Summary of the Admissions Process for Computer Science, Mathematics & Computer Science and Computer Science & Philosophy Oxford University, 2013–14

Summary

In all 440 applications were received in 2013 for Computer Science and joint degrees. This represents an increase of about 50% compared with last year. Of these, 200 (45%) were short-listed. In all 69 offers (including open offers) were made (in addition, one candidate was given an offer for Mathematics).

Broken down, by degree subject, the applications and offers are as follows:

- Computer Science: 237 applications; 97 short-listed; 30 offers;

- Mathematics & Computer Science: 153 applications; 86 short-listed; 31 offers;

- Computer Science & Philosophy: 50 applications; 17 short-listed; 8 offers.

Short-listing

In light of the competition for places, the purpose of short-listing is to provide time, during the December interview window in Oxford, to guarantee all short-listed applicants receive interviews from at least two different colleges.

All applicants are expected to sit the Mathematics Admissions Test prior to short-listing, or seek permission in exceptional circumstances to be exempted from the test. The test contains questions designed to assess aptitude for Computer Science. The distribution of test papers and return of test scripts was undertaken by ATS (formerly Cambridge Assessment). The test date was 6th November. Details relating to the Test, and including several past and specimen papers, can be found at `http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/ugadmissions/how_to_apply/MAT_test.html`.

Short-listing is performed in accordance with the stated admissions criteria (`http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/ugadmissions/why_oxford/formal_admissions_criteria.html`) on the basis of all currently available and relevant data: in particular these data include an applicant's score from the Admissions Test, all aspects of the applicant's UCAS form and any further relevant contextual data specific to the application.

As guidance, and on the basis of a validated weighted combination of the test score and GCSE A* scores (where applicable), the Admissions Coordinator advises college tutors as to a calculated score which would short-list the field of applicants to about three per place.

Throughout the process all UCAS forms, all test scores, all contextual information, comments and interview grades, are easily accessible to all college tutors involved with admissions via a web-based database.

College tutors review the UCAS forms, and any other information relevant to individual applications, and in light of all information enter their provisional short-listing decisions in the web-based admissions database. In light of further information a college may reverse the default short-listing decision, making known the reasons for their decision to the Admissions Coordinator. Provisional short-listing decisions become final by an agreed deadline unless appealed by another college or the Admissions Coordinator.

Letters and/or emails are then sent to candidates informing them of the outcome of the short-listing exercise.

Interviews

All short-listed candidates are invited to Oxford for interview around mid-December. The timetable of interviews by subject is readily available on an Admissions Office webpage well in advance of the dates.

Each applicant has a first-assigned college, which is either the college to which s/he applied or —in the case of open applications— a college randomly assigned by the Admissions Office in such a way as to even out the competition for places across colleges. Each applicant is also randomly assigned a second college by an algorithm so as to equalise across colleges the interview load per place ratio.

During their time in Oxford, applicants are guaranteed interviews by at least two different colleges (their first- and second-assigned colleges) and may also be interviewed by other colleges. Applicants to joint degrees typically have separate interviews on the two disciplines.

Interviews are academic in nature. An applicant's performance is judged according to the admissions criteria. The interviews are graded on a scale of 1–9 against agreed descriptors.

One or more interviews by Skype, phone or video-conference facilities are typically arranged for any short-listed applicant who is unable to attend interviews in Oxford. These interviews commonly take place in the week before the interviews in Oxford.

The Admissions Group operates various procedures in a coordinated effort to ensure that the strongest applicants are admitted to the University

irrespective of college choice; these include transparency of all test results, interview grades, and UCAS forms amongst all tutors involved with admissions, and a final meeting of tutors at which the strongest unplaced applicants are collectively discussed and open offers are made by the Admissions Group. Typically around 20-25% of offers (23% in 2013) are either open offers or made by a college other than the first college considering the applicant.

Decisions are deemed to be official at the end of the Group's final meeting and the short-listed applications are assigned a final overall grade. These decisions are then conveyed by tutors to their respective college offices for dissemination to short-listed applicants. The Admissions Group has standard offers for those taking A-levels, the International Baccalaureate or Advanced Highers; college tutors will seek advice from admissions tutors or the Admissions Office in making other offers.

The figure overleaf gives a breakdown of admissions decisions based on test marks (excluding candidates who withdrew or failed to sit the test without extenuating circumstances).

Feedback

Feedback, other than decisions, will not automatically be sent out, but applicants may seek feedback from their first-assigned colleges about any aspect of the admissions process. Feedback will not usually be sent out until the new year, once the admissions process is complete.

<div align="right">January 2014</div>

Test Score Range by Admission Decision - All Candidates

No. of Candidates

	90 or over	80 or over	70 or over	60 or over	50 or over	40 or over	30 or over	20 or over	Under 20	didn't sit test
Offer	2	6	14	22	13	11	1			
Shortlisted, no offer		1	4	13	57	51	3			1
Desummoned pre-interview				1	1	44	74	51	9	1

Legend:
- Offer
- Shortlisted, no offer
- Desummoned pre-interview