



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

Oxford
Physics

Oxford Physics Open Days

Admissions Lecture

2017

The admissions process

- How to apply
- How to succeed
- Questions

How to apply

- Applications to Oxford are made through UCAS as usual, but must be made by 15th October at the latest.
- You cannot normally apply to both Oxford and Cambridge in the same year

How to apply

- There is no special application form or fee if you are applying through a UK school
- You must register (normally through your school) for the PAT aptitude test by 15th October at the latest

Courses

- There is a choice of two courses:
- F303, the 4 year MPhys course
- VF53, the 4 year MPhysPhil course
- Direct applications for F300, the 3 year BA course, are no longer possible

The BA course

- You can transfer from the 4 year MPhys course to the 3 year BA course at any point in the first two years. You can also transfer back again
- We normally recommend transfers at the end of year 2 after examination results are available.

MPhysPhil

- All applicants for the MPhysPhil are treated by Physics as if they were applying for Physics
- Applicants also assessed by Philosophy
- Must be accepted by *both* subjects
- Applicants may be rejected for the MPhysPhil but be offered an MPhys place
- MPhysPhil is not an easy option
(2/3 Physics + 2/3 Philosophy = 1 degree!)

MMathPhys

- The MMathPhys is a course in mathematical physics
- You cannot apply directly for this course; you must apply for the MPhys, MPhysPhil, or MMath
- During year 3 of the course apply to transfer to the MMathPhys in year 4

Colleges

- All applications to Oxford are handled by a college, coordinated by the department
- If you wish you can nominate a college, but if you prefer you can make an “open application” and a college will be assigned
- You may well end up with an offer from a college other than the one handling your application

Choosing a College

- You don't have to choose!
- Course is the same at all colleges
- Not Harris Manchester
- Your college is where you will be *living* for the next four years so worry about rooms, food, location and facilities
- Don't set your heart on one college as you may well end up elsewhere

Shortlisting

- Too many applicants to interview everyone so we shortlist down to 2.5 per place
- Mostly based on the aptitude test taken on 2nd November 2017 but a small number of applicants are shortlisted for other reasons
- Candidates are then reallocated from more popular to less popular colleges to ensure a ratio of 2.5 per place everywhere

Interviews

- Take place in December (11-13th in 2017)
- One or more interviews at your handling college, which you applied to or were assigned to or reallocated to
- One or more interviews at a second college chosen at random
- All academic and domestic arrangements are made by your handling college

Decisions

- Decisions are made at the end of the interview week once the information on all applicants is available
- Applicants are compared across the whole university, not just one college
- Letters are sent out on or after January 10th 2018

Feedback

- More detailed feedback including test scores can be sent later
- Some colleges will send this automatically but some will only send it on request

Offers

- Can get an offer from your handling college, your second interview college, a third college, or an “open offer”
- Open offers do not specify a college and a college will be determined in August once the A level results are available
- Offers will normally be conditional on examination results

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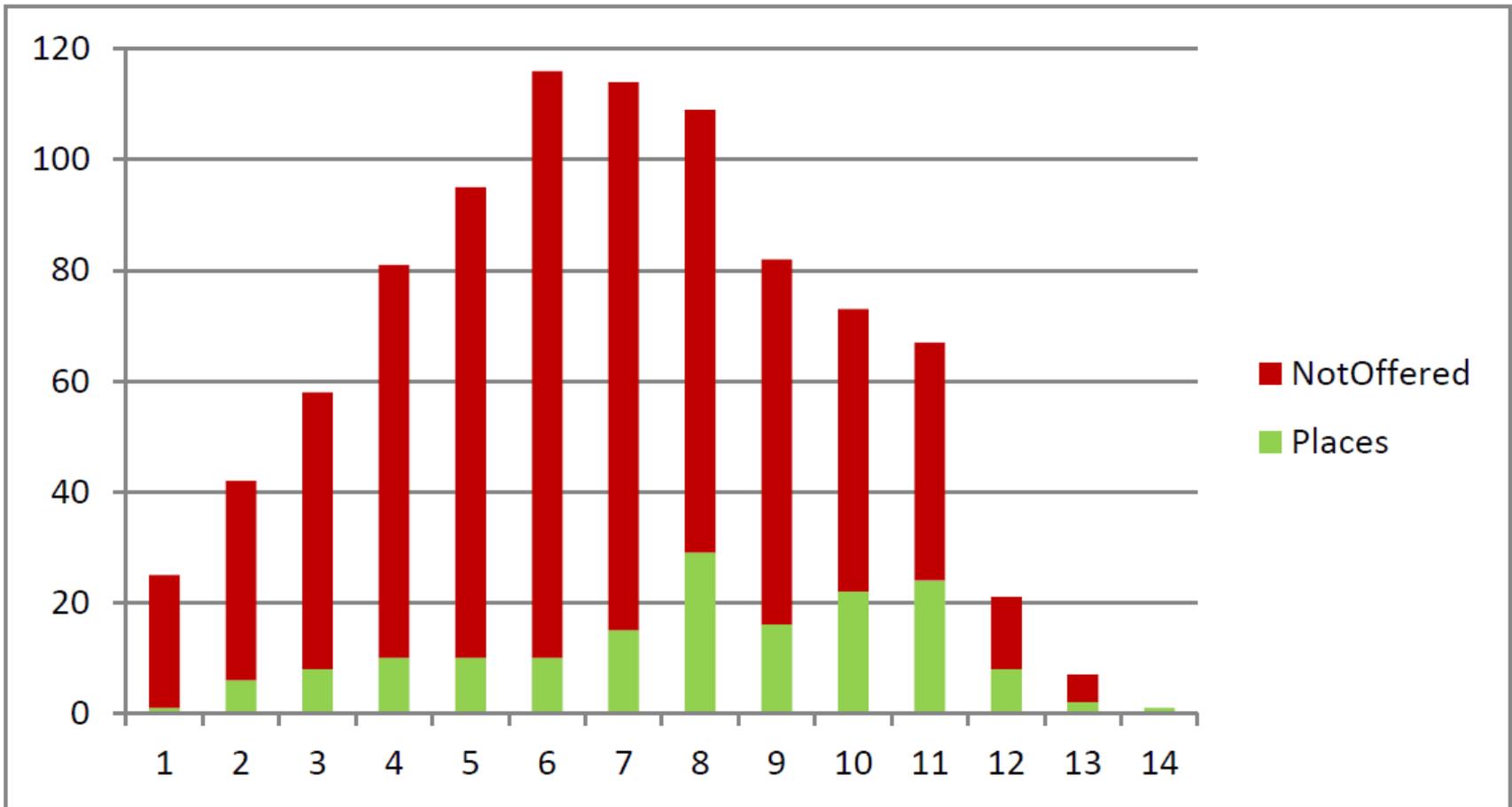
A levels

- Applicants should have or be predicted to get A*AA at A level or its equivalent, including Physics and Mathematics
- A*AA is no guarantee of a place: many A*AA applicants are rejected, and the great majority of successful applicants have between 2 and 4 A* grades
- Oxford does not use module marks

GCSEs

- There are no formal requirements
- The majority of successful candidates have between 4 and 11 A* grades at GCSE, but it is not particularly unusual for candidates to be accepted with fewer than 4 A* grades, or to be rejected with more than 11 A* grades

GCSE statistics (2014)



Further Maths

- Further Maths is not required and many applicants are accepted without it
- But it is the ideal 3rd A level subject, and you may be asked why you didn't do it
- All applicants should be confident that they would have enjoyed Further Maths and done well at it

Aptitude Test

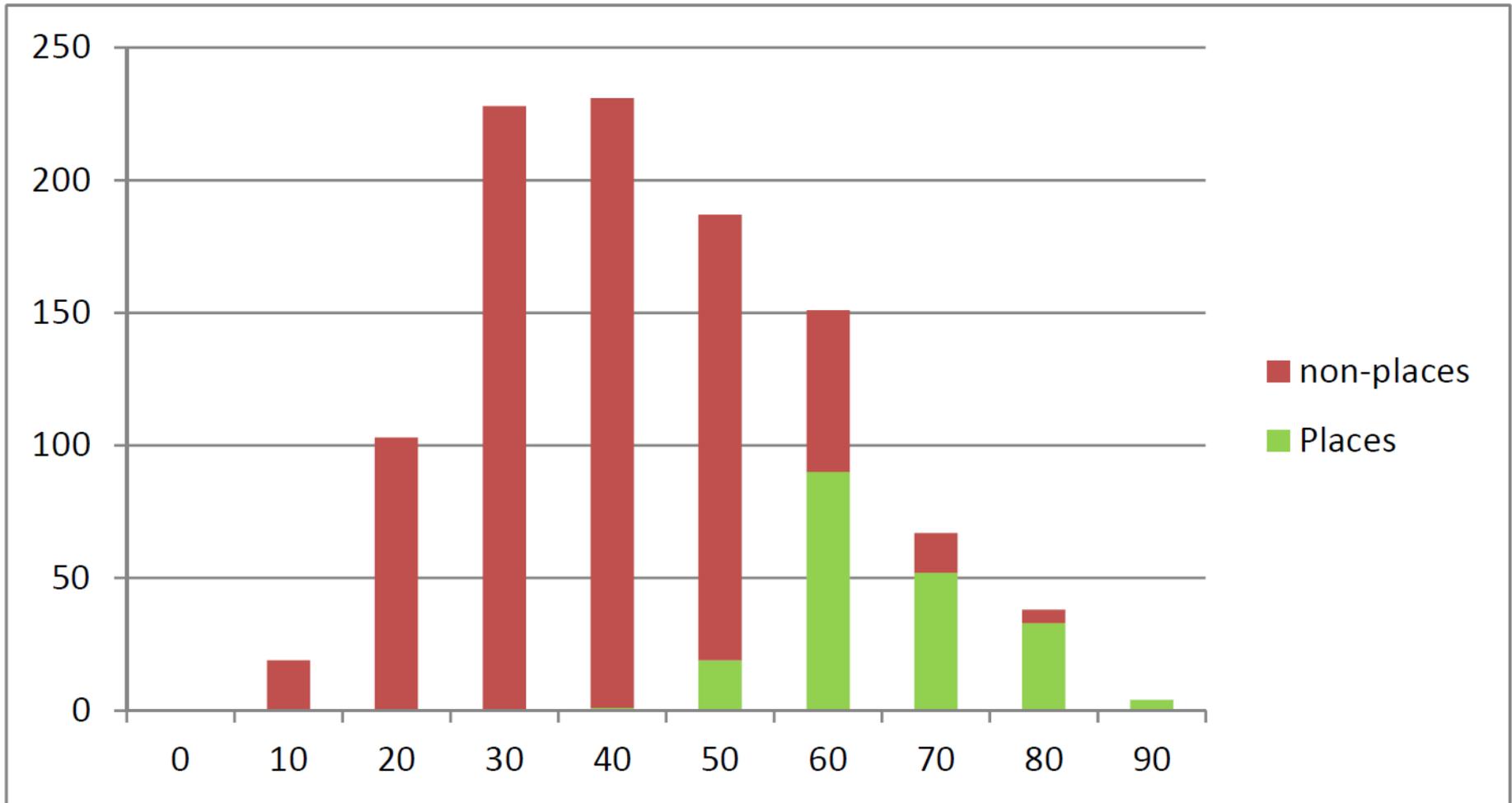
- The Aptitude Test is the single most important part of the whole process
- All candidates must sit the test, usually in their own schools, on 2nd November 2017
- A 2 hour paper on maths and physics based on GCSE and AS material
- Hard questions on fairly simple topics!

Aptitude Test (**Change**)

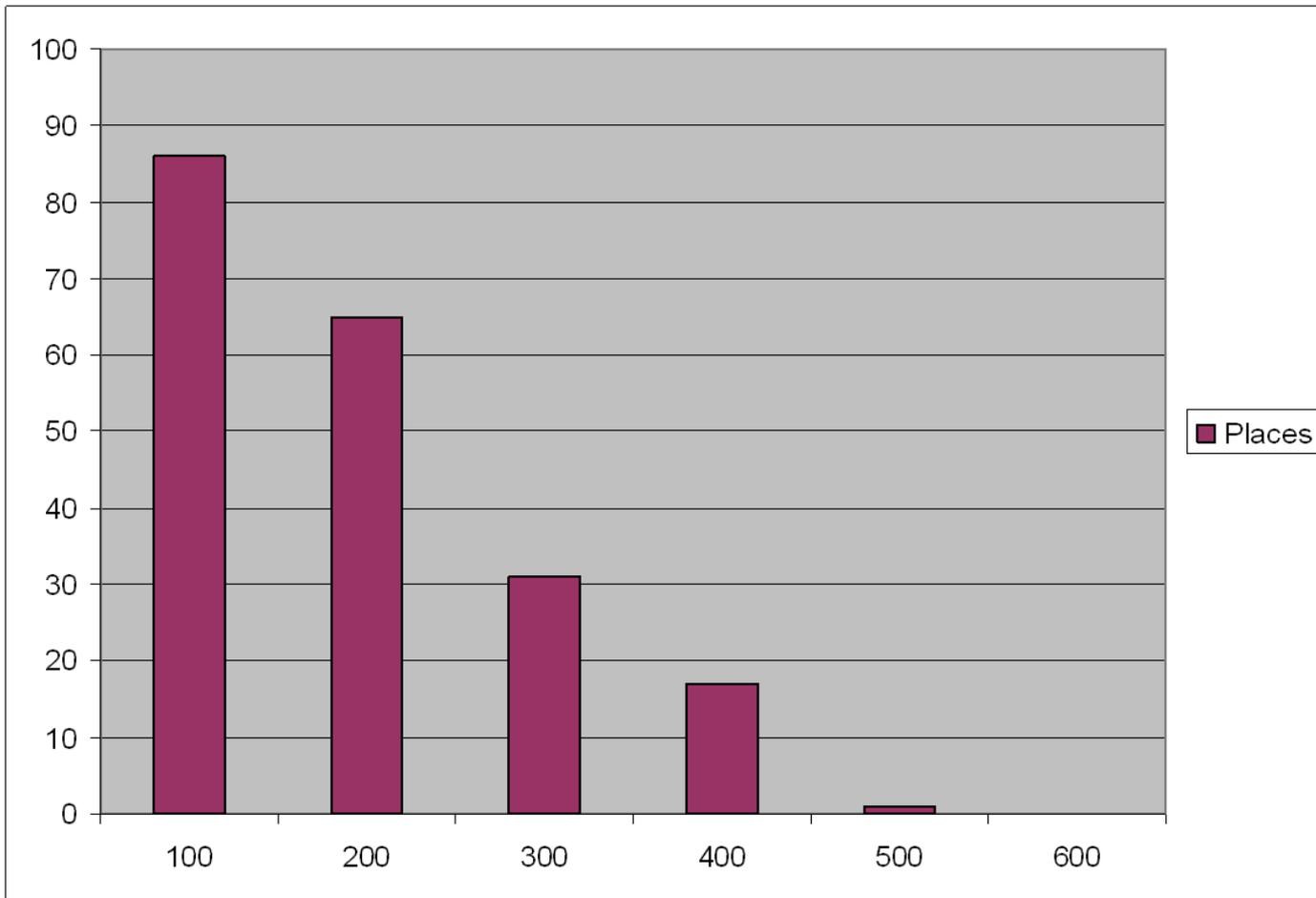
- Multiple choice questions will be re-introduced.
- The physics and maths sections will be mixed up with one another rather than being two distinct sections.

See <http://www2.physics.ox.ac.uk/study-here/undergraduates/applications/physics-aptitude-test-pat> for a sample paper.

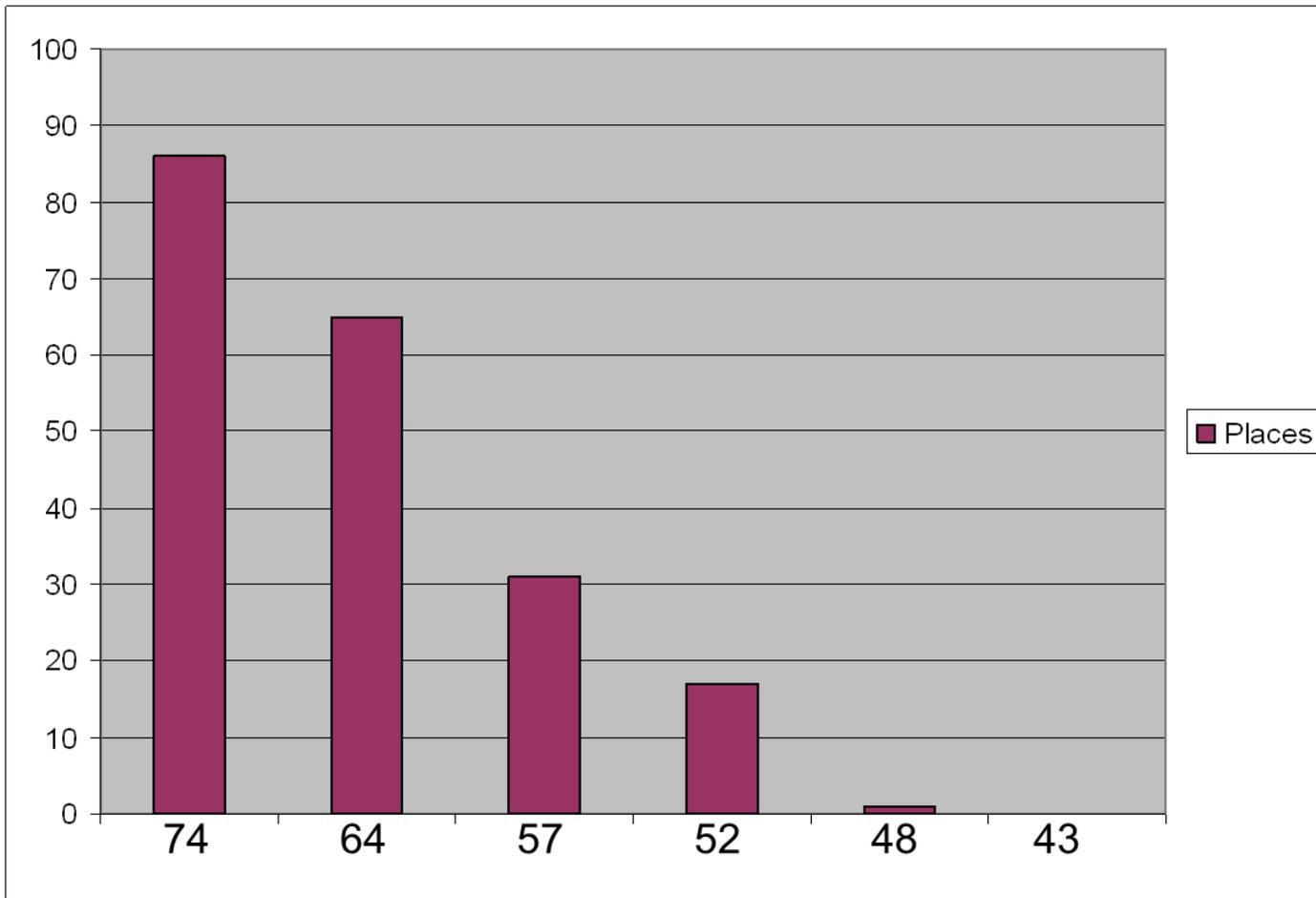
Test statistics (2011)



Test statistics (2008)



Test statistics (2008)



Aptitude Test

- You must register through an authorised test centre, normally your school or college. Full details are on the web.
- There is no fee for entry, but some test centres may make an administration charge
- Syllabus, past papers and reports are available on the physics web site

Aptitude Test

- Best way to practise is past papers
- There is one set of model solutions for the sample paper
- The syllabus and format changes slightly from year to year: current papers have no multiple choice or long questions
- Mark distribution varies: see the reports

References

- References are universally glowing, so it is very hard for applicants to stand out
- The most useful references are those which compare applicants to previous successful applicants
- Also very helpful if schools identify any serious disturbances in past education

Personal statements

- Despite what schools tell you, personal statements are largely irrelevant for *Oxford Physics* applicants
- Applicants may, however, be asked to expand on comments they have made
- Don't lie about interests to impress us as you are very likely to be found out

Interviews

- Interviews are purely academic. Any social chit chat is just to calm applicants down and will not count for anything
- They will cover a range of topics in physics and maths: a harder version of the test
- More interested in how applicants think than in what they know
- Almost impossible to know how you did!

Interview Practice

- Hard to practise academic content unless you have a *very* experienced teacher
- It is *very useful* to practise talking to an adult stranger about almost anything at all
- Try talking to a teacher you don't know!

Any Questions?