Applying for Biomedical Sciences

Robert Wilkins

Places

3-year course
BA degree:
Cell and Systems Biology
OR
Neuroscience

December 2017
409 applicants
113 interviewed
44 offers

Admitting Colleges

Up to 40% of our successful applicants are made an offer by a college other than the one to which they applied (or were allocated)

You can make an 'open application': same chance of success

Entrance requirements

3 A levels
to include two from
Biology/Chemistry/Mathematics/Physics

Typical offer: A*AA

We expect you to have taken and passed any practical component in your chosen science subjects.
If you are not studying Biology/Chemistry/Mathematics/Physics, GCSEs in these subjects are needed

We do not have a further agenda:
there is no preference for 3 science A levels or specific subject combinations

Entrance requirements

IB
HL to include two from
Biology/Chemistry/Mathematics/Physics

Typical offer: 39 (7,6,6 at HL)

If you are not studying Biology/Chemistry/Mathematics/Physics, GCSEs in these subjects are needed

We do not have a further agenda:
there is no preference for 3 science A levels or specific subject combinations

The evidence

UCAS form
academic record (GCSE, A-level prediction)
personal statement
reference
BMAT
Interviews
Personal statement

*Read the selection criteria first*

- Explain why you have chosen the subject
- Outline your interests in the subject
- Describe what you have done to learn/prepare
- Summarise your extra-curricular activities
- Provide other relevant information: gap year, illness
- Note that the bulk should be academic-related
- Be sure to be honest: do not manufacture interests
- Don’t copy a ‘model’ statement from elsewhere!

Selection criteria

[www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/study/bms](http://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/study/bms)

- We look for evidence of a strong track record of academic achievement
- motivation: an informed view of the subject
- intellectual curiosity, enthusiasm for science
- reasoning and problem-solving ability
- ability to communicate
- capacity for sustained and intense work

Personal statement

*Read the selection criteria first*

- Explain why you have chosen the subject
- Outline your interests in the subject
- Describe what you have done to learn/prepare
- Summarise your extra-curricular activities
- Provide other relevant information: gap year, illness
- Note that the bulk should be academic-related
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BMAT

**ALL applicants must sit the BMAT**

It provides an assessment of potential for medicine, biomedical sciences courses

- There are three elements:
  - 60 minute test of aptitude and skills
  - 30 minute test of scientific knowledge and applications
  - 30 minute writing task

BMAT questions are be designed so that **no specific preparation** beyond GCSE-level science and mathematics is necessary, ensuring that the BMAT is accessible to all potential applicants irrespective of background

Registration deadline: **1 October 2018**

Test date: **31 October 2018**


Shortlisting

- We write to applicants in early December to let them know if they have been short-listed
- ~ 3 people are invited for each available place
- GCSE performance, BMAT score and other relevant information are used in shortlisting
We use the fraction of GCSEs obtained at A* as our measure of GCSE strength. Our average applicant has around 70% of their GCSEs at A* grades. We can assess your GCSE grades against those of other students at your school. We do not necessarily give equal weight to each section of BMAT. There is no absolute required number of A* or BMAT score to obtain an interview.

Shortlisted applicants are interviewed by two colleges: the college of choice and the other allocated by computer. College selectors will not be aware of college preference or BMAT score. Applicants will be in Oxford for ~26 hours.

The number and format of interviews may vary but the selection criteria are common. A common pattern is to receive two interviews at each college. Applicants will be interviewed by at least two academics - including a psychology tutor - at each college. The personal statement often shapes the interview.

Colleges rank candidates on the basis of the UCAS information and interview. Tutors then receive BMAT scores, and the rankings from the second interviewing college. Colleges re-rank and select those candidates to whom they wish to make offers. The college of application has first choice of any applicant.

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Why interview?

- explore your interests and motivation for the subject
- examine how you think
  - how you handle information
    - how? why? so what? what’s missing/wrong?
- establish what insight you have about the subject and studying it at Oxford

Misconceptions about interviews

- there are trick questions
- it's a test of knowledge
- everyone gets the same questions
- wrong answers are always a bad thing
- you will know how it's gone
- one bad interview and it's all over
- it's an ordeal

Types of questions

- 'warm-up' questions
- questions based on your statement
  - reading
  - projects
  - experience
  - interests
- scientific problem questions
- questions based on schoolwork
- current affairs