in two branches at the end of the first year, or continue with all three. The tutorial system offers you the opportunity to discuss your work with tutors and scholars of the highest calibre. There are numerous academic opportunities outside the normal course: Oxford hosts distinguished lecturers and visitors in many fields. Oxford also has outstanding library provision, with dedicated Social Science and Philosophy Libraries, as well as the world-renowned Bodleian.

Applying

All applications are considered very carefully on their individual merits. In addition to academic ability and flexibility of mind, tutors are looking for motivation and commitment

to the three disciplines. The formal admissions criteria are here: <http://goo.gl/GSvk7K>.

Entry Requirements

You may apply for PPE having done any combination of subjects at school; it is not necessary to have studied Politics, Philosophy or Economics. History and Mathematics are useful backgrounds, but are not essential.

- A-Levels: AAA
- Advanced Highers: AA
- IB: 39 (including core points) with 766 at HL

Or any equivalent (see details of international qualifications here: ox.ac.uk/intquals).

Course Structure

First Year

All three branches are studied.

Philosophy General Philosophy (a topic-based introduction to epistemology and metaphysics), Moral Philosophy, Logic

Politics Theory of Politics, Practice of Politics (an introduction to political science), Political Analysis (an introduction to the use of quantitative methods)

Economics Microeconomics, Macroeconomics

Assessment

Three written examinations.

Second and Third Year

You choose whether to specialise in two branches (bipartite) or continue with all three (tripartite). You take compulsory core courses in the branches you continue with, along with optional courses. You take eight courses in total.

Philosophy Core Courses Ethics + one of: Early Modern Philosophy; Knowledge and Reality; Plato: Republic; Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics

Politics Core Courses Any two of: Comparative Government; British Politics and Government Since 1900; Theory of Politics; International Relations; Political Sociology

Economics Core Courses If bipartite, all three of Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, and Quantitative Economics; if tripartite, two of the previous.

Optional courses

See the PPE Handbook under 'Course Structure' here <http://goo.gl/PEVs9f> for a sample list of optional courses. You should not assume that the option courses described there will remain the same for your cohort.

Assessment

The majority of courses are assessed by a written examination at the end of the third year, so the average PPE student would sit eight written examinations. However, you can choose to offer a Thesis or Supervised Dissertation in place of an examined course.

Introductory Reading

Prospective applicants will benefit from some introductory reading. We suggest the following texts.

Philosophy Thomas Nagel 'What does it all mean?'; Martin Hollis, 'An Invitation to Philosophy'

Politics Jonathan Wolff, 'An Introduction to Political Philosophy'; Various authors, 'Developments in British (French, German, etc.) Politics'

Economics Tim Harford, 'The Undercover Economist'; Paul Krugman 'The Accidental Theorist'



Image: Eric Haney



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Application Timeline

1. UCAS application

You need to apply a year before the start date of PPE by completing the online application form at www.ucas.com. Applications open in early September, and the deadline is 6pm UK time on 15 October every year.

2. Admissions Test

All candidates must sit the Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA), normally at their own school or college, in early November. It is your responsibility to register for the test. For the exact test date in the year of your application, along with further information, details of how to register, and a specimen paper, see www.tsaoxford.org.uk.

3. Interview

Tutors decide which candidates to shortlist in late November or early December. Interviews for shortlisted candidates normally take place in early to mid December.

4. Decisions

Final decisions about offers of places will use the full range of evidence available, including past and predicted exam results, the school report, the personal statement, the TSA admissions test and the interviews. Shortlisted candidates are told whether or not their application has been successful in early January.

Contact

For general information on Oxford and how to apply:

ox.ac.uk/ask

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For specific information on PPE:

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