**UK UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS**

**UCAS**

5 course choices

1 personal statement

CT recommendation [ONLY the CT; doesn’t change even if you’ve graduated]

Apply for entry next September or following September (deferred entry); boys apply only if going for a) PSC or b) uniformed group scholarships

Deadlines: 20 September, 15 October, 15 January – usually don’t pay attention to January one; before graduated, should have already put in UCAS application

Admissions test?

Written work requirement?

Interviews?

Course Search

UK course search is probably the most important research you’ll be doing for uK schools

Go beyond course titles

Check out minimal grade requirements for many of your popular courses – AAA in 3H2s, for example

Use your 5 choices well – spread your risk

All schools receive the **same** personal statement

Research your courses

Most popular:

* Medicine
* Law
  + LNAT schools vs non-LNAT
    - **LNAT**
    - www.lnat.ac.uk
    - Registration, Timescales & Deadlines
    - Have to register yourself
  + Sign up separately and don’t KIV the LNAT till too late
    - Oxford applicants have an early LNAT completion date
  + No prior knowledge of the law is required
  + Law internship experience is good to have
  + No subject prerequisites
* Economics
  + Pay attention to Math and Economics grades
  + Many courses are extremely mathematical
  + TSA may be required – depending on your institution

Tripos system – **Cambridge**

[www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/camdata/tripos.html](http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/camdata/tripos.html)

Divided into several parts and need to complete parts to qualify for BA degree

Offered across different areas

* Natural Science (NST) – Psychological and Behavioural Sciences
* Engineering
* Manufacturing Engineering
* Human, Social and Political Science combi
  + Pol & Int’l relations
  + Sociology
  + Social Anthropology
  + Biological Anthropology
  + Archaeology
  + Assyriology
  + Egyptology
* Economics

Psychology

* BA or BSc courses: BA at Oxford & Cambridge for historical reasons, the course is still very scientific
* Highly recommended that applicants have studied one or more of the science subjects
  + Bio, Chem, Phys, Pysch, Math is highly recommended
* Fields of human cognitive processes, neuroscience, language etc.
* Cambridge – part of PBS tripos / NatSc tripos track
* Experimental Psychology or **Psychology, Philosophy and linguistics**
  + **TSA and MLAT required**
* UCL , University of Bath

Philosophy

* Oxford has a lot of courses; Cambridge is Philosophy tripos

History

* Oxford Single Honours or Joint honours; Cambridge is part of the history tripos

Social Sciences

* Oxford: Human Sciences
* Cambridge: Human, Social and Political science
  + Interested in politics & int’l relation, sociology, social anthropology, biological anthropology etc.
* LSE: BSc Philosophy, Politics and Economics; BSc Politics and Int’l Relations

Scottish Universities tend to be 4 –year courses as opposed to 3 year Bachelor’s degrees; closer to American system, choose major end of 2nd year

Professional Courses:

* Law – SG ministry of Law

In-house school deadlines to be released in July

Timelines (Cambridge) – these stay the same even in future application windows

20 Sept: UCAS deadline; COPA submission

- Process of student submission to Civics Tutor who will then submit full UCAS application

End Oct: Interviews, Cambridge Written Tests

Nov: written work deadlines, if any; BMAT admissions

Mid Jan: offers

March: A level results release

Timelines (Oxford)

15 Oct: UCAS deadline, Early LNAT deadline

Nov: Admissions Tests (5 Nov); Written work deadline, where required

Dec: Skype interviews – done here, RI is a Skype centre

Mid Jan: offers made

March: A levels results released

Applying this year – applying with Predicted Grades

Oxford – after Prelims are over; Predicated Grades will be reflective of prelim grades;

Cambridge – Predicated Grades will be reflective of CT2 results; will call for last year’s internal grades as well – so Promos are submitted

**UCAS Personal Statement**

Components used for selection

* Course-specific entry requirements: minimal grades (Y4 grades self-reported and predicted grades)
* You won’t know your predicted grades, nor your reference
* Teacher reference from CT
* Admissions Test (where required, course-specific and school-specific)
* Submission of Written work (usually Oxford & Cambridge)
  + Usually what you’ve already done before in class, not required to come up with something new in October/November
* Interviews (where required)

Personal statement is 70-80% Academic, but don’t turn it into a thesis (4000 character maximum)

Questions to address:

* How did you become interested in the course? Demonstrate your enthusiasm! (and suitability for course)
* Subject focus – scope of subject matter discussed to indicate range of interests in relevant areas
* Evidence of connections made through wide reading (outside of H2 syllabus, for instance) for a deeper appreciation of subject
* Demonstrate intellectual curiosity
* Internship experience: For more professional tracks, this discussion is greatly helpful (eg dentistry, law etc); evaluate your *learning* experience, don’t merely describe. *Omit if less instructive*.
* Activities – varying importance depending on course applied for; general advice: close with a para on your own activities – be sure to focus on the ones relevant to your course first, followed by a mere listing of those less relevant – are you able to relate to other people? Community Service, dealt with people from all walks of life?
* There’s no room to go off on a tangent to less relevant things
* It’s not a career statement – it’s about your interest in studying the subject that will equip you for that career

Openings

* Anchor to your core area of interest
* Straight into the subject matter – what it is that interests you, and why you are even going to this subject
  + “Economics, in my opinion, helps us better understand the world we live in…”
  + “I began to take a deep personal interest in law when…”
  + “Politics has always been a source of fascination for me…”
* If you use a quote, you’re using someone else’s words – you have to own them, and make them relevant throughout and connect it to what you have to say.

Body

* Connections
* Use your personal story – of how your interest has developed in the subject area – to weave everything together
* Use key ideas to frame your personal statement
* Ensure cohesion throughout entire statement
* Avoid circumlocution; crisp and clear connections are required
* Heavily content-based
* Demonstrate your ability to discuss ideas, and the interrelationships between ideas
* Focus on academic interest, and application to read the subject.
* Reader has only one question – why should I be interested in having you sit in my class? What would be of interest to me to recruit you into a class? He wants a sharp mind.
  + “Development economics has fascinated me from the start…”
  + “Economics amazes me as it deals with problems on a macro scale, but also with personal matters… Behavioural Economics was a childhood preoccupation as I pondered the motivations behind human actions…Dan Ariely’s *Predictably Irrational*… discussion of concepts in Game Theory etc”
* Can tell from your statement if you’re going to get in or not – especially schools which don’t conduct interviews
  + In those schools, if your statement doesn’t make the cut, you’re out
* Just list your external activities, don’t need to discuss in detail
* The more specific the connections you make (ideas-wise), the more individual your personal statement will be
* A lot of deliberate effort required to craft personal statement

Conclusions

* Why your choice of subject in the UK
* One-liners are fine too; meat is in the opening and first few body paragraphs
* Scholarships you have been awarded/are considering (because of relevance to course choice) and career choice etc.
* Unnecessary to dwell on it much

Interviews are academic interviews – have to be able to process it on the spot, when you evaluate it as well

**First things first**

* Choose your 5 courses
* Read up on your courses – from preliminary readings, what’s covered in years 1, 2 and 3 etc
* Those with variations in permutations, PPE, E&M, Liberal arts should be aware there is more than one reader for their statement
* Remember your reader cum evaluator is the academic professor in your subject area
* Often less interested in what you do outside of class

College choice is blind – other schools don’t know where else you’re applying

Although you’re only allowed to apply for Oxford OR Cambridge

Complete UCAS application due by **earliest** deadline

Will be earlier in-house as CT has to submit it as well

Cambridge – 20 Sept, Oxford – 15 Oct, All others latest 15 Jan, students advised to complete apps before school year ends (before your tutors forget about you)

Note that some courses may also need admissions test completed/registered for, prior to UCAS submissions

Personal statement (4000 characters long) is read alongside rest of materials where required – admissions test results, submitted written works, interview (by academics)

Statement may be drawn on for discussion during interviews

Where interviews are part of the assessment, they tend to be weighted most heavily.

**To-do-list for now:**

* Decide on course options: check out courses on UCAS, use UCAS course search
* Check entry requirements
* Check admissions test, interview requirements
* Cambridge – check out some colleges? (Oxford doesn’t matter - submit open application; Cambridge does)
* But don’t start your UCAS account till cycle opens in August (you should be applying through Apply 2015)
* Application talks towards end July/early August

**UCAS TALK 2**

[www.ucas.com/apply/](http://www.ucas.com/apply/)

Buzzword: Raffles2015

Applying for 2015

List as ‘international’

Will receive a username

Applying “through my school/college”

You will be able to pick through your class – if you don’t see this, you’ve entered the wrong portal

You get a unique 10 digit ID – in any correspondence with any university, you have to site this number

(Don’t check the criminal conviction checkbox if you haven’t done anything)

Input of qualifications – choose ‘Singapore-Integrated-Program-Cambridge-Advanced-Level” [SIPCAL]

Enter subject, select ‘Other’ if not listed

Choose SEAB-CI as awarding body for your subjects

List ‘Pending’ if results are not out yet

Enter RP qualifications:

Have to type in “Raffles Institution” and search it out

Select “Singapore-Integrated-Programme English Language Qualification”

Critical step as UK universities require knowledge of your standard of English

* You may be required by your UK university to complete the IELTS at a later point as a result of changes at the UKBA as it may influence the student visa application

For all other subjects, choose ‘Other’ (International Non-EU Qualifications)

Add subjects accordingly with exception of English language

Qualification date: December of the year of graduation

For O levels, select ‘my school/centre is not listed here” – will need to key in the name of the school yourself

Singapore GCE-Ordinary Level

CIE as awarding organization

UCAS: **Cost**

Application fee for 2-5 choices (more than one course, university or college) = **£23**; 1 choice: **£12**; need to be paid with a credit card

Submit

Personal information

Course choices

Personal statement (4000 characters **maximum**)

* Explain your motivations for your course choices
* Opportunity to explain what you find interesting and fascinating about the subject

Teacher reference (1 only, from CT)

* Your CT can only complete his portion and send the application off **once you have completed all your other sections in UCAS**
* **You need to prompt your tutor to fill in the reference.**
* Ex-students contact former Civics Tutor or former Co-CT
* Civics Tutor/Referee is the person who completes and ‘sends’ off your UCAS application

Sec 4 or Y4 IP equivalent grades (input by yourself)  
Predicted Grades [if applying this year; applying next year with Actual Grades]

*Note: Competitive courses may require other additional information as part of their selection process*

College choice is blind

The same personal statement goes to all your UK institutions – so for Personal Statement, make sure there are similarities across all the subjects you apply for if you’re applying for different course choices

The deadline that applies to you is the deadline for your application **first due** (e.g. Cambridge). This is faster and more convenient.

Once the UCAS has been submitted, schools can/may contact you directly regarding your application. **Check your mailbox regularly.**

UCAS is just a means of sending information to the universities securely, nothing else.

Maximum of 5 choices;

If you apply to: Medicine, Vet Science, Dentistry, you only have 4 choices; you can add on a **related** 5th choice

Check course-specific subject requirements, and whether you need to complete any additional admissions tests

**Cambridge & Oxford**

Can only apply for one university

Can only apply for one course at either of them

Recognised Law Degrees & Recognised Medicine Degrees – check the various websites

Additional testing:

LNAT, BMAT, UKCAT – be aware of test dates and plan accordingly; you have to sign up for them **on your own**

LNAT

Test date: 1 Sept-15/20 Jan 2015

LSE is a **non-LNAT school**; evaluate personal statement and grades primarily

Registration opens in August

**Oxford: register & book by 5 Oct; submit UCAS form by 15 Oct; Sit LNAT before or on 20 Oct at the latest**

All other Unis:

15 Jan 2015: register & book LNAT and submit UCAS form

20 Jan: Sit LNAT on or by this date

**Cambridge does not use the LNAT as well**

Cambridge has their own test date, on the same date as their written test

You can check offers on **UCAS Track**

Each school makes out offers in its own time, depending on whether interviews and admission tests results are required for the cost

Universities in the UK make **conditional offers** (unless applying with Actual grades)

You will be given a reply date once you hear back from all your universities

You will firm one offer and keep one insurance offer in UCAS Track [i.e. you keep a maximum of 2 offers]

Schools will contact you individually for accommodation, student visa arrangements etc.

**Apps with earlier EXTERNAL deadlines:**

Cambridge: 20 September

Oxford: 15 October

All UK med/vet/dentistry schools: 15 October

Additional components:

1. Any written test, written work during class time as well as other test requirements
2. Interview in Singapore in Oct/Dec
3. Preliminary application (COPA for Cambridge)

Cambridge:

23 for UCAS, 30 for COPA, 130 for Interview [pounds]

**Important dates to note:**

20 Aug: Last day to request references for Cambridge/Oxford

10 Sept : Cambridge UCAS & COPA submission deadline for students

20 Sept: external deadline

If applying to Cambridge, you can drop off your personal statement from **15 July**; for everyone else from **1 Aug**

Read on a **first come first serve basis**

Give some reading time – as you get closer to the deadline, turnaround time slows down (roughly 3 days to a week)

Book an appointment with your allocated Counselor [PatsySoo-Koh.clickbook.net / kevinsim.clickbook.net]

Usually we say 2 drafts

**Singaporean Males only**

If you need to serve NS, don’t make a UCAS application in this application cycles unless going for SAF, SPF, Navy, Air Force and/or PSC

UK Schools **only** allow applications for next year’s entry and following year (deferred entry)

e.g. UCAS 2015

- Entry in Sept 2015; deferred entry 2016

Do check if the school is willing to defer your entry

**OXBRIDGE-SPECIFIC INFOMRATION**

Oxbridge **MAY** allow for 2 years – you have to look up the information based on the course requirements

Applying with: SIPCAL – Y4 IP grades + Predicted Grades/A levels **OR** O levels + Predicted Grades/A Levels

For Oxford, only need UCAS. Cambridge also requires the COPA.

For Cambridge, your CT2 grades are **incredibly important** for the prediction

For Oxford, they will be looking at the prelims

Typical entrance requirements:

**AAA (Oxford) / AAAA (Cambridge) + H3** (sometimes)

Course-specific requirements are there as well

* Biology as a requirement for most Vet courses for example

Interviews are **always academic**

Written Work submissions

Both say they will recognize SIPCAL, but while Oxford says for sure, Cambridge says ‘maybe’

**Additional Components**

Check the various entrance requirements (see slides to be released)

There is also info specific for applicants from Singapore

Admissions tests are specific to the courses you are applying for

Check to see if registration for the tests are required before even submitting the UCAS (eg LNAT)

May be required to submit written work as well

All tests can only be taken **once a year**; will take the **first score**

**British Council** coordinates most of the tests – go under ‘Educational & Professional exams’ and under “Admissions Testing” – you will have to pay fees for these tests

**STEP tests** run in June every year – if required, can be taken in 2015 [offers would hence be conditional on getting a certain grade for the test]

Most tests conducted on 5 November 2014

All Cambridge Written tests take place at Hwa Chong:

**25 Oct 2014, Hwa Chong, will be notified by Cambridge directly**

TSA: **Thinking Skills Assessment**

Required for any Philosophy or Psychology combination at Oxford

Required for all sciences (including Psychological and behavioural Sciences as well as Social, Human and Political Sciences)

TSA Oxford:

Registration opens in September; deadline 15 October (UCAS deadline for Oxford as well)

Test date: 5 Nov

Results released online by 15 Jan

TSA Cambridge:

Cambridge college will be in touch regarding testing arrangements

**Oxford-only tests:**

CAT (classics admissions)

ELAT (English Lit)

HAT (history)

MLAT (modern languages)

OLAT (Oriental languages)

MAT (Mathematics)

* Imperial College requires all undergraduate math take the MAT

STEP is required for Cambridge and Warwick math courses

Some Cambridge colleges require the STEP Math on top of the TSA

[www.admissiontestingservice.org](http://www.admissiontestingservice.org)

Some courses require pieces of written work that you have done as part of their application

There is a cap on the number of words they are willing to read, and an assignment completed **during class time**

Cover page to be endorsed by the teacher marking the assignment to vouch for the time period in which the paper was completed

Will hear from Cambridge directly, Oxford by 15 November

Under ‘entry requirements’ for Cambridge to find out if there’s anything extra that needs to be submitted

You may have to take the test whether they require the test or not, as you may be rolled over into the pool of applicants for all the other Cambridge colleges to accept you

Oxford interviews will take place in **early Dec 2014**

Skype interviews held at Raffles

NB: All medicine applicants to fly over to UK for interviews

Cambridge interviews: **20-29 October**

Architecture, history of Art, Classics and Music candidates may have to travel to Cambridge for interview

* There is the option to be interviewed here or be interviewed in Cambridge (doesn’t affect your chances)
* Those wishing to be interviewed in Cambridge, COPA is only due 15 October

Both schools will contact **directly**

Have a look at sample interviews online – it’ll be academic simulation of a tutorial, to see if you can think on your feet and if you get stuck what do you do and what resources you draw on

**CAMBRIDGE APPLICATIONS**

Submit COPA + Submit UCAS application 🡪 Email received with details of SAQ & COPA Reference number 🡪 Complete SAQ with COPA Reference Number 🡪 Possible invitation to interview 🡪 Decision

Cambridge requires:

1. Cambridge online Preliminary Application (COPA)
2. Transcript Document Submission
3. Supplementary Application Questionnaire (SAQ)

20 Sept: COPA & UCAS due

COPA is required for anyone applying outside of the EU; UCAS is insufficient for Cambridge

COPA collects detailed info on top of the UCAS

You should first create a UCAS account before beginning the COPA; will need UCAS ten-digit personal ID for COPA

It does not matter whether you **complete** COPA or UCAS first (but you need the UCAS code for COPA)

You don’t have to complete COPA in one go

Not all questions may be applicable to you, however you cannot submit COPA until you have completed the necessary sections

**Only allowed one COPA application per year**. Making more than one application will invalidate your **entire** application

Takes roughly 2 hours to complete the COPA, though can log in as many times as necessary

May take up to **24 hours** for the email containing COPA reference number to come through; will also take some time for UCAS application to be processed, so email about SAQ will not be received immediately.

**Firefox browser** is recommended – if you experience difficulties, relogin.

Have to complete the *Application type* section to access the rest of the questionnaire

Requires a digital photograph of yourself

Will prompt you if information is incomplete

Goes straight to the interviewer who will roster you from it

Some of the UCAS information is duplicated in COPA

Then will involve Application Details:

1. Proposed course; indicate options that you wish to follow; if you will consider changing course (since some courses only open in 2nd year) and the Preferred College which **must match UCAS choice** or the UCAS choice takes precedence |

2. Have you applied to Cambridge before; Any circumstances that might lead to asking for deferred entry to 2016 or 2017; If unsuccessful, will you consider an offer for entry in October 2016; indicate **where** you prefer to be interviewed if selected

Education Details

Subjects currently reading / last read

Requires phases of education since Age 11

Were you able to take subjects you wanted? Can your school provide extra lessons to support Cambridge applications (NO)? Difficulties teaching of subjects?

For Qualifications Completed: ex-students, list A level grades, awarding body CIE

Whereas current students view Qualifications Un-completed

SAT results **can** be declared but **do not need to be** [what is good to you may not be good enough to them]

Enter UCAS personal statement; you are given an optional additional personal statement to tell Cambridge alone you couldn’t have said elsewhere; you are **not disadvantaged if you don’t fill it in**

Transcripts can now be uploaded in soft copy, but needs to be a multi-page PDF

You can choose to complete the COPA first and come back to upload it once you have it

Only **one** opportunity to upload your files

High school transcript submission:

Current students: 0 level/IP + Promos

Ex-students: O level/IP + As

There’s a 30 page guide available online

Provide accurate contact details for other UCAS referee

Email must read: [cambridgeapplications@ri.edu.sg](mailto:cambridgeapplications@ri.edu.sg)

You will still be allowed to submit past the deadline, but your application / any extra info will **not** be considered

**SAQ** requires you to use your COPA reference number; application is complete only when you submit the SAQ

You will receive a conformation email that the UCAS has been sent

You Section 1 completed with COPA reference number and UCAS ID number then sent on to Section 8

You may skip certain SAQ sections

Each time you submit something, give it 24 hour turnaround time and some confirmation that submission has been received