

OXBRIDGE APPLICATIONS



Subjects – check the university page for specific details on your subject requirements (grades, A-Level subject preferred, if you need to sit an entrance exam before or at your interview, if gap years are encouraged by the faculty or not etc.). Also check directly if you are applying with other qualifications.

Key dates (but check these for your year of entry):

- Typically, the UCAS application deadline for Oxford and Cambridge is in mid-October.
- Oxbridge interviews often take place in December.
- Conditional offers are usually sent out in January.

**Just a note, Oxbridge refers collectively to the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge. These are the UK's two oldest, most prestigious and most competitive higher education institutions.*

KEY TIPS FROM VICTORIA AYODEJI, University of Cambridge Graduate

Victoria is a Public Speaker, Coach, Writer and DJ. She graduated from the University of Cambridge in 2021.

During her time at university, she was nationally recognised with the Outstanding Achievement Award and UpReach Top 10 Award at the House of Lords for the UK Student Social Mobility Awards and was selected as Powerful Media's Top 100 Future Leaders. Most recently, she was selected as one of the global winners of the prestigious McKinsey & Company Achievement Award.



GETTING STARTED: Victoria's personal statement advice

Crafting a compelling personal statement for Oxbridge requires careful consideration. Here are some tips to make your statement stand out:

- **Demonstrate your academic passion:** your personal statement is your chance to showcase your enthusiasm for your chosen subject. Discuss relevant books, articles, or projects you've engaged with and explain how they've deepened your interest.
- **Reflect on your skills:** highlight not only your academic prowess but also the skills that make you a well-rounded candidate. Emphasise critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication abilities.
- **Tailor your statement:** make sure your statement aligns with the specific course you're applying for. Oxbridge admissions teams look for candidates who demonstrate a clear understanding of their chosen field.
- **Show resilience and perseverance:** discuss any challenges you've faced in your academic journey and how you've overcome them. This can demonstrate your resilience and determination.

VICTORIA'S TOP 5 TIPS WHEN DEVELOPING YOUR APPLICATION

- 1: Seek interview support and mentoring:** mock interviews with someone who has studied the subject can be immensely helpful. These sessions provide insights into the interview process and help you prepare effectively. I also recommend creating a LinkedIn profile, which can connect you with mentors and peers who can offer guidance. Mentoring can be instrumental in helping students from underrepresented backgrounds succeed. Seeing others with similar backgrounds achieve their goals can be motivating and comforting.
- 2: Don't hesitate to ask for assistance:** reach out to individuals who can assist with mock interviews, share insights, or provide guidance on preparing for interviews. Never underestimate the power of a strong support network. Seek guidance from teachers, family members, or mentors who believe in your potential. Having a reliable support system can make a significant difference.
- 3: Read and discuss academic materials:** this includes short academic articles or books related to your subject, especially those mentioned in your personal statement. Practice discussing these materials to showcase your passion and knowledge during interviews.
- 4: Build confidence:** interviews at top universities can be high-pressure situations. Part of the preparation is not just acquiring knowledge, but having the confidence to express it effectively. Work on your self-assurance and remember that you deserve to be there.
- 5: Address preconceptions:** don't let preconceptions about elite institutions hold you back. Focus on your academic aspirations and the workload rather than concerns about the social or financial environment. University is an opportunity to explore different environments and experiences. Being from a diverse background should not deter you from thriving at these institutions. Embrace the differences and view them as opportunities for growth. Remember that admission teams select candidates for a reason - you belong there.

THE COLLEGIATE SYSTEM AND HOW TO PICK A COLLEGE:

Oxford and Cambridge use a collegiate system - where the university has a central administration and several constituent colleges.

Tips when choosing your college:

Consider your course: different colleges may have strengths in particular subjects. Research which colleges excel in your chosen field.

Location: think about where you want to live. Some colleges are located in the city centre, while others are further out.

Size and atmosphere: consider the size and atmosphere of the college. Do you prefer a smaller, more intimate setting or a larger, bustling environment?

Attend open days: explore the campus, college buildings and facilities. This first-hand experience helps you make an informed decision. You can meet professors, current students, and potential future peers, giving you valuable insights into academic life. As well as having the opportunity to ask questions about courses, admissions and the overall student experience.