

2023 Admissions Round Feedback

Biology

Please note this is subject admissions feedback from the 2023 selection round - there will be changes each year, and these pages are only retained to provide a general indication of process.

The Biology admissions tutors would like to thank all applicants for the time and care they put into their applications. We are also grateful to referees for proving their supporting statements and for the encouragement and support they give to applicants.

In Biology, 731 (740 in 2022) candidates applied to Oxford and 334 (343 in 2022) were shortlisted for interview; 130 (128 in 2022) offers were made. At Keble, 18 out of the 33 first choice applicants were interviewed; each shortlisted applicant for Keble was interviewed here and by one other pre-arranged college. Six offers were made for 2024.

We took account of the full range of information available to us at shortlisting, including information about school performance and on any specific factors affecting achievement. Students were selected for interview from their UCAS forms on the basis of examination scores (achieved and predicted), referee's report, and personal statement – showing both an interest in and an academic potential for Biology. In their assessment of individual applications, the tutors took account of contextual data concerning relative individual and school performance as well as some background characteristics related to place of residence. This information is available only for applicants from within the UK. An explanation of how the University uses contextual data can be found here: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-tooxford/decisions/contextual-data>. We were also mindful of the potential and uneven impact of the disruption to teaching and assessment caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Regarding the interviewing process at Keble, no written tests were set and interviews were approximately 30 minutes in length. During the interview, candidates were partly assessed on their ability to analyse and comment on biological data or images that were presented to them. Very little of the interview was concerned with questions that just required factual recall. We were particularly interested in assessing whether the candidates were genuinely enthusiastic about biology (this is a selection criterion for Biology) and here it was helpful to ask them to discuss recent reading, project work or other work of a biological nature carried out outside of school.

Further and general information on Biology admissions can be found here: <https://www.biology.ox.ac.uk/admissions>