KEBLE AT LARGE

**CHEMISTRY**

APPLICATION GUIDE

https://lh4.googleusercontent.com/cgzbTaKLX_mVSRL6gGJBvo9U4X4q9P4XBYsW-NO5eVS3aLlOxbmBf0TzrcFk98oARnTGozjkO7i7gTXLWCA6c3Sfq5qbCU0xIhkh8zhw6Y-6qyLOFzUwJlN7hXxYzm7KErsN2W-2

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| **Deadline for applying through UCAS** | **15th October 2016** |
| **A-Level requirements** | **A\*A\*A**  *(including Chemistry and Maths) with both A\*s in science subjects and/or Mathematics.*  *Candidates are required to have Chemistry and Mathematics to A-level, Advanced Higher, or Higher Level in the IB or any other equivalent. Another science or Further Mathematics may be useful for some elements of the course, but are not essential.* |
| **IB requirements** | **40** (including core points) with 7 in HL Chemistry and either 6/7 in HL Mathematics or 7 in SL Mathematics plus a second science with 7 HL |
| **Aptitude test?** | **No** |
| **Course length** | **4 years** |
| **Qualification** | **An MChem in 4 years** |

**UCAS Application**

* You can find the UCAS website at https://www.ucas.com/
* Bear in mind that applying to Oxford for any subject has an earlier deadline than the UCAS deadline in January.
* Teacher’s references: Your teacher will submit a reference about you to UCAS. It is a chance for them to say positive things about your attitude to learning and your performance as a student. Although some colleges dismiss the importance of the reference, they do get read.
* All of your academic and extracurricular achievements get entered into UCAS. This will include your GCSE and A-level grades.
* Remember that academic results are considered in light of your school’s performance. For example, tutor’s will take note of GCSE results that outperform the average from your school, even if you have a lower number of A\*s than other applicants.
* Therefore, there is no specific GCSE grade requirement for an Oxford place, although all applicants must meet an: A\*A\*A offer at A level (or equivalent)
* There is no work experience requirement for Chemistry – however, any work experience or volunteering can demonstrate key skills and is worth a mention on your UCAS application.

**Personal Statement**

* When it comes to writing the personal statement, different people will tell you different ways to structure it and what to put in. This can make writing the personal statement quite frustrating, but it is important to understand that there is no perfect formula to writing the personal statement. A personal statement should be personal and should show your achievements, interests and importantly, your personality in your application.
* It is helpful to start by reading what each university wants to see from its applicants – you can structure your personal statement to show the university that you would fit into their course well. This information can be found on their website and in their prospectus.
* Make sure you read up on the detail about the course structure, as courses vary from university to university. For example, the Chemistry course at Oxford is synoptic whereas it is usually modular at other universities. Make sure you’re applying to places with modules and a course structure you would enjoy.
* Things you could include in your personal statement:
  + Why you want to study Chemistry – what is it about the subject that makes it fascinating for you? How could you use Chemistry in the future?
  + What parts of the A-level course did you really enjoy that you want to learn more about in your degree?
  + If you undertook the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), what did you learn from this?
  + What extra-reading have you done and what did it teach you that you haven’t covered at A-level?
  + A little bit about you as a person – what extracurricular activities do you enjoy doing? Tutors want to know that you are an all-round student, who has interest beyond the subject and would take advantage of Oxford’s many student societies.
* The key tip: Do not lie about anything on your personal statement. Your personal statement does get read and there is a very real possibility that a tutor could pick up any part of your personal statement and ask you questions about it in an interview. It will reflect poorly on you as a candidate if what you’ve written is untrue.

**Recommendations for Reading**

* Try and identify an area of your A-level Chemistry course that you find particularly interesting – extend your reading on this topic. Reading into topics you enjoy shows that you are a proactive learner and can reflect well on your personal statement.
* Keep up to date with what is going on in the field of Chemistry. The New Scientist or Chemistry Review are good magazines to pick up. You can mention specific articles you found interesting in your personal statement.
* There really are no set books which you have to read – the tutors are looking for a genuine interest in extending your understanding in areas of Chemistry which you find intriguing from your A level course.
* There is also no need to base your reading around the areas of research the tutors at Keble are involved in – they do not expect you to know about their research.

**Interview**

* For 2015 entry, 84% of applicants were interviewed by the university. Therefore, the very majority of applicants are interviewed
* The interview is a very key stage of the application process – until the interview, the tutors only know you from your personal statement, reference and past grades. The interview allows them to see if you would fit well into the tutorial-based system.
* If you have applied to Keble, you could either be interviewed at Keble or re-allocated randomly to be interviewed at another college (to obtain an even spread of applicants across the colleges)
* You will have two interviews at Keble, typically over two days. On the third day, you will either be pooled (interviewed at another college) or sent home. It is important to realise that you shouldn’t read too much into whether you have been pooled or not. Not getting pooled can mean the college definitely does or does not want to make you an offer. Getting pooled can mean that the tutors want another opinion, or they think you are a strong candidate and want another college to make you and offer if they don’t have enough space.
* For the interview, make sure you go through your personal statement and are able to expand on anything written there, especially your extended reading. It is important to realise that the tutors do not expect you to know all the answers to their questions straight away. They will ask you hard questions that are much beyond the scope of A level knowledge, but they want to see how you tackle the problem (so thinking out loud is a good idea!). Try and pick up on the hints they give you, as these will definitely guide you towards the right answer.
* But remember – the tutors at Keble are very friendly and want to try and guide you towards the correct answers, so try and relax and don’t listen to any ‘horror stories’ you’ve heard about Oxford interviews!
* You will be given a room in college for the 2-3 days that you will be in Oxford for interviews. It is a good idea to try and relax, meet other chemists and applicants and chat with the student helpers. This can make your stay much more enjoyable and make you feel more relaxed about the interviews.
* There is no dress code for the interview and Oxford encourages applicants to dress comfortably, so it really does not matter what you wear to the interview. Some candidates choose to dress smartly, wearing a suit or a smart skirt and shirt – however, it will make no difference to your chances of getting in if you opt for a more casual jeans and jumper. Remember that an interview is an already daunting experience so you should not wear anything which would make you more uncomfortable.

**Further Questions?**

If you have any further questions, please don’t hesitate to e-mail Keble at Large at kebleatlarge@outlook.com