KEBLE AT LARGE

**Computer Science**

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\*AA with a A\* in Mathematics, Further Mathematics, or Computing/Computer Science** |
| **Aptitude test?** | **Yes – The MAT** |
| **Course length** | **3 or 4 years** |
| **Qualification** | **A BA in 3 years**  **A MSc in 4 years** |

**UCAS Application**

* Oxford offers three computer science related subjects: Computer Science, Computer Science and Philosophy, and Mathematics and Computer Science. The first step in making a UCAS application is to choose which course you would like to apply to. The description of each course can be found at <http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/how_to_apply/choose_course.html>
* The second step is to pick out a college where you would like to read the subject. The information about which college provides which course is given here: <http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/why_oxford/tutors.html>
* Your high school teachers will write references for you as part of the UCAS application. Because these are beyond your control and it is highly likely that your teachers will write positively about you, you should not fret yourself about the references.

**Work Experience/ Volunteering**

Working and volunteering are definitely valuable experiences, and you can make your application stronger by referring to extracurricular experiences, but these don’t play a major role in the admissions process.

**Personal Statement**

Your personal statement, coupled with your aptitude test results, determine whether you are offered an interview. You should use this to express why you wish to study computer science, as well as how you feel your experiences- both curricular and extracurricular make you suited to the subject. While an important part of the application process, your academic results and aptitude test score tend to carry more weight, so you should not worry too much about your personal statement. One important thing to note is to avoid lying in your personal statement, it could be very awkward if you are invited to interview and get asked a question on a book you “read”, only for you to admit that you never read beyond the first chapter.

**Recommendations for Reading**

* If you mentioned a particular programming language in your personal statements, you should brush up on it because in the interviews your tutors may ask about anything written in your personal statement.
* As computer science is math-intensive, math textbooks as well as computer science books are recommendable.
* Start with a book on any branch of math or computer science that intrigues you. You are not expected to have a clue as to what the tutors are researching, let alone read up on their research areas.
* The reading list posted by the department: <http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/why_oxford/background_reading.html>
* Linear algebra serves as a vital foundation of computer science. However, at Oxford, the linear algebra for computer science students focuses more on applications than theory, and it is partly because we simply don’t have enough time to go through every detail of linear algebra’s rich theory. In light of this, one book I would suggest if your feel like studying ahead and getting a sense of what university-level math is like is Linear Algebra by Stephen Friedberg. Its proof-based style of presentation may be totally different from what you have seen in high school math textbooks and hence you may find it difficult to keep up with the book. But you shouldn’t rush through it.

**Aptitude Test**

* It is certainly sensible to go over some past papers, which are available at a website of the Math Institute: <https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/study-here/undergraduate-study/maths-admissions-test>
* Since it is crucial to know the scope of the aptitude test, I would recommend you first check out the syllabus on the website provided above.
* You are not required to be knowledgeable in advanced math such as vector calculus or partial differential equations - the purpose of the test is to see the depth rather than the breadth of your knowledge. As long as you have covered the materials listed in the scope of the MAT, you don’t need to be concerned about the lack of knowledge.
* Under the test condition, the test can be demanding in terms of time management. Be mindful of time as you solve problems.

**Interview**

* Your tutors can ask you a wide range of questions from math and coding problems to your motivation. The type of interview questions varies from applicant to applicant, depending on what is written in personal statements. For instance, if you put an emphasis on your proficiency and experiences in coding in the personal statement, there is a high chance of getting coding questions.
* So make sure that you are well-prepared to elaborate on anything you mentioned in the personal statement.
* Be ready to answer questions about the reason why you applied to Oxford and why you chose computer science.
* The interviews do not intend to test your reaction time. So take a moment to marshal your thoughts before giving your answers. But of course it is not a good idea to remain silent too long.
* If you get stuck in solving problems, tell the tutors what you think is the right path toward the solutions and why you are stuck. In many math questions, you are expected to use hints provided by the interviewers to solve problems, so it’s totally normal to ask for help. Think of the interviews as mock tutorials. Instead of whether you can reach the correct answers, the interviewers want to see how you deal with previously unseen question, how you would perform in real tutorials, and whether you can keep up with the tutors.

**Further Questions?**

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