

PREPARATION FOR OXBRIDGE

Each day, discovery.



ELTHAM COLLEGE





| Introduction

The Eltham College Oxbridge Programme aims to provide students with a greater understanding of what it means to apply for, and study at, both Oxford and Cambridge. By offering a wide range of interventions, including workshops, talks, visits and one-to-one guidance, we can ensure that the students who go on to apply to Oxbridge have made an informed decision, and are able to submit the strongest application possible.

In this booklet we have provided an overview of our typical programme, which includes some key dates relating to the admissions procedure in the Upper Sixth Form. However, if you are considering an application to either Oxford or Cambridge, we would strongly recommend that you start to think about the preparation process as early as possible. As with everything in life, the more prepared you are, the more confident you will feel, and the more likely you are to succeed.

Louise Badelow
Head of Careers and Oxbridge



Successful Oxbridge applicants 2021

Is Oxbridge right for me?

When it comes to applying for Oxbridge, an exceptional academic record is just the start. Experience tells us that it is students with 'intellectual flair' who are ultimately successful in securing a place. These kinds of students firstly see themselves as the drivers of their own educational journey rather than passengers carried along by others. They don't want to be spoon-fed simple answers, but instead strive to dig deeper, ask probing questions and work things out for themselves. They ask questions to open up a topic and generate more complex debate. They ask questions to pin a subject down, demand more precision or double check consistency and reliability. They look for opportunities to discuss, scrutinise, cross-examine, hypothesise or theorise, making connections across subject areas. They can spot ambiguities and the scope for interpreting in numerous ways. They embrace challenge, even if long-term mastery may require short-term failure. They delight in the freedom to choose their own avenues for investigation and will seize ownership of a mundane starting point, turning it into an advanced intellectual analysis full of intrigue, original ideas or daring contemplations of alternative possibilities. Ultimately, they approach learning with a sense of wonder and playful curiosity combined with a questioning, critical mind.

Nevertheless, regardless of these qualities, Oxbridge is not right for everyone. We work hard to ensure students can build their own knowledge about the reality of applying for, and studying at, Oxford and Cambridge. This enables them to make an informed decision about whether or not it is an appropriate option for them.





| Some other questions to consider

In addition to carefully considering whether Oxford or Cambridge is right for you, there are some other key questions to ask yourself when thinking about an Oxbridge application. These include:

- Which course am I interested in?
- Is my preference for Oxford or Cambridge?
- Which College will I apply to?
- How can I best prepare?

Engagement with the Oxbridge Programme will help you answer these questions but use this time to conduct your own research. Visit the university websites to explore the various course options and request a copy of the current prospectus. Think about attending university open days during the summer – it really is the best way to help decide which university and college is right for you.

Importantly though, try to be as objective as possible about your interests, ability, aptitudes and work ethic. Above all, if you decide it's the right path to take, do so with commitment.

| Making the most of your time

Admissions tutors from all Oxbridge colleges recommend having two or three topics that you have researched to a high level, and about which you can talk with enthusiasm and confidence. These topics need to be beyond the A level curriculum and with this in mind, alongside your own exploration, Oxbridge Subject Mentors will provide extension tasks to help you develop your knowledge outside of the classroom. This work will prove to be a vital component of your future application and it is strongly recommended that you engage with these additional tasks over the coming months.



Where can I find out more?

There are plenty of resources available to help inform your decision about whether to apply to Oxford or Cambridge. The university websites, www.ox.ac.uk and www.cam.ac.uk, provide full details of the courses available, the collegiate system and entry requirements for each subject. In addition, students have access to www.unifrog.org where you will find a dedicated Oxbridge portal, including course specific acceptance rates and a three-word description of each college to get you thinking about college choice.

www.explore.org is a fantastic digital resource, provided by the University of Oxford. The 'home of big questions', it aims to engage young people with debates and ideas that go beyond what is covered in the classroom. Big questions such as 'Is sleeping more important than studying?' and 'Should celebrities influence you more than your parents?' seek to tackle complex ideas across a wide range of subjects, drawing on the latest research undertaken at Oxford. In addition, www.myheplus.com brings you exciting supercurricular resources created by Cambridge students and academics. The ability to look beyond the curriculum and engage in debate is key when it comes to developing high-level thinking skills and intellectual sparkle, and we strongly recommend students take every opportunity to develop these important attributes, both at home and in school.

In addition, please visit the 'Oxbridge and Scholarship' page on **SharePoint** where you will find lots of helpful resources and weblinks.





| Our Oxbridge Programme

Effective preparation is key to a successful Oxbridge application, and we offer a comprehensive programme of support, including university visits, access to an Oxbridge Subject Mentor, extension sessions to help prepare for admissions tests, interview preparation workshops and one-to-one mock interviews with staff and external subject experts. Significantly though, it is those students who engage with the process, and take full advantage of the wide range of support available, that go on to make a successful application. Our programme will differ each year dependent upon the availability of external speakers and events, however the activities below are indicative of our on-going provision for **Lower Sixth Form** students.

- January** Students register their interest in applying to Oxbridge

- February** Oxbridge programme launch event

- March** Oxford and Cambridge Student Conference

- April** Subject extension sessions begin

- May** “The Edge” interview preparation workshop
Students matched with Oxbridge Subject Mentors

- June** Students matched with OE mentors (where possible)

- July** Summer preparation guidance



Key dates

Please find below an outline of the key dates relevant to the Oxbridge application process during the **Upper Sixth Form**.

September	Submit Personal Statement for review Mock admissions tests Registration for pre-interview admissions tests
October	UCAS application deadline (15 October) Supplementary Application Questionnaire deadline (Cambridge only)
November	Pre-interview assessment tests Submit written work as requested (dependent upon university and college) Invitation to interview Mock interviews
December	Interviews
January	Offers made



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