



Corpus Christi College
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Applications to Oxbridge

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Today's Focus

- Consider advantages of Oxbridge
- Note similarities and differences between Oxford/Cambridge incl. application routes
- Identify key traits of Oxbridge applicants
- Chart the application process
- Discuss strategies to maximise success



Why Oxbridge?

- **Huge scope:**
Founded in 1096 (Oxford) and 1209 (Cambridge)
Oxford - 22,000 students, Cambridge – 24,000
Oxford staff – 16,350, Cambridge – 12,440
- **Prestige:**
Complete University Guide 2025:
1st (Cambridge) and **2nd** (Oxford) of 130 unis
QS World University Rankings 2024:
2nd (Cambridge) and **3rd** (Oxford) of 1,500 unis
- **Outstanding teaching**
- **Fantastic graduate prospects**
- **Generous financial support**



Why Cambridge?

Financial support

University strategies to help students:

- Cambridge Bursary Scheme (CBS)
 - Triggered at 62k per year (students receive £100 per year). Those whose family income is £0-£25,000 receive £3,500 per year
 - Students who have been eligible for free school meals at any time in secondary school receive extra £1,000
 - Enhanced Bursary available to Medics/Vets for years 4/5/6 of up to an extra £2,100 per year



Why Cambridge? Financial support

An example from Corpus Christi College:

- CBS - £3,300
- University student support - £500
- College financial support - £1500
- Specific College bursary - £500
- IT fund - £600
- Travel grant - £200
- Book grant - £200

TOTAL: £6,800



Oxbridge Aims

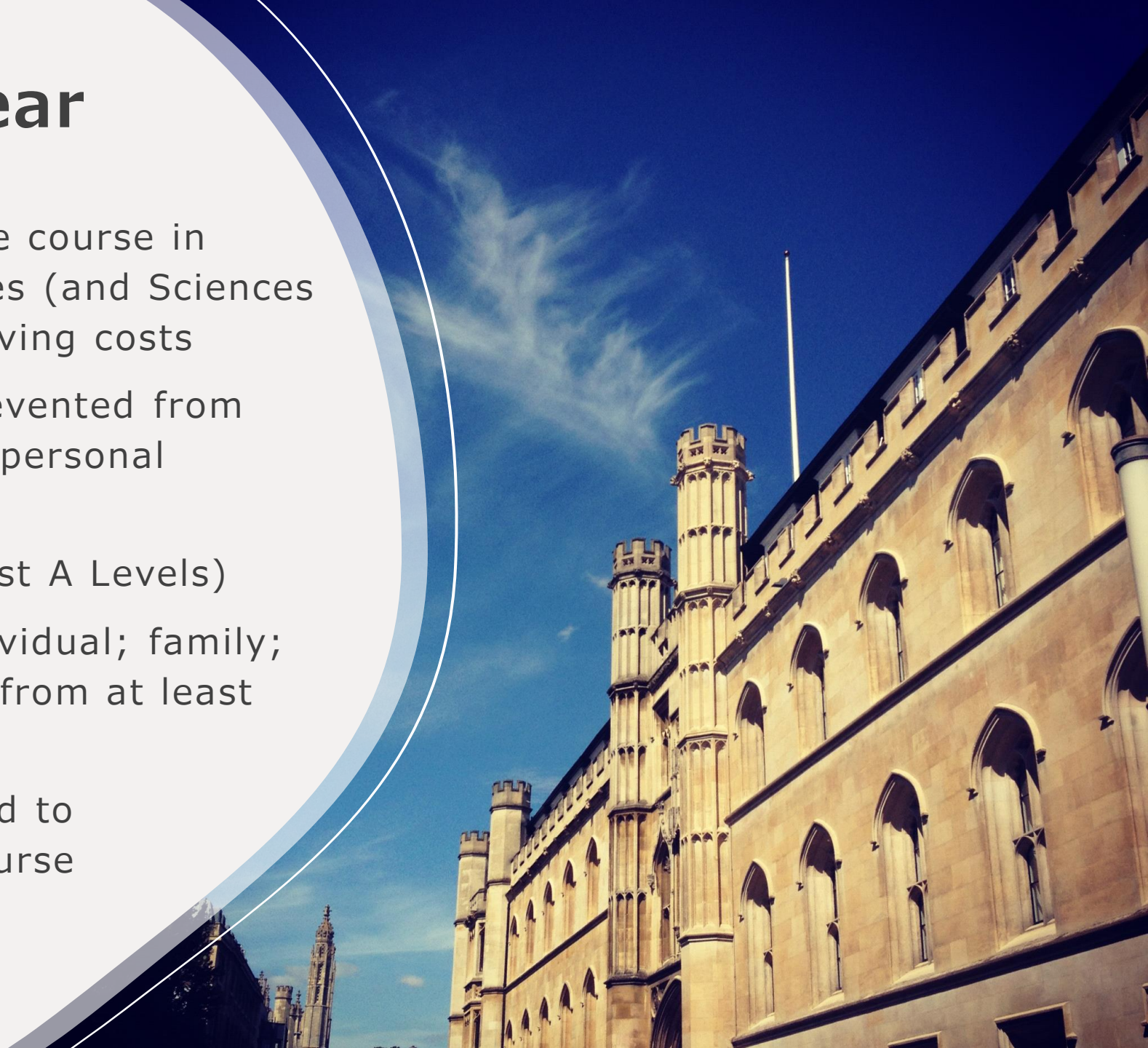
To admit students with the highest academic ability and potential, irrespective of social, racial, religious or financial considerations

- 75% of applicants will be called to interview at Cambridge
(minimum required grades A*AA-A*A*A)
- 40% of applicants will be called to interview at Oxford
(minimum required grades AAA-A*A*A)



The Foundation Year

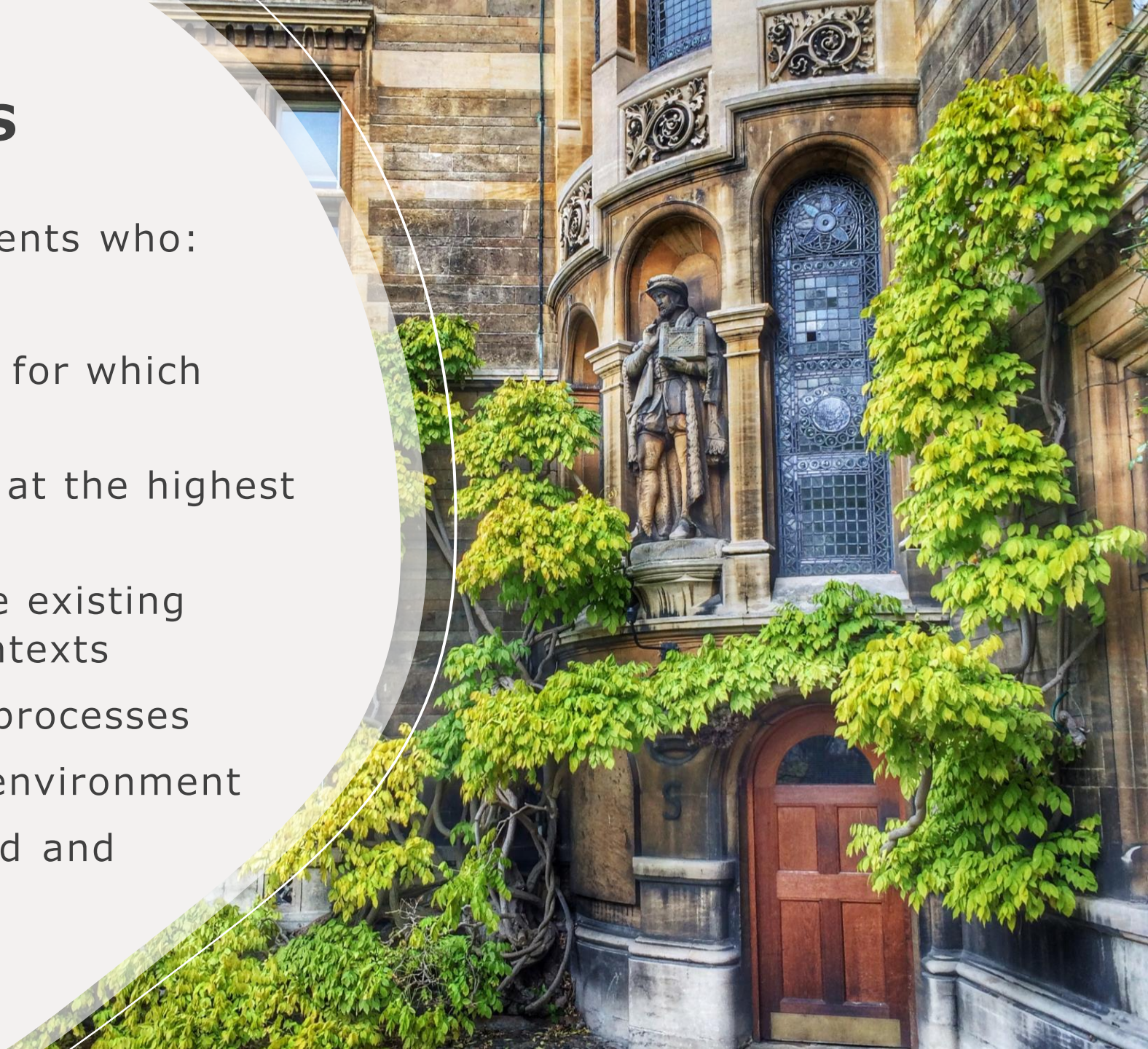
- A one-year, fee-free, pre-degree course in Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences (and Sciences at Oxford), with a bursary for living costs
- For students who have been prevented from reaching academic potential by personal circumstances
- BBB at needed for entry (not just A Levels)
- Range of eligibility criteria: individual; family; school. Must meet one or more from at least two of these categories
- 65% in Foundation Year required to move to a traditional degree course
- 31 January 2025 deadline



Key student Skills

Oxbridge are looking for students who:

- are well suited for the course for which they've applied
- have the potential to study it at the highest level
- demonstrate an ability to take existing knowledge into unfamiliar contexts
- can **articulate** their thought processes
- respond well to the learning environment
- are committed, self-disciplined and resilient



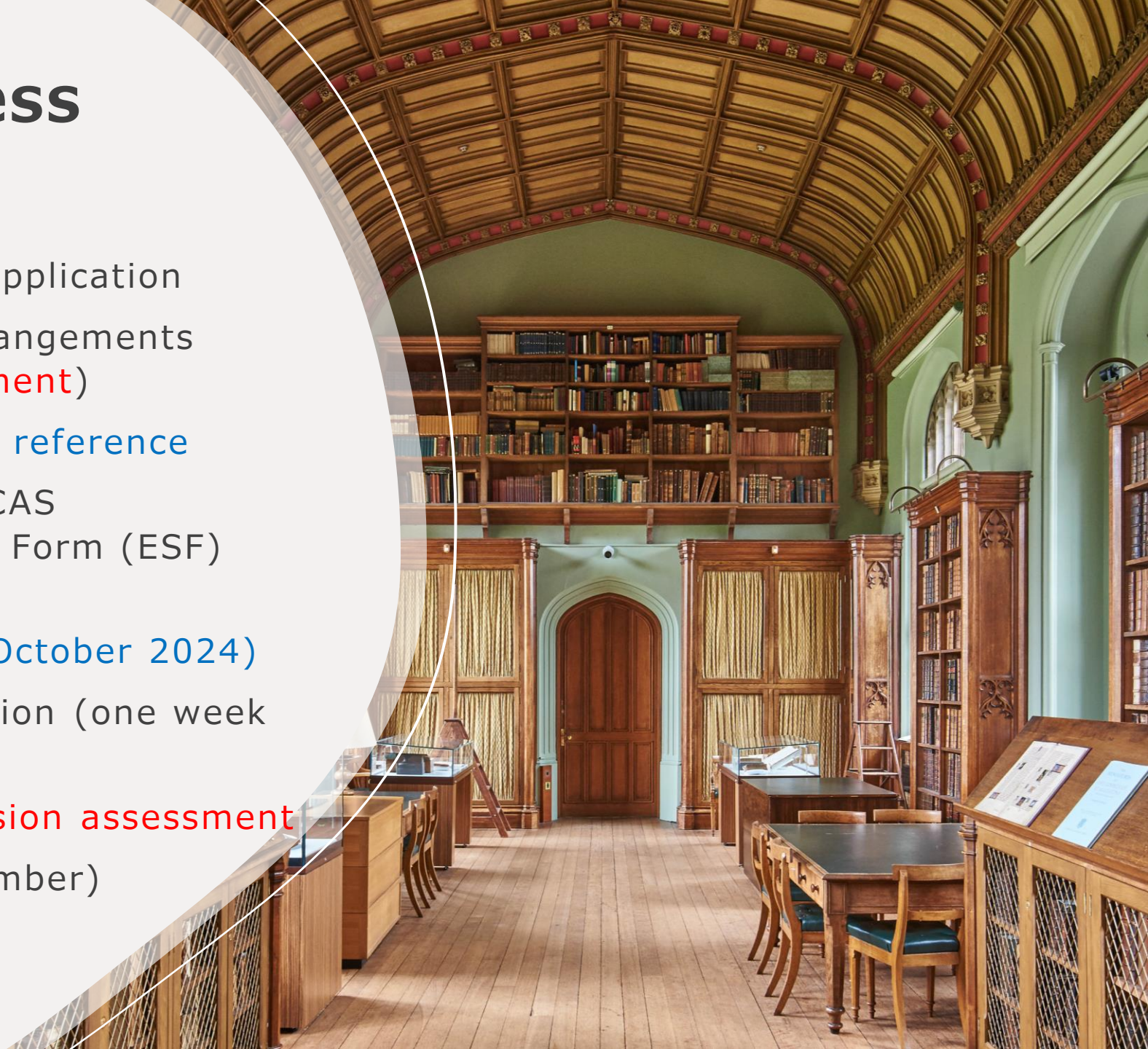
Oxford or Cambridge?

- Course choice will be major factor
e.g. Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) and Earth Sciences at Oxford but Natural Sciences at Cambridge rather than Biology, Chemistry or Physics separately
- Oxford offers more joint honours courses
- Cambridge is a slightly smaller city
- Oxford focuses more on admissions assessments results than Cambridge to make decisions regarding interview
- Cambridge and Oxford interview systems are a little different



Application Process

- Choose course
- Choose college/decide on open application
- Check admission assessment arrangements (**register/take admission assessment**)
- **Teachers complete UCAS teacher reference**
- Complete Personal Statement/UCAS form/Extenuating Circumstances Form (ESF) (internal deadline)
- **Send UCAS application/ESF (16 October 2024)**
- Complete My Cambridge Application (one week later)
- Submit written work/**take admission assessment**
- Interview (first 3 weeks of December)
- Decision (January)



Cambridge courses (A-H)

Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic (19p/3pp)

Archaeology (32p/3p)

Architecture (60p/9pp)

Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (40p/3pp)

Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology (67p/6pp)

Classics (50p/3pp)

Computer Science (122p/13pp)

Design (began for 2024)

Economics (163p/8pp)

Education (34p/6pp)

Engineering (333p/7pp)

English (188p/4pp)

Foundation Year (42p/6pp)

Geography (99p/5pp)

History (164p/4pp)

History and Modern Languages (31p/3pp)

History and Politics (67p/5pp)



Students accepted/Applications per place
Figures from 2023

Cambridge courses (H-Z)

History of Art (31p/3pp)

Human, Social, and Political Sciences (166p/9pp)

Land Economy (71p/9pp)

Law (230p/7pp)

Linguistics (26p/5pp)

Management Studies (Part II course) (50p)

Manufacturing Engineering (Part II course) (40p)

Mathematics (258p/6pp)

Medicine (273p/6pp)

Modern and Medieval Languages (128p/2pp)

Music (50p/3pp)

Natural Sciences (547p/5pp)

Philosophy (50p/6pp)

Psychological and Behavioural Sciences (81p/11pp)

Theology, Religion, and Philosophy of Religion (37p/3pp)

Veterinary Medicine (73p/5pp)



Students accepted/Applications per place
Figures from 2023

Choosing a college (or not)

- Oxford: 32 colleges, Cambridge: 31 (however some are for mature students or are for females only)
- Can **choose a specific college** or **make an open application**
- Factors affecting college selection:
 - Subject
 - Location
 - Size and age
 - Accommodation
 - Facilities



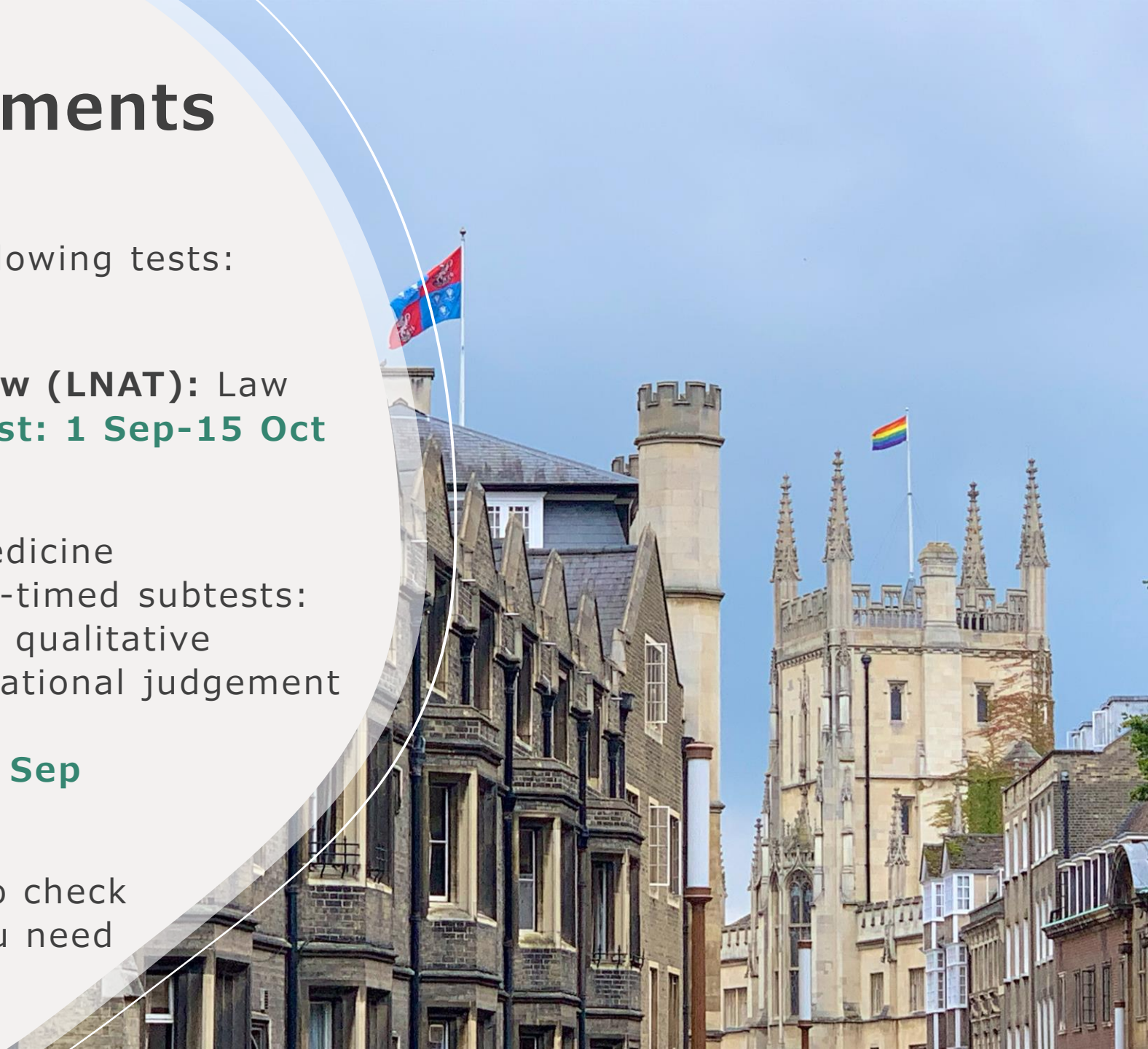
Admissions Assessments

Oxford/Cambridge both use the following tests:

National Admissions Test for Law (LNAT): Law
Registration: 1 Aug – 15 Sep; Test: 1 Sep-15 Oct

Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT): Medicine
2-hour computer test, 5 separately-timed subtests:
Verbal reasoning; decision making; qualitative reasoning; abstract reasoning; situational judgement
Registration opens: 14 May;
Booking: 18 June; Test: 8 Jul-26 Sep

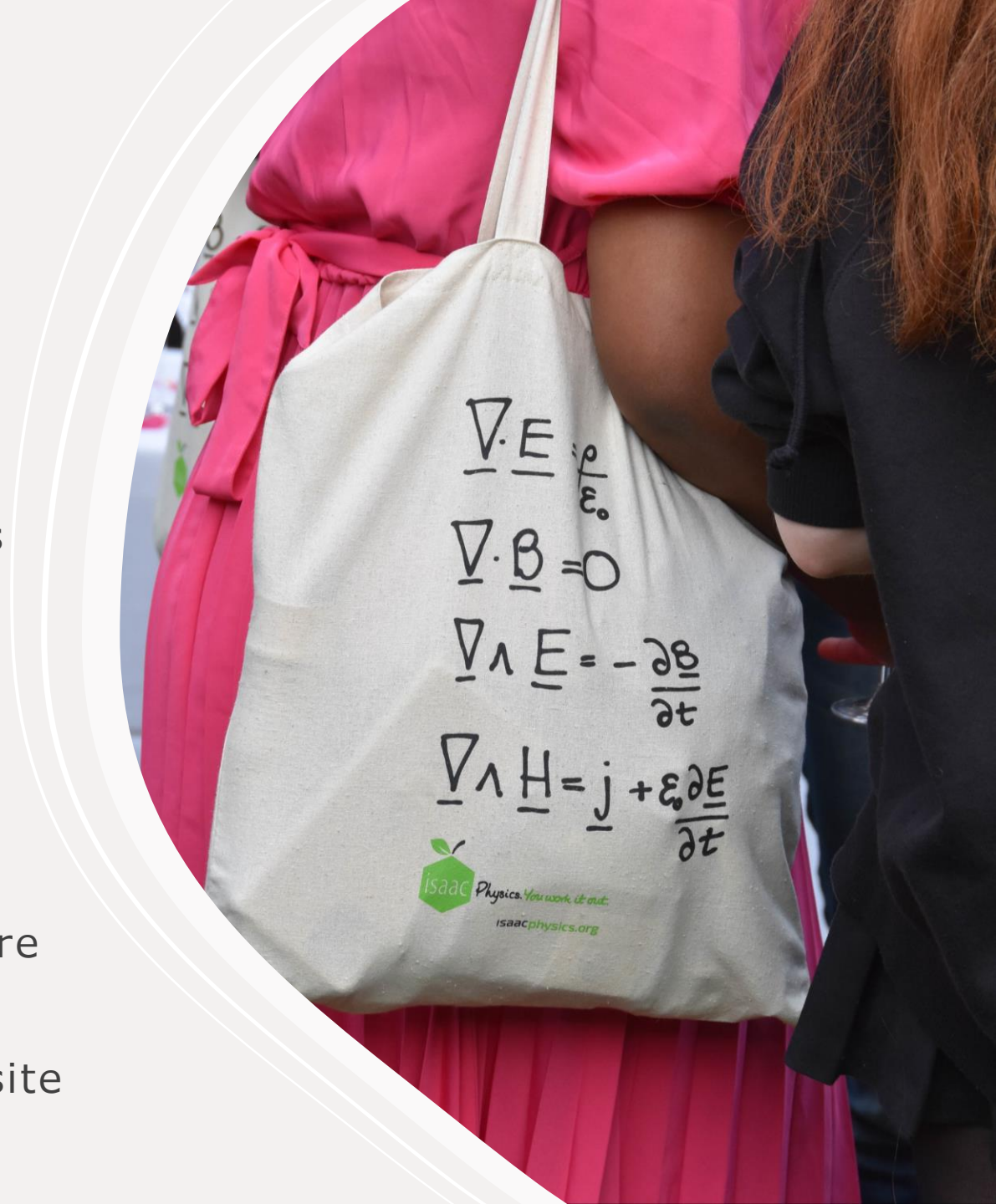
For other subjects, you will need to check if there is an assessment and if you need to register for it.



Assessment Preparation

Students should:

- Ensure they're up to speed with any school content
- Familiarise themselves with the test format
- Read the test specification/any relevant notes about the test on the uni/test website
- Do as many practice papers as possible – even better if they can talk through areas of difficulty with someone else
- Practise in timed conditions
- Use the 'explain answer' function to help where there is one
- Use any guidance videos on the uni/test website



Personal Statements

- Provide insight into student's motivation/commitment to subject and potential questions for interview
- Should be mostly focused on super-curricular activity (75% academic; 25% extra-curricular)

- Structure:

Para 1 – why you want to study subject (short)

Para 2/3 – how you've developed interest outside of school i.e. super-curricular (long)

Para 4 – extra-curricular (short, not mandatory)

Para 5 – what you are offering university (short, not mandatory)

- Show, don't tell methodology



Useful super-curriculars

Quality not quantity:

- Read off-curriculum books, magazines, journals
- Visit museums/galleries
- Access respected films, documentaries, podcasts
- Attend online seminars/lectures
- Participate in academic competitions
- Set up subject-focused discussion/problem-solving group
- Take part in targeted Outreach programmes/summer schools (e.g. Oxbridge/Nuffield research internships/Sutton Trust)
- Do relevant work experience



Oxbridge Interviews

- Academic dialogues through which progress is made through challenging issues. They are very subject-based and not at all like a job interview.
- Students have at least two interviews, 20-40 mins each, with academics (potentially with two colleges for Oxford)
- Most colleges will do these online but some will have opted for in-person
- Students will be challenged and will need hints to move towards solutions
- They may involve students: problem solving; defining terms they have used; linking ideas across disciplines; thinking out loud; making connections between different but related situations

The Outcome

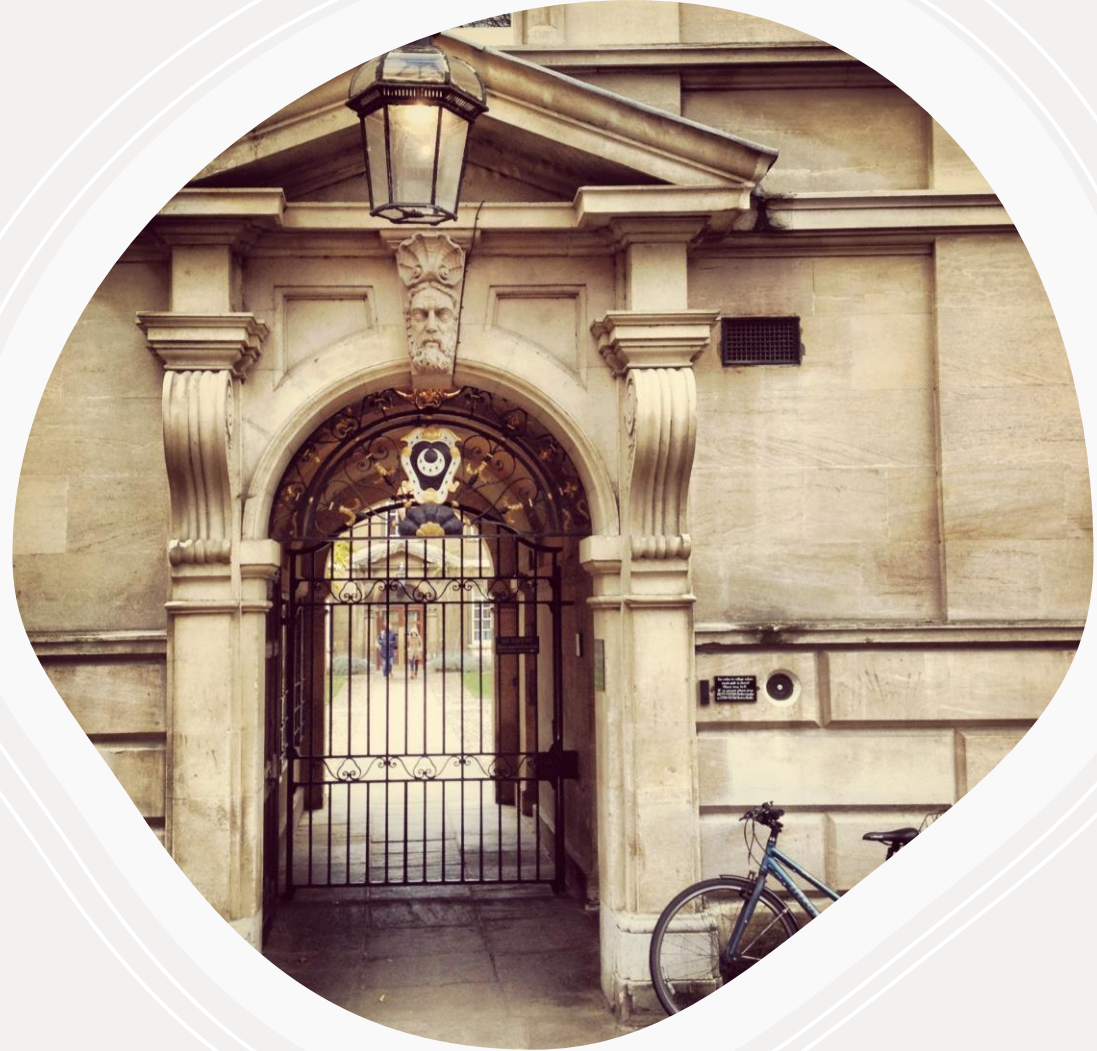
- At Cambridge, if students are not offered a place at their interview college, they go into the 'Winter Pool'
- 9-12 January
- Redistribution mechanism designed to ensure best applicants receive an offer regardless of college application/allocation
- Admissions Tutors have all original information about students plus interview notes
- 20% of places allocated in this way



Making the Grade

Lots of factors affect selection:

- How competitive the course is
- Predicted A Level (or equivalent) grades
- AS grades/unit marks (where available)
- GCSE (or equivalent) grades
- UCAS school/college reference
- Personal statement
- Submitted work (if applicable)
- Admissions assessments
- Contextual 'flags'
- Interview



What can students do to support applications?

- Go to open days:
Cambridge – 4/5 July and 13 Sept
Oxford - 26/27 June and 20 Sept 2024
- Do plenty of good quality super-curricular activities (see Oxbridge websites)
- Take an active interest in current affairs and research these
- Obtain work experience
- Prepare for admission tests
- Practise speaking about subject to others
- Do mock interviews



What can you do?

- Read personal statement
- Have topical discussions
- Provide emotional support
- Create 'down time' to help relieve stress



What questions do you have?

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Thank you!

