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 15\textsuperscript{th} 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 2\textsuperscript{nd} 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 (11-13\textsuperscript{th} 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 3\textsuperscript{rd} 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 2\textsuperscript{nd} 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
• 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?