KEBLE AT LARGE

**Human Sciences**

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** | **AAA**  *(Excluding Critical Thinking and General Studies) taken in one academic year.* |
| **Aptitude test?** | **Yes – The TSA** |
| **Course length** | **3 years** |
| **Qualification** | **A BA Human Sciences in 3 years** |

**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, this is important encouragement to make sure you’re conscientious and hard working- they do get read! Although you shouldn’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, guidelines and statistics regarding the academic requirements for an application to the university can be found here: https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses-listing/human-sciences?wssl=1
* This website gives detailed information about past acceptance statistics and the entry requirements, it is important to remember however that academic scores are considered in light of your school’s performance, for example, GCSE performance that outperforms the average from your school will be flagged up 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: AAA offer at A level.

**Work Experience/ Volunteering**

* At Oxford you do not have to have any work experience, although if you can get some it is something great to talk about in your personal statement.
* Most universities understand that work experience is not always possible to obtain, therefore if you can’t get any, it’s not something to fret about.

* Tips for getting work experience: get in contact with your local businesses, charities and academic institutions (usually job shadowing rather than work experience), write them a letter and pop in (dressed smartly) and ask to talk to the Manager about the work experience. It is always useful to ask family, friends and acquaintances if they know anybody who may be able to point you in the right direction. It is more difficult to get work experience in a university, but some universities run schemes so keep checking their websites and get an application in early!
* Volunteering is another great addition to a personal statement and it ticks the ‘personable’ box on your application.
* This is much easier to come by, examples of suitable volunteering are working at Old People’s homes, local school play groups and hospital volunteering. If you’re struggling to find something, have a look online, there are many clubs that would happily have a volunteer if you get in contact with them.
* Use your initiative when it comes to applying to these places, a position may not be advertised by a phone call/letter of enquiry may do the trick if you can demonstrate you’re really keen
* Once again, volunteering is recommended, but not essential, if you try your best and can’t find any opportunities, the university will not hold this against you!

**Personal Statement**

* For Human Sciences writing a personal statement is the hardest part of your application as it is only offered at Oxford and UCL. The tutors that look through the applications know this and do not expect you to tailor your statement to Human Sciences. You can ask around for structures and you will see huge variety in what different people put, 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.
* DO NOT spend hours trawling through the student room reading about the amazing achievements of people who have supposedly got into Oxford, a lot of these are false and it’s important to make sure you’re talking about you, not someone else!
* Whilst the personal statement is about you, in order to help your application, it is good to read up on what each university wants to see from applicants, this can then be used as a potential structure. For Human Sciences applicants should be driven, and interested in making a difference and helping people, not looking for a fast track to a high paying job.
* In addition to this, you should read up in detail about the course, as Human Sciences covers a huge variety of topics try to relate points in your personal statement to different units on the course.
* Your personal statement could include: motivation behind your choice to study Human Sciences, reference to particular aspects of your A level course that you enjoy/that may be relevant to Human Sciences, work experience and volunteering, extracurricular activities as well as any extended reading you may have done (do not lie about this, they will ask you about it at interview!)

**Recommendations for Reading**

* Try and identify areas of you’re a level course that you specifically enjoy and extend this by finding books that explore this further.
* Keep up to date with the general news, as well as recent changes in the natural environment. Current events always make for a good talking point when stuck in an interview!
* Try and check the New Scientist, National Geographic or a newspaper’s ‘science’ section at least once a week. If anything interests you make sure you read up on it a bit further, this will demonstrate scientific interest if it gets brought up at interview.
* There is no need to memorise set articles you may come across, but a general awareness of what’s going in the scientific community will stand you in a great position.
* Suggested reading is available here: http://www.ihs.ox.ac.uk/prospective-students/introductory-reading/
* I would particularly recommend anything written by Jared Diamond and Stephen Jay Gould
* There is no recipe for what you should read, the tutors are looking for a genuine interest in extending your understanding, it doesn’t matter what specific area this may be in, there is no need to research what the tutors at Keble study, they are not expecting you to know about their research.

**Aptitude Test**

* To make an application to Oxford for Human Sciences you have to sit the TSA entrance exam
* 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.
* <http://www.admissionstestingservice.org/for-test-takers/thinking-skills-assessment/tsa-oxford/dates-and-costs/>
* The TSA exam is designed to assess how you think (as the name suggests), but there are ways to prepare for it. Firstly, try all the Past Papers 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/
* Make sure you keep a cool head during the exam and just try and answer as many questions as you can, its multiple choice so you do have a 20% chance of getting them right, and marks are not detracted for wrong answers!
* The final part of the TSA exam is an essay from a choice of topics, 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 well-rounded argument. If you want to put your essays into the top score brackets, references to current affairs are a great addition, but not essential.
* Oxford does not use your TSA score as a final deciding factor, it is taken into account with your grades, but it is important!

**Interview**

* If your application passes the first round, you will be invited to interview at the University.
* For Human Sciences, you will be interviewed at two colleges, the one you applied to, and one randomly assigned college- the colleges won’t know which you have applied to.
* Most colleges will give you two interviews, with different tutors, these may be on the same day or spread across a period of time- you’ll be given a room to stay in for the duration of your stay.
* For the interview 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.
* On the day, many candidates may be dressed in quite a relaxed manner, as Oxford encourages applicants to dress comfortably, however, do not feel embarrassed about wearing a suit or a smart skirt and shirt.
* The key advice in terms of what to wear, is to make sure you present the best version of yourself, whilst there is nothing wrong with trackies and trainers, its advised to dress more smartly in order to present yourself as a professional, a key attribute for a medical student. There is no need to panic if you don’t have a fancy suit etc, a smart shirt and trousers will be fine, the interviewers just want to see that you have made an effort.
* Wearing the wrong thing will not affect your chances of getting a place!

**Further Questions?**

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