

HUMAN SCIENCES ADMISSIONS SUMMARY REPORT 2021-22

1. ADMISSIONS STATISTICS

1.1 Number of applicants

There were 218 applicants. Of these 212 sat the Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA) which is a compulsory part of the process.

1.2 Number of applicants per place

A total of 34 offers were made (including open offers), making a ratio 6.4 applicants per place.

1.3 Breakdown of applicants by open applications, deferred entry, gender and domicile

There were 35 open applications.

There were 214 applicants for entry in 2022 and 4 applicants for entry in 2023.

There were 180 female applicants and 38 male applicants.

There were 140 home applicants, 16 EU applicants and 62 overseas applicants.

1.4 Number of applicants shortlisted

108 applicants were shortlisted for interview.

1.6 Number of applicants offered places

34 applicants were offered places (including 2 candidates who were made open offer places).

2. ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES

2.1 Shortlisting Procedures

2.1.1 Selection Criteria

The interview process and selection criteria for Human Sciences are set out on the Human Sciences website at <https://www.ihs.ox.ac.uk/admissions>

2.1.2. Procedure for Shortlisting

Shortlisting was performed in accordance with the stated admissions criteria on the basis of all available and relevant data: in particular these data included an applicant's score from the TSA, all aspects of the candidate's UCAS form, including achieved qualifications and predicted qualifications, and any information specific to the applicant.

As contextualised GCSEs were not available this year, candidates were ranked on their TSA score. A threshold based on the number of places available was calculated and those above the threshold in the ranking and whose predicted or obtained A levels or equivalent grades met the requirements of the course, were shortlisted. A number of candidates below the threshold who had exceptional circumstances were also short-listed, resulting in just over 3 short-listed applicants per place.

An on-line meeting of tutors from all colleges was held to discuss short-listing decisions in the light of all information available to ensure that short-listing decisions were applied consistently across all colleges. At this meeting short-listing decisions for candidates were agreed and these decisions were entered onto the web-based admissions database.

Each application had a first-assigned college, which was either the college to which they applied or, in the case of open applicants, a college randomly assigned by the Admissions Office in such a way as to even out the competition for places. In cases where a college was particularly over-subscribed, a college could reallocate some of its candidates after short-listing. These candidates were then assigned to colleges which were under-subscribed. In 2021–22, 20 candidates were reallocated to a different first-choice college.

2.1.3 TSA and GCSE

As contextualised GCSE scores were not available this year due to GCSEs having been awarded in 2020 on Teacher Assessed Grades, the pre-interview score for all candidates was based on their TSA score.

2.1.4. Statistics on short-listed candidates

The average number of GCSEs amongst short-listed candidates was 9.6 (compared to 9.9 in 2020-21 and 10.1 in 2019-20) and the average number of GCSEs at A*/9/8 amongst shortlisted candidates was 8.6 (compared to 8.4 in 2020-21 and 8.1 in 2019-20). Amongst all candidates, the average number of GCSEs was 9.6 (which was the same as in 2020-21 and compared to 9.8 in 2019-20) and the average number of GCSEs at A*/9/8 was 7.8 (compared to 7.4 in 2020-21 and 7.2 in 2019-20).

Of the 108 shortlisted applicants, 76 were taking (or had taken) A levels (compared to 71 out of 106 in 2020-21) and of these 70 or 92.1% were taking Biology (compared to 60 or 84.5% in 2020-21 or 82.3% in 2019-20).

2.2 Interview Process

2.2.1 Description of Interview Process

All short-listed candidates were interviewed in early December. The interview dates by subject are readily available on the Admissions Office webpage in advance.

For the second year running, as a consequence of the Coronavirus pandemic, all interviews took place remotely on Microsoft Teams.

2.2.2 Number of Interviews at 1st Colleges

There were 107 first college interviews.

2.2.4 Number of 2nd College interviews including second college allocation process

There were 107 interviews at 2nd colleges. Each short-listed candidate was randomly assigned a second-college by an algorithm so as to equalise across colleges the interview load per place ratio.

2.2.4 Descriptors of Interview Scoring used

Interviews are academic in nature. An applicant's performance was judged according to the admissions criteria. The interviews were graded on a scale of 1-20 against agreed descriptors as follows:

20	Truly exceptional A candidate such as only rarely encountered	(A++)	78+
19	Outstanding Unambiguously first class	(A+)	72-77
17-18	Excellent Clear suggestions of first class potential: highly competent in response to tests; highly articulate; relevant knowledge going beyond what one might expect; thoughtful and insightful in discussion, taking the conversation further than the norm	(A)	68-72
14-16	Very good Clearly capable of gaining a 2.1 degree: competent in response to tests; articulate; sound relevant knowledge; enthusiastic about Human Sciences	(AB)	63-67
12-13	Competent Competent overall, but some suggestion of weakness: some inaccuracies or difficulty in response to tests or in discussion of relevant issues; gaps in relevant knowledge; some lack of enthusiasm for the subject	(B)	58-62
10-11	Borderline acceptance Signs of potential, but also clear signs of weakness: inaccuracies or difficulty in response to tests or in discussion of relevant issues; not as articulate as tutorial discussion generally requires; gaps in relevant knowledge; lack of enthusiasm for the subject	(BC)	54-57
8-9	Weak Too weak to consider for a place: failures in the tests; failure to sustain a discussion; worrying gaps in relevant knowledge; lack of enthusiasm for the subject	(C)	48-53
4-7	Very weak As above, but to a greater degree		21-47
0-3	Exceptionally weak Failure to navigate the tests and sustain a discussion; unacceptable gaps in basic knowledge; unenthusiastic		0-20

2.2.5 Procedure for Final Decision making including final admissions meeting

The Institute operates various procedures in a co-ordinated effort to ensure that the strongest applicants are offered places irrespective of college choice. These include transparency of all test

results, interview grades and UCAS forms amongst all tutors involved in admissions, and a meeting of tutors at which places awarded are collectively agreed. At this meeting the strongest unplaced candidates were discussed and 8 were selected for a panel interview.

A panel, comprising the admissions co-ordinator and two other college lead interviewers for Human Sciences, interviewed these candidates and two candidates were made open offers.

3. Pre-Interview Admissions Test: The Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA) Test

3.1 When the test results are available

The TSA results were made available to candidates on 11 January 2022 by Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing.

3.2 How the test results can be accessed

Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing issue a PDF Statement of Results to each candidate via its Results Online System which can be accessed via the link on its website at

<https://www.admissionstesting.org/for-test-takers/thinking-skills-assessment/tsa-oxford/scoring-and-results/>

3.3 The average performance of Candidates

The average TSA score in 2021 was

64.0 amongst all applicants (compared to 68.2 in 2020 and 63.9 in 2019)

68.6 amongst shortlisted applicants (compared to 73.1 in 2020 and 67.8 in 2019)

70.2 amongst successful applicants (compared to 73.9 in 2020 and 68.9 in 2019)

For the problem solving questions, the average score was:

63.6 amongst all applicants (compared to 67.7 in 2020 and 63.1 in 2019)

67.9 amongst shortlisted applicants (compared to 72.5 in 2020 and 66.7 in 2019)

67.9 amongst successful applicants (compared to 73.7 in 2020 and 68.2 in 2019)

For the critical thinking questions the average score was

64.7 amongst all applicants (compared to 69.5 in 2020 and 65.5 in 2019)

70.0 amongst shortlisted applicants (compared to 75.1 in 2020 and 69.8 in 2019)

73.5 amongst successful applicants (compared to 75.4 in 2020 and 69.9 in 2019)

3.4 Graph Showing Distribution of TSA Performance by applicants.

