KEBLE AT LARGE

**Economics and Management**

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** *(including Mathematics to A-level)* |
| **Aptitude test?** | **Yes – The TSA** |
| **Course length** | **3 years** |
| **Qualification** | **BA in Economics and Management** |

**UCAS Application**

* Every application to university starts with UCAS: applying to Oxford for any subject has an earlier deadline than other universities.
* Your teacher will submit references about you to UCAS. It is a change for them to say positive things about your attitude to learning and your performance as a student (also explaining extenuating circumstances, if applicable). Don’t worry too much as your teachers should hopefully be saying positive things about you!
* All your academic and extracurricular achievements get entered into UCAS (this will include your GCSE and your AS-level grades if applicable)
* Academic results are contextualised by comparing them to your school’s performance. Even if you have fewer A\*s than other applicants, tutors will take note if your GCSE results outperform your school’s average.
* There is no specific GCSE requirements, although all applicants must meet a A\*AA offer at A-Level (or equivalent)
* You are required to take Mathematics to A-Level, and other subjects such as Economics, Further Mathematics or Physics are helpful
* There is no work experience requirement for Economics and Management—however any work experience or volunteering can demonstrate valuable skills and is worth mentioning in your UCAS application

**Personal Statement**

* Writing a personal statement is probably the hardest part of your application.
* You can ask around for structures and you will see huge variety in what different people put, but it is important to realise there is no formula to the perfect personal statement.
* It is personal and is used to show your interests, achievements and importantly your personality in your application.
* Whilst the personal statement is about you it is good to read up on what each university wants to see from applicants (often universities publish the key attributes they want in a candidate on the course website). This can then be used as a potential structure.
* You should read up in detail about the course (more details can be found here:

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses-listing/economics-and-management?wssl=1>

* Some students apply with a preference for one subject over another and that is perfectly acceptable.
* However, you should make sure that you do find the other half of the course interesting since you will be spending a lot of time on it.
* In the first year, you have no choice over the modules you take (General Management, Financial Management and Introductory Economics)
* Oxford knows that you will be applying for other courses (for example, you might apply for just Economics elsewhere) and if this is the case, you don’t need to worry about focussing mainly on Economics. However, you should mention Management at least briefly or focus on aspects of Business Economics that you enjoy.

**Work Experience/Volunteering**

* Although the application process doesn’t require you to have any work experience in an area related to Economics and Management, if you are able to get some kind of work, volunteering or an internship it is something great to talk about in your personal statement.
* Work experience can also help you decide what kind of degree path you want to follow – if you get work experience in a bank, you might discover you really like it and therefore choose to continue Finance in your second and third years.
* However, universities know work experience is not always possible to obtain, therefore, if you can’t get any it’s not something to fret about.

**Recommendations for Reading**

* Try to identify an area of the course (or the subjects in general) that you particularly enjoy and extend this by finding a book that explores this further.
* Keep up to date with current affairs as well as economics or business news (The Economist or the Financial Times are particularly good)
* If anything interests you make sure you read up on it a bit further as this will demonstrate interest if it gets brought up at interview.
* Whilst it is generally not recommended to mention very popular books like Freakonomics and the Undercover Economist in your personal statement, they are interesting and worth reading to provide useful analogies and facts for interviews.
* There is no need to research what the tutors at Keble study—they are not expecting you to know about their research
* A reading list showing the type of books used for references in the first year is available here:

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxford/media_wysiwyg/Economics_%26_Management_reading_list_pdf.pdf>

**Aptitude Test**

* To make an application to Oxford for Economics and Management you need to take the TSA (Thinking Skills Assessment). This is a 2-hour pre-interview test for applicants designed to help tutors assess whether candidates have the skills and aptitudes needed.
* Often, your school is not involved in arranging this exam so it is your responsibility to book yourself a place. Make sure you get this done before the deadline (15 October):

<http://www.admissionstestingservice.org/for-test-takers/thinking-skills-assessment/tsa-oxford/how-to-register/>

* “The TSA is a test of verbal, spatial and numerical reasoning, and also asks you to write an essay in order to demonstrate that you can construct a cogent and clear argument.”
* It is 90 minutes of multiple choice and 30 minutes for writing a short essay.
* You do not need any particular knowledge as it’s more a test of how you think.
* The test is designed to be difficult to revise for.
* Try the past papers under timed conditions and look at the explanation of results to get a feel for what they are assessing. These can be found here:

<http://www.admissionstestingservice.org/for-test-takers/thinking-skills-assessment/tsa-oxford/preparing-for-tsa-oxford/>

* The final part of the TSA exam is a timed essay from a choice of topics, usually relating vaguely to the courses that require it.
* You do not need to have any prior knowledge about the subject for this essay.
* They will assess your core English skills and your ability to create a structured and logical argument.
* References to current affairs are a great addition but not essential.
* A score of around 65 on the TSA is the average score to be invited to interview. Keep in mind that it is multiple choice, so you have a 20% chance of getting it right!

**Preparing for Interview**

* If your application passes the first round, you will be invited to interview at the University.
* Having mock interviews can help you overcome the fear and stress related to them and to help you get familiar with timings and with the format of an interview. Try to arrange them with teachers or adults that know about the subject (although they do not need to be experts)
* During an interview, you can change a particular answer as the discussion progresses, but make sure you have reasons for doing so: don’t simply change from “yes” to “no” because the interviewer points out a problem with “yes”; you can argue against their comment and maintain your position. Most questions do NOT have a ‘correct’ answer, so don’t try to guess what the interviewers want, their job is only to prod you and see how you argue and contest criticisms.
* The Oxford website analyses a sample question:

*“Do bankers deserve the pay they receive? And should government do something to limit how much they get”*

* This is a very topical question in light of the recent financial crisis.
* A simple answer might be that since banks are generally private firms and workers are free to work where they wish, then the pay they receive is just the outcome of a competitive labour market. In this story, bankers earn a lot because they are very skilled and have rare talents.
* It is hard to see a reason for government intervention in this case – though on equity grounds one may want to have a progressive income tax system that redistributes some of this income.
* A good candidate would wonder why it is that seemingly equivalently talented people can get paid so much more in banking than in other occupations. Do we really believe that bankers are so much better than other workers in terms of skill?
* An alternative story is that the banking industry is not competitive and generates profits above what a competitive market would produce. This would then allow workers in that industry to share some of those profits and so earn much more. In this case, there is a role for government intervention - making the market more competitive.
* The key point about this question is trying to get candidates to think about the economics of pay rather than just whether they think it is fair or not.
* For Economics, they will usually set you a Game Theory-style problem, and get you to talk through your reasoning and answers. Research some common examples of game theory to familiarize yourself with them.

**Interview**

* Most colleges will give you two interviews of approximately 20 minutes each, with different tutors. These may be on the same day or spread across a period of time.
* Generally, one interview will be classified as the “economics” interview and the other as the “management” interview.
* You’ll be given a room to stay in for the duration of your stay.
* There will be information points, usually in the colleges’ Junior Common Room (lists of interviews with time and place) and helping students that are there to make sure you know where you need to be and when.
* As a quality and standard check you might be interviewed at another college (referred to as “pooling”) on the third day. It is important to not read too much into being pooled, there are a number of reasons why it occurs.
* Since it is not required for any applicants to have qualifications in either economics or management, no specific knowledge will be assumed for any student.
* Make sure you go over your personal statement and ensure you’re up to date with everything you said you have read/enjoy. You can expect tutors to pick out very random points from your personal statement and make you elaborate on them.
* Another good thing to prepare is an area of interest for each subject, which will help you answer generic questions such as: “why Economics and Management?” or “what area of Economics interests you?” or “what is Management?”
* Other than that, you can’t really prepare for what they will ask you in an interview. Remember it is not a test of existing knowledge but more an assessment of how you think and discuss. Be sure to present your arguments clearly and calmly, be prepared to respond to problems and criticisms of your arguments.
* Don’t be afraid to ask questions or clarifications! You do not need to answer immediately after the interviewer asks a question. It is much better to take your time, think it over, form an argument, and if needed, ask relevant questions about the context before you answer.
* Also, do not be afraid to say “I’m stuck” or “I don’t know” – the interviewers aren’t out to get you and don’t want to see you fail
* If you simply tell them you don’t understand something or you’re not following they will do their best to rephrase the question or give you a clue.
* It is much better to admit you’re having trouble than to try to answer a question with nonsense or made-up things (they’re professionals, they’ll see right through you!)
* On the day, many candidates may be dressed in quite a relaxed manner as Oxford encourages applicants to dress comfortably. However, you can also dress smartly and do not feel embarrassed about wearing a suit or a smart skirt and shirt.
* This also applies for interviewers – some might be in very smart suits, whilst some will be in everyday relaxed clothes. Wearing the wrong thing will not affect your chances of getting a place!
* When you’re not having interviews, take some time to get to know other applicants or helping students, or explore Keble and Oxford. Interview time can be a fun and wonderful experience!

**Further Questions?**

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