

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

Balliol College
Corpus Christi College
Exeter College
Keble College
Lincoln College
Magdalen College
New College
Oriental College
St Anne's College
St Catherine's College
St Edmund Hall
St Hilda's College
St Hugh's College
St John's College
The Queen's College
University College
each offers at least two places

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

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

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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

BMAT questions are 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**

<http://www.admissiontesting.org/for-test-takers/bmat/bmat-october/>

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

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

Shortlisting

Short-listed applicants are interviewed by **two** colleges: the college of choice 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

Interviews

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

Selection

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

Interviews



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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