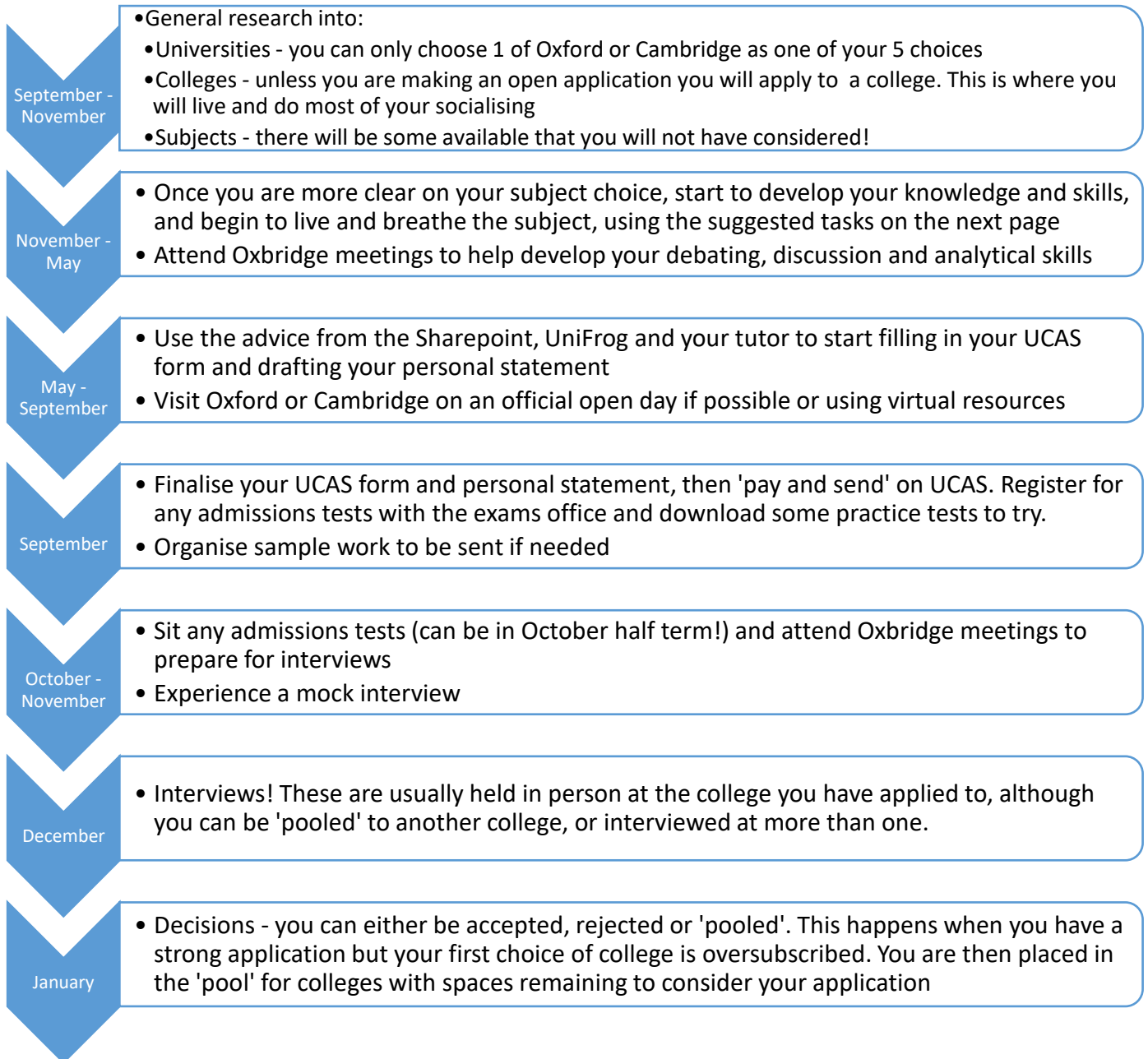


Applying to Oxford or Cambridge

Applying to Oxbridge takes more preparation than applying to many other universities. Ultimately you should be applying because you love your subject and want to work hard at it, so it shouldn't feel like a chore! You will be supported throughout this process but also expected to carry out independent work.

Application process timeline:



You should consider Oxbridge if you:

- Love your subject and it is offered at Oxbridge in a form you will enjoy
- Want to study with likeminded people
- Enjoy learning new ideas
- Enjoy debating, discussing and challenging ideas
- Want to work hard

You should not consider Oxbridge if:

- It does not offer the course you want
- The course somewhere else suits you better
- You don't like the universities and want to go somewhere else
- You are not on track for the grades they require

Oxbridge will look at:

- A Level predictions (should be A*s and As only)
- GCSE grades (mostly 7s - 9s unless there are extenuating circumstances)
- Your personal statement which we will help you write in the summer and should refer to the activities listed below. The focus should be super-curricular i.e. subject related rather than extra-curricular
- The college reference which your teachers and tutor will write
- Any written work submitted (required work varies by course and by college)
- Any admissions test results (required tests vary by course and by college)
- The interview
- Relevant contextual information (postcode, socio-economic background, school)

It is your responsibility to ensure your A Level choices will allow you to access the course you want. All information is available on the official university websites. If you are ever unsure, you can ring the admissions tutor at the college or for your course using the available contact details on the website.

Making your application stand out

If you are unsure of where to start with any of these suggestions, ask your subject teachers to point you in the right direction; visit the Oxbridge Sharepoint site; ask in the library or go to the university's course website.

LEARN

- o Read up on the subjects that interest you - step outside of the curriculum. Remember this can be fiction or non-fiction! Ask a subject teacher or in the Library for suggestions or use the suggested websites on Sharepoint as a starting point
- o Listen to Podcasts – Radio 4 or Oxford podcasts are good starting points and the Big Tent features Oxford researchers
- o Watch documentaries or relevant TV programmes, remember Planet eStream has lots to look at
- o Enroll on extra online courses using Massive Open Online Courses and Future Learn
- o Attend talks and lectures – there are plenty of free and local events or you can watch free TED talks online or use the brilliant Gresham college archive
- o Complete an EPQ. Both universities highly recommend and recognise these!

PARTICIPATE

- o Compete in national and international competitions. Many Oxbridge colleges run essay competitions and there are national school maths and science competitions as well
- o Teach others - volunteer to teach at your old secondary school or join peer mentoring schemes
- o Arrange challenging volunteering work or relevant work experience to show your ability to thrive in unfamiliar situations. Remember this is only compulsory vocational subjects, so don't worry if this is not possible for you!
- o Attend taster days, welcome days, shadowing weekends, summer schools and any other relevant experiences.
- o Research by carrying out your own projects, or by contributing to academic research via Zooniverse

TALK

- o Join discussion groups for your subjects, form your own debate club, hold an opinion
- o Create clubs and societies, lead groups around the areas you are interested in
- o Explore a range of controversial issues using resources like Oxplore and My HE Plus and discuss them with your peers.

BE INFORMED

- o Be interested in what is going on around you be able to hold a conversation on a range of topics, try to read/ watch the news regularly and look out for subject related items you can discuss with your peers
- o Follow influential thinkers or relevant academics on social media

Whatever you do, keep a log of these super-curricular activities. Don't just write what you've done but what you've learnt from it. This will be invaluable when it comes to writing your personal statement. You could be asked about anything you mention on your personal statement at interview.

If you have any questions or want to be added to the Oxbridge mailing list, email ncl@collyers.ac.uk