

# Applying to Oxford or Cambridge



# Why Oxford or Cambridge?



- Broad range of courses
- World-class teaching – lectures, seminars/classes, practicals
- Small-group teaching – tutorials/supervisions
- Excellent facilities and resources
- Academic, pastoral and financial support (e.g. Cambridge Bursary)
- Wide range of extra-curricular options
- Excellent graduate opportunities, irrespective of degree discipline

# What are we looking for?

✓ **Academic  
ability and  
potential**

✓ **Subject  
requirements**



✓ **Genuine subject  
interest**  
– motivation and  
enthusiasm



✓ **Suitability  
for chosen  
course**



✗ **Irrelevant  
extra-curricular  
activities**

✗ **Particular  
school types**

✗ **Particular  
backgrounds**

# Information used in selection

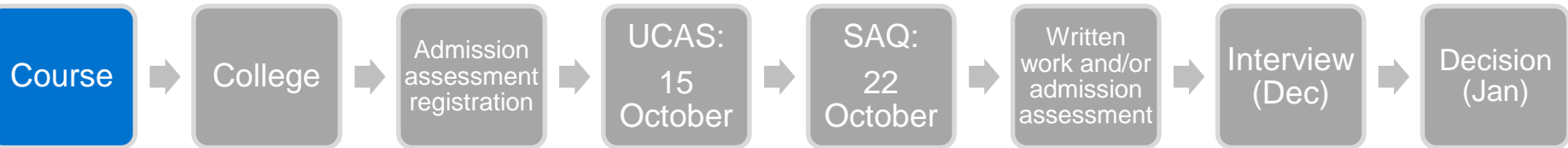
We consider every application individually, taking all aspects into account:

- Academic record
- Personal statement
- Teacher's reference
- Admissions assessment results (where required)
- Written work (where required)
- Contextual data
- Interview (if interviewed)

No part of an application is considered in isolation – all available information is looked at together before decisions are made.

	<b>Offers for Cambridge</b>
<b>A Levels</b>	A*AA for Arts/Humanities  A*A*A for Sciences
	<b>Offers for other Competitive Courses/Universities</b>
<b>A Levels</b>	A*AA - AAB for Arts/Humanities  A*AA - AAB for Sciences

# The application process: Choosing a course



- Think about what you enjoy
- Look at course details
- Talk to staff and other students



# Choosing a College – where would you like to live?

Course

College

Admission  
assessment  
registration

UCAS:  
15  
October

SAQ:  
22  
October

Written  
work and/or  
admission  
assessment

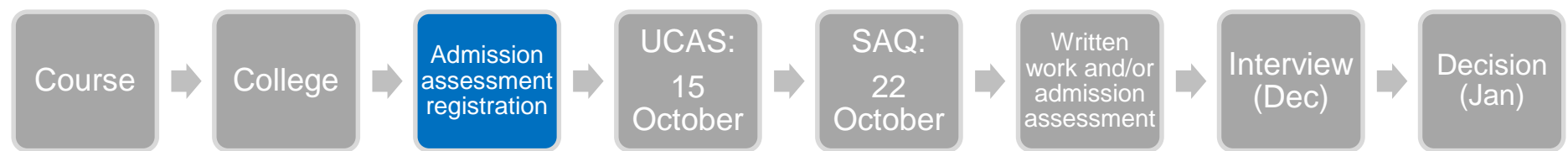
Interview  
(Dec)

Decision  
(Jan)

- 29 undergraduate Colleges
- Differ in terms of:
  - accommodation
  - appearance
  - facilities
  - size (number of students)
- Instinct
- Open application



# Pre-interview assessment registration



- **BMAT registration deadline – 1 October 2018**
- **Registration deadline for others – 15 October 2018**
- **Assessments taken – 31 October 2018**

## Pre-interview written assessments

- Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic
- Asian and Middle Eastern Studies
- Chemical Engineering
- Economics
- Engineering
- English (ELAT)
- Geography
- History
- History and Modern Languages
- History and Politics
- Human, Social, and Political Sciences
- Land Economy (TSA)
- Medicine (BMAT)
- Natural Sciences
- Psychological and Behavioural Sciences
- Veterinary Medicine (Natural Sciences paper)

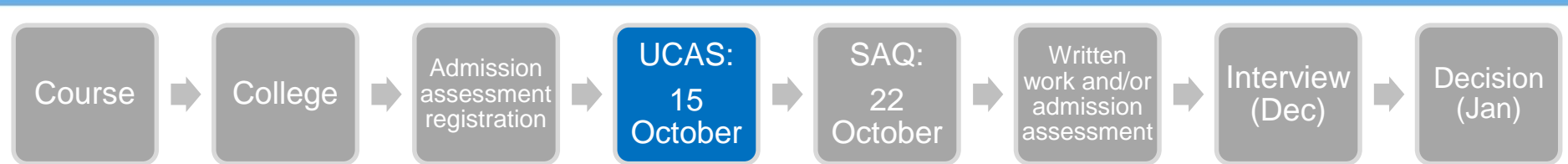
# Why use admissions assessments?

- Differentiate between well-qualified candidates
- A common set of data with which to compare applicants to a specific course
- To stretch and challenge applicants
- Assess the aptitude and potential of candidates
- If appropriate, assess subject knowledge and understanding

[www.cam.ac.uk/assessment](http://www.cam.ac.uk/assessment)



# UCAS application



Completed online – application deadline 15 October

## Personal statement

- Be honest and write with integrity
- Cover your interest in your course, relevant subjects you have studied, super-curricular exploration
- Extra-curricular activities not relevant to the course applied for aren't taken into account in our considerations

# What is super-curricular activity?

- We define super-curricular activity as anything that a student has done that enhances their learning that is not a part of their compulsory studies at school or sixth form.
- Evidence of super-curricular activity is something that we and many other top-level universities look for as part of a strong application



# What makes an activity super-curricular?

- Academic content.
- Relevance to your chosen degree subject.
- Non-inclusion in your A-Level syllabuses.
  - Important note: work undertaken as part of an EPQ or other project component does count.

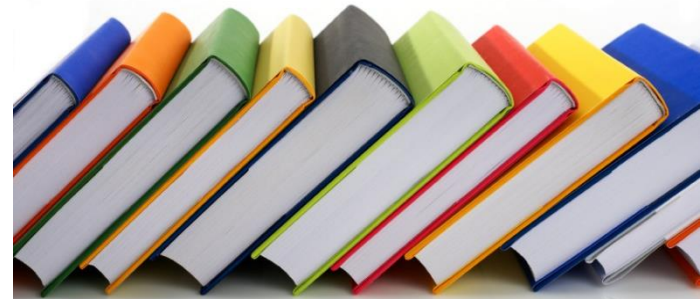
# Getting the most from wider reading

## Genuine interest in the subject outside the confines of the formal syllabus

Extra reading and exploration are crucial to success, not just in arts subjects

Critical engagement with reading:

- What is the argument in this book/article?
- What is the supporting evidence?
- What do I think? How can I find out more?



# HE+ Website

[www.myheplus.com](http://www.myheplus.com)

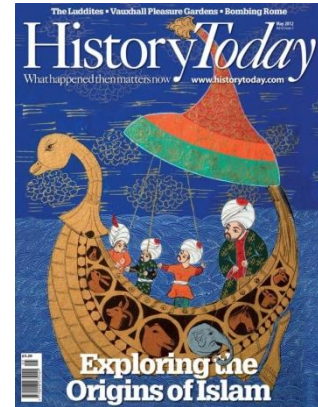
- Range of Arts/Humanities and Sciences/Maths
- Resources to help you explore your subject beyond the curriculum
- Also give you general information about that subject, and what it's like to study it at university



# Wider exploration



# #ExploreYourSubject



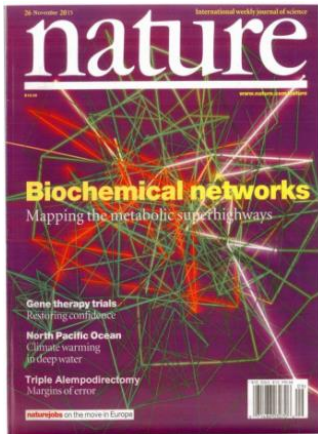
In Our Time  
with  
Melvyn Bragg



92-95 FM



Inside the Ethics Committee

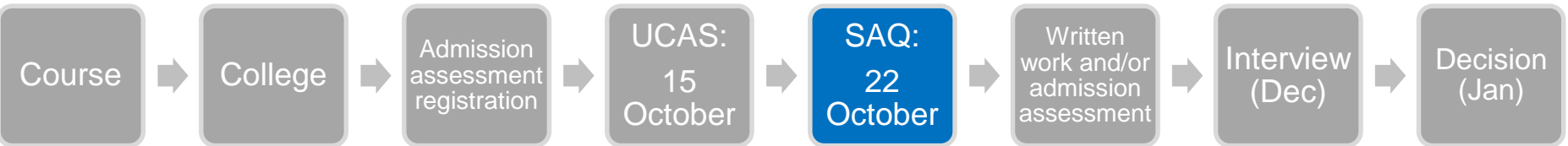


# Possible super-curricular activities

- Books/Articles
- Magazines
- Lectures/talks
- Films
- Theatre
- TV programmes
- Radio shows/podcasts
- Visits to museums etc.
- Clubs/Societies
- Relevant work experience
- Academic sessions/workshops
- Essay competitions...



# Supplementary Application Questionnaire (SAQ)



- Used to collect information not in the UCAS application but useful when assessing applicants, including:
  - topics covered in AS/A Level (or equivalent) courses
  - optional Cambridge-specific personal statement
- Ensures consistent information about all our applicants
- Completed online, in multiple sessions if you want

1 Photograph ✓ 2 Application type ✓ 3 Personal details 4 Course details 5 Education 6 Qualifications 7 Additional information 8 Submit Log out

Personal Details (2 of 2)

\* 3.3 Please list your Country or Countries of Ordinary Residence since 1 September 2006:  
[UK]

\* 3.4 If you are living outside Europe will you be available for an interview in Cambridge? Yes No N/A

3.5 If there are any dates during the interview period in which it will be very difficult for you to attend an interview, please explain when and why. (Answer max. 300 characters including spaces)  
Count: 4 Characters  
[None]

\* Indicates a compulsory question Section completed?

Previous Page Next Page Save Review My Answers Help text (PDF)

Help Text

Question 3.3 Country of Ordinary Residence is where you normally live (not solely for the purposes of education).

Question 3.5 Interviews usually take place during the first three weeks of December. Applicants are advised to avoid making any unbreakable commitments during this period. Please list any dates during this period when you would be unable to attend an interview. Acceptable reasons for being unable to attend on a given date include religious observances or longstanding hospital appointments. School concert rehearsals or sports matches are not acceptable reasons.

Section completed: When you have completed this section, please check this tick-box. This will change the status of the section 3 button in the navigation bar above once you move to another section. This is to help you keep track of your progress. You will still be able to change any of your answers until you submit your SAQ.



# Written work and at-interview assessments



## At-interview written assessments:

- no need to register in advance
- taken when you're in Cambridge for interview (if interviewed)

## Written work:

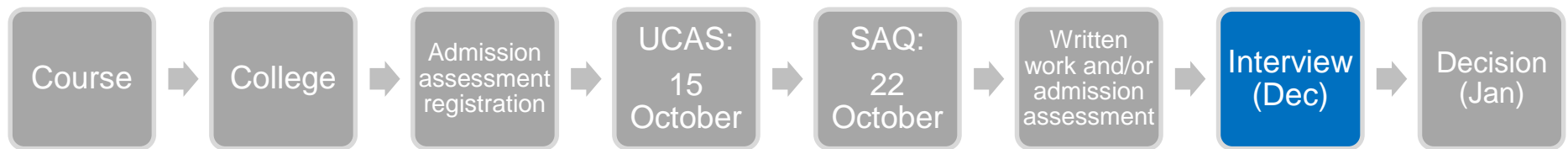
- for a number of our courses you may be asked to submit one or two examples of your written work from a relevant A Level/IB (or equivalent) course

## At-interview written assessments

- Archaeology
- Architecture
- Classics
- Computer Science (tbc)
- Education
- History and Modern Languages
- History of Art
- Law
- Linguistics
- Modern and Medieval Languages
- Philosophy
- Theology, Religion and Philosophy of Religion

Mathematics/Music – assessment tasks at interview

# Interviews



- Usually first three weeks of December
- One, two or three interviews
- Each 20-40 minutes
- Conducted by lecturers
- Predominantly academic and subject-focused

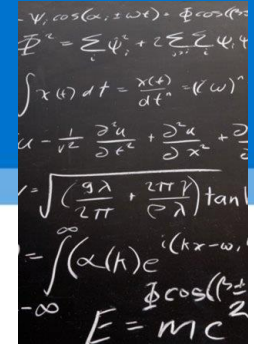


**No trick questions and not the ‘final hurdle’**

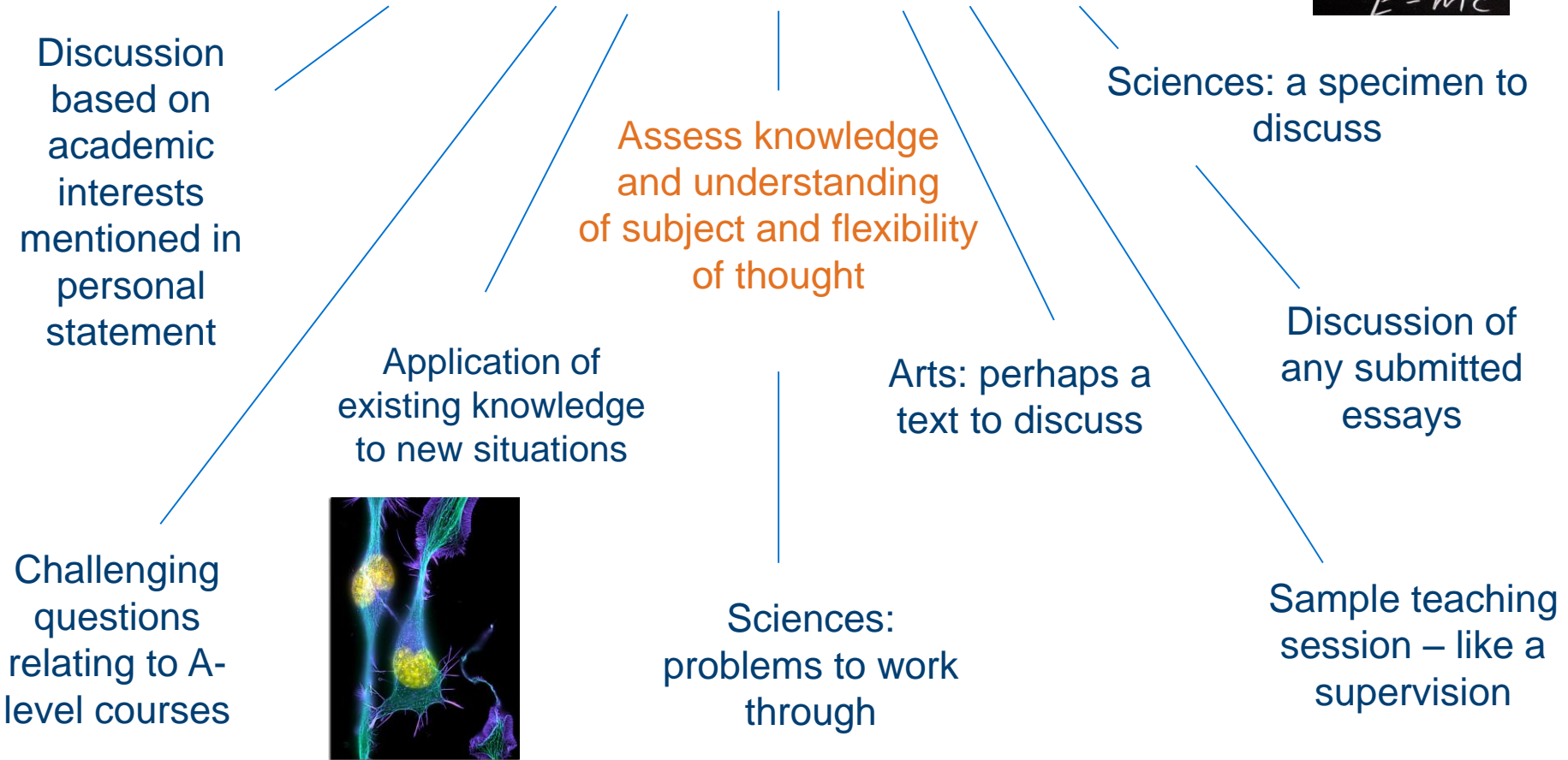
# Why interview?

- How do applicants who look very similar on paper differ from one another?
- Are your aptitudes and interests suitable for the course to which you have applied?
- Do you have the potential to study your chosen subject at a high level?
- Can you think independently, flexibly and critically and assimilate new ideas or apply existing concepts to challenging new questions?
- Does the 'supervision' style of learning suit you?
- Do you display vocation/professional commitment (where appropriate)?

# Interviews: what to expect

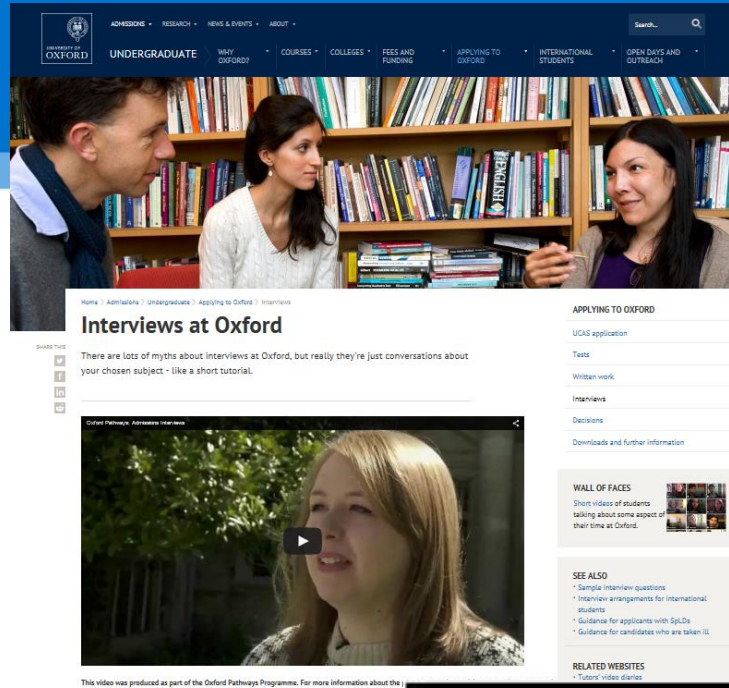


## SUBJECT-SPECIFIC INTERVIEW



# Useful resources

- Admissions websites

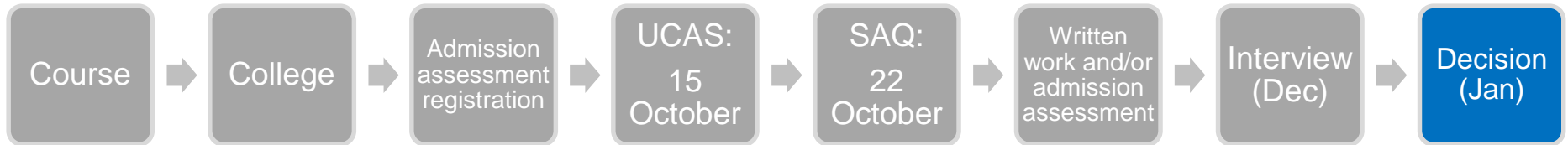


- Interview videos



- Past/specimen test/assessment papers

# Application outcome



The Colleges are responsible for all undergraduate admissions decisions, and notify students of the outcome of their application in January

## 1. You may be made an offer

- May be from the College you applied/was allocated to, or from a different College as a result of your application being ‘pooled’
- Conditional/unconditional (only if post A-level)

## 2. You may be unsuccessful

- Don’t be deterred from applying by the prospect of not being successful – we can only offer places to those who apply!

# Preparing to apply

## P Programme of study

- Course choice is the most important decision – research thoroughly, personal interest(s)

## R Results

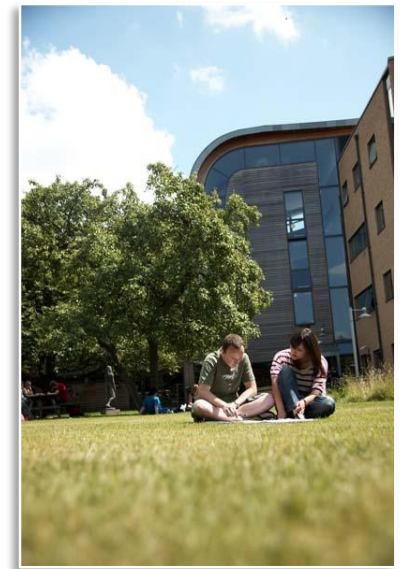
- Work hard to do as well as you can in your current studies

## E Engage and explore

- Be proactive in your learning – current studies and interests relevant to your intended degree

## P Practise

- Discussing your academic interest(s)
- Past/example admission test/assessment papers
- Time management – generally and for exams



# University of Oxford

[www.ox.ac.uk/study](http://www.ox.ac.uk/study)  
[study@ox.ac.uk](mailto:study@ox.ac.uk)

# University of Cambridge

[www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk](http://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk)  
[admissions@cam.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@cam.ac.uk)

For the most up-to-date information and advice about anything covered in the presentation, please refer to our websites.