

Making an application to Oxford and Cambridge



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In this session:

- What Oxford and Cambridge offer
- Overview of the application process
- What we are looking for
- Preparing students for the admissions process and maximising success
- Coronavirus admissions update

Challenging, stimulating courses

- Supportive teaching, through supervisions/tutorials and a Director of Studies/Tutor
- Our teachers / lecturers include many national and global subject leaders
- Superb facilities and resources
- Academically intensive – short terms / semesters



The Oxford and Cambridge Experience

- Collegiate system
- Varied student societies
- Supportive environment
- A good work life balance is encouraged
- Excellent employment prospects

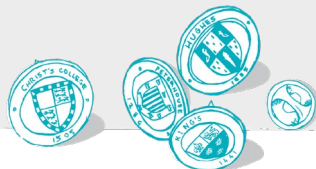


The application process

1 Choose your course



2 Choose a College or open application



3 Check admission assessment arrangements



4 UCAS application

*Remember!!
Application deadline
15 Oct*

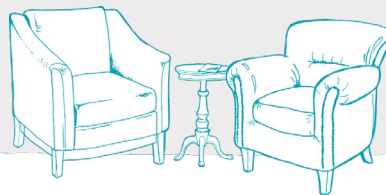
5 COPA/ SAQ – Cambridge Only



6 Take admissions test/ assessment and/or submit written work



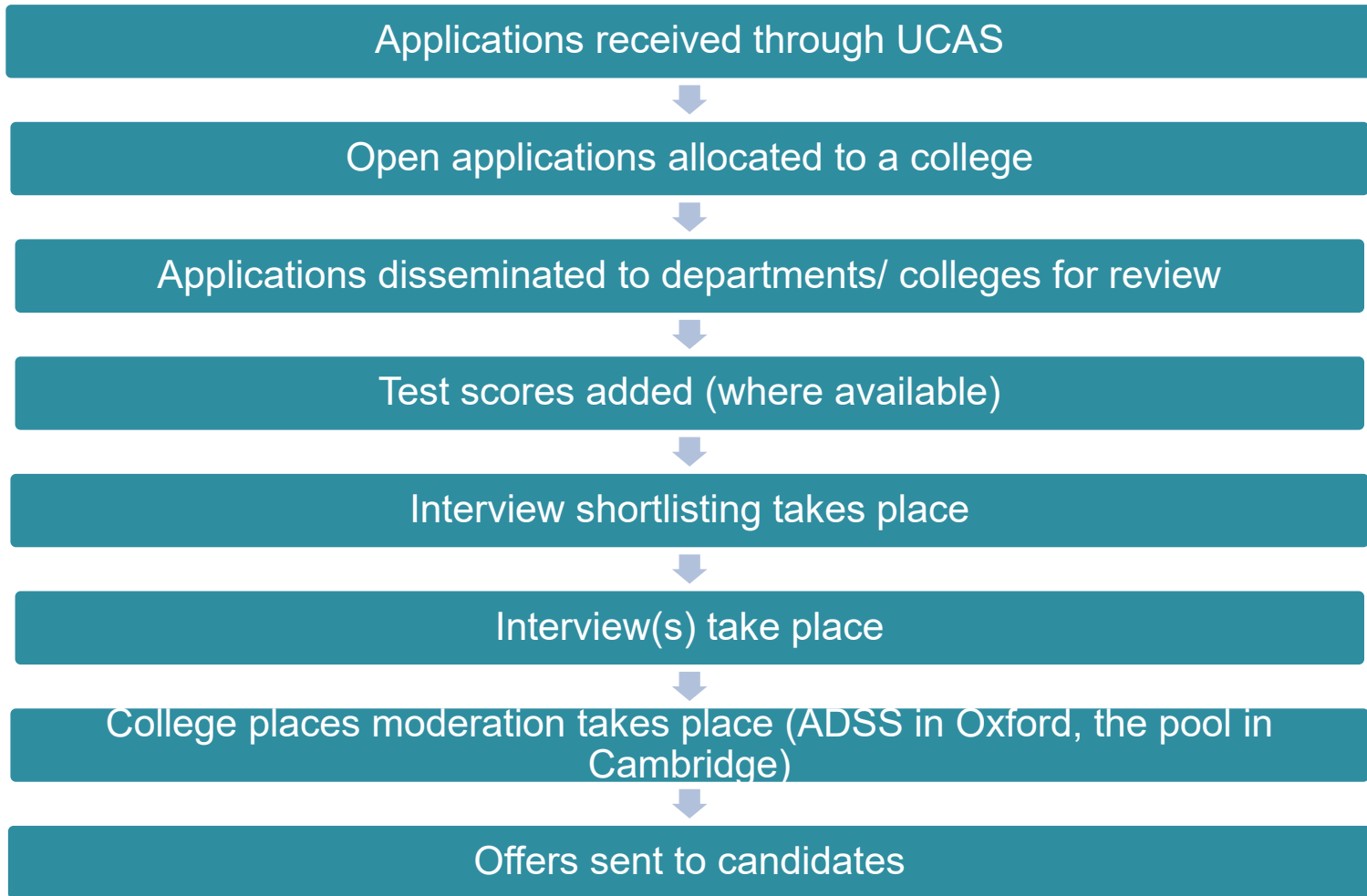
7 Interview (December)



8 Decision (January)

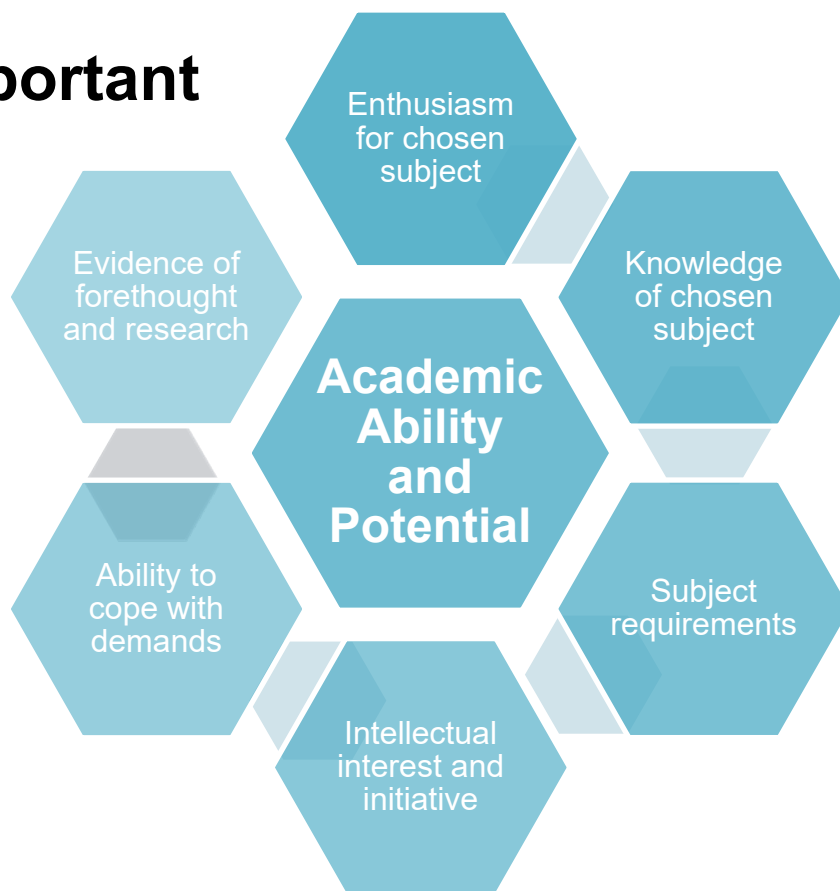


What happens next?



What are we looking for?

Important



Not considered

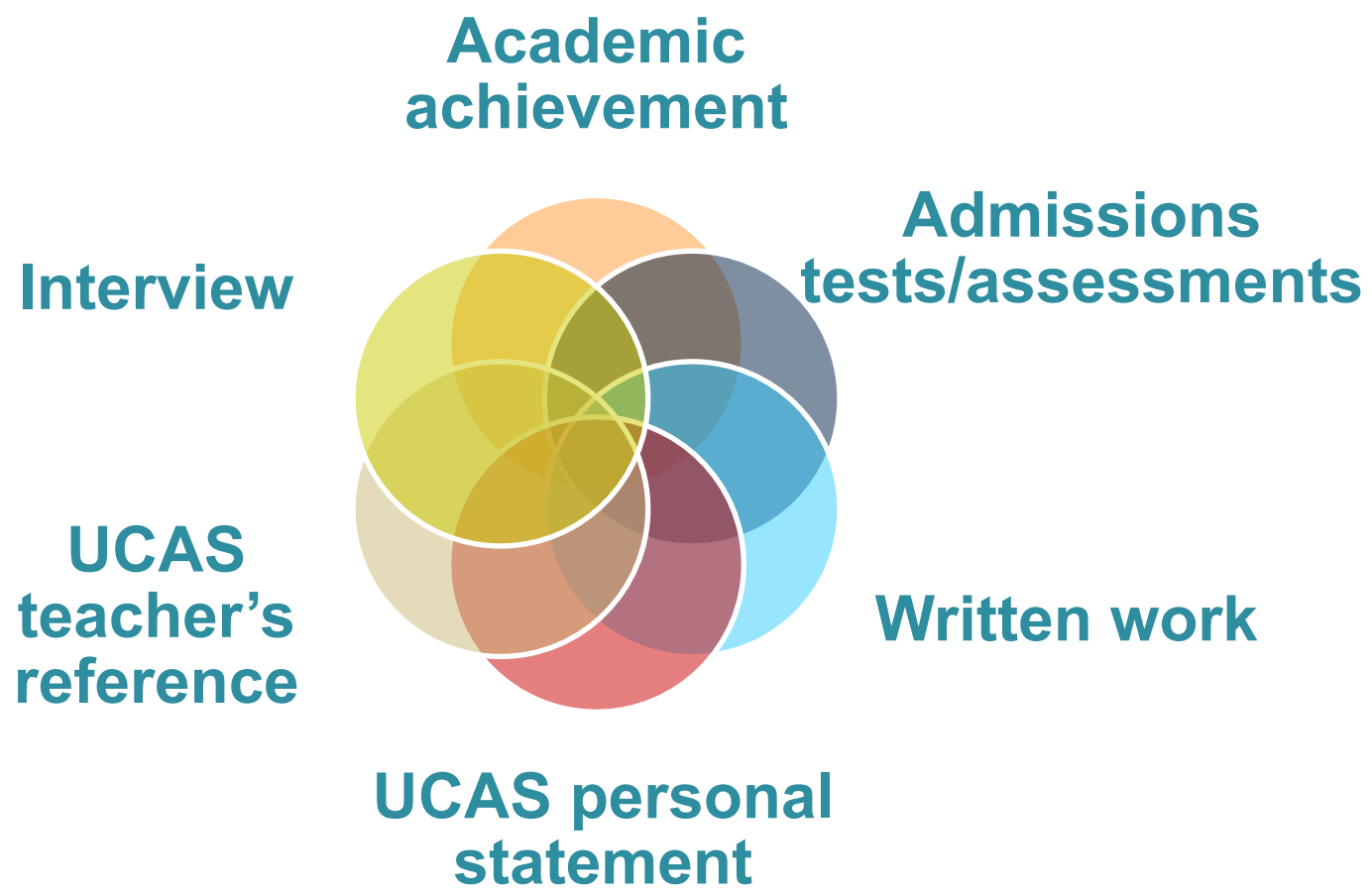
Demonstrated interest

Particular background

Legacy places

Extra-curricular activities

How do we assess applications?



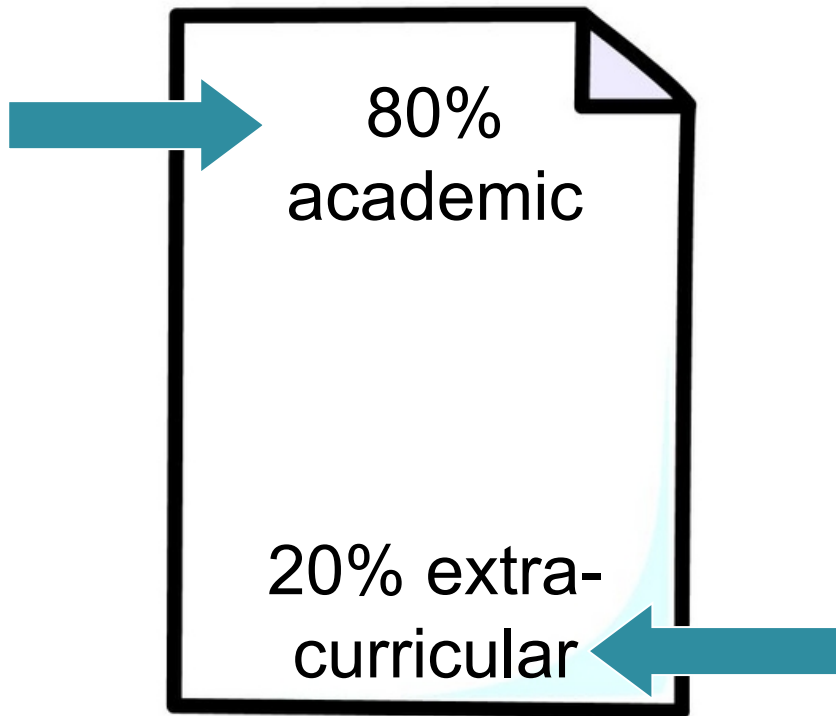
Preparing students for the admissions process

Personal Statements



- ✓ Be honest and write with integrity
- ✓ Cover interest in the course, relevant subjects studied, super-curricular activities
- ✓ At least 80% academic content
- ✓ Very different from a US style application essay
- ✓ Extra-curricular activities that aren't relevant to the course applied for won't be taken into account

Advising students on personal statements



DO...

- Remember there is no secret formula!
- Remember that tutors want to gain an insight into the applicant

Encourage your students to:

- Be reflective
- Be honest!
- Apply for a course they really want to study
- Critically engage with any reading or activities that are mentioned

DON'T...

- Over-edit
- Encourage your students to be overly dramatic!
- Just list achievements

What is super-curricular and why is it important?

- Going above & beyond the school curriculum
- A step into academic working
- Can be enabled, encouraged and supported
- Can provide a discussion point at interview
- Is for everyone and needn't cost money

Super-curricular activities help to:

- Understand whether the student has chosen the right course
- Demonstrate subject interest and develop research skills
- Show the student can work independently and be self-motivated
- Broaden the student's subject knowledge

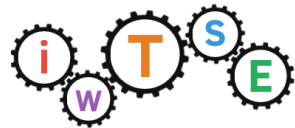
What about extra-curricular?

Extra curricular activities include non-academic activities, such as taking part in sport, music and volunteering.

- When we assess applicants, we are first and foremost interested in their academic potential.
- As students here there are plenty of opportunities to get involved with extra-curricular activities however



Super-curricular ideas:



iWantToStudyEngineering



And... news stories, relevant
scholarly articles, online journals

School reference

“As a referee, you’re aiming to give universities and colleges an informed and academic assessment of an applicant’s suitability for further study.”

UCAS

*wwwucas.com – How to Write UCAS
Undergraduate References*

- Part of UCAS application – 4,000 characters
- Has some similarities with US Teacher Recommendation
- Professional insight into an applicant’s academic performance and potential
- Must be consistent with rest of application
- Will not be seen by applicant before submission, but applicant can request to see it via UCAS
- Final grade predictions

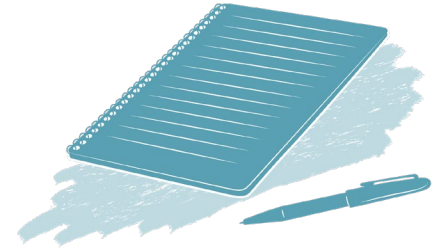
Producing a supportive reference



- Highlight areas of particular strength relative to cohort
- Relate back to the relevant subject selection criteria where possible
- Contextualise achievement
- Remember Cambridge's Extenuating Circumstances Form
- Provide additional information if there is a change of circumstances post-application
- Multiple contributors, single voice



Suggested structure



School / college information
(can include a hyperlink to school website, but this should be in addition to key information)

10%

80%

Subject specific information and aptitude for degree

- Focus on subject choice
- Contextual achievement
- Areas of particular strength

Any mitigating or extenuating circumstances *(including nature and length of impact)*
Concluding statement

10%

Tests and Assessments: Why use them?



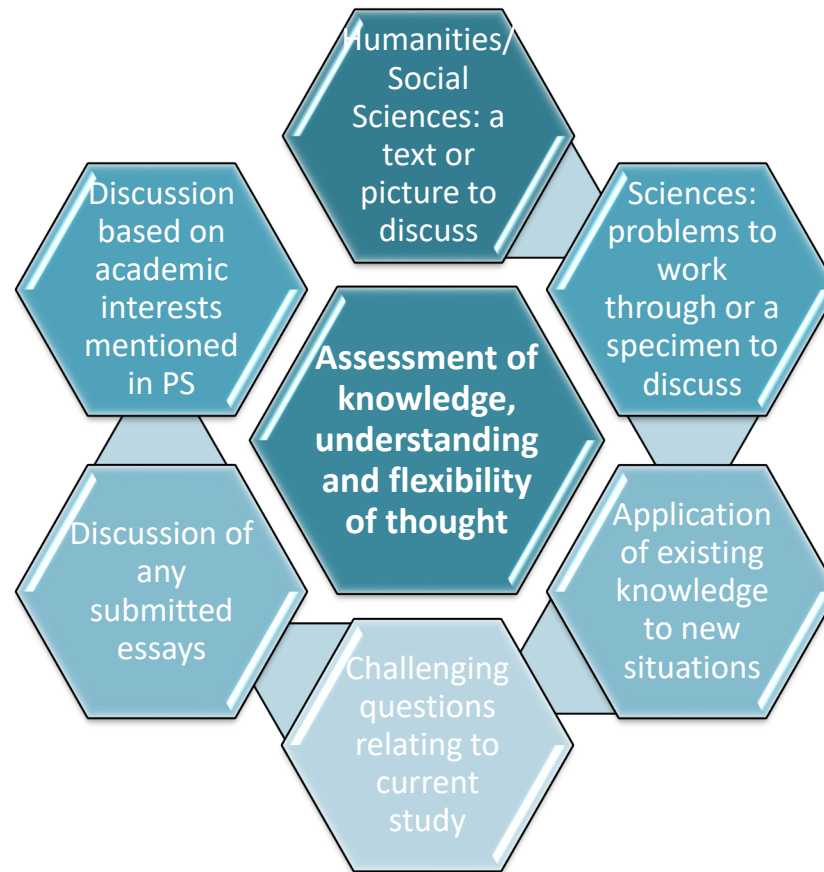
- Differentiate between well-qualified candidates
- A common set of data
- To stretch and challenge applicants
- Assess the aptitude and potential of candidates
- If appropriate, assess subject knowledge and understanding
- Help us concentrate interviewing resources on those most likely to achieve an offer (Oxford)

How can applicants prepare?

- Registering on time
- Look at syllabus online
- Practice under timed conditions
- Understand inevitable challenge
- Resources freely available



Interviews: What students should expect

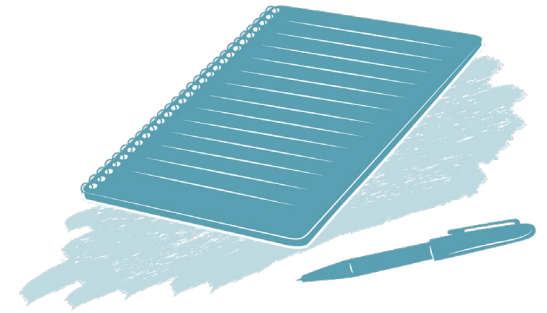


**No hidden agenda, no trick questions,
not the final hurdle!**

Interviews: What are we looking for?

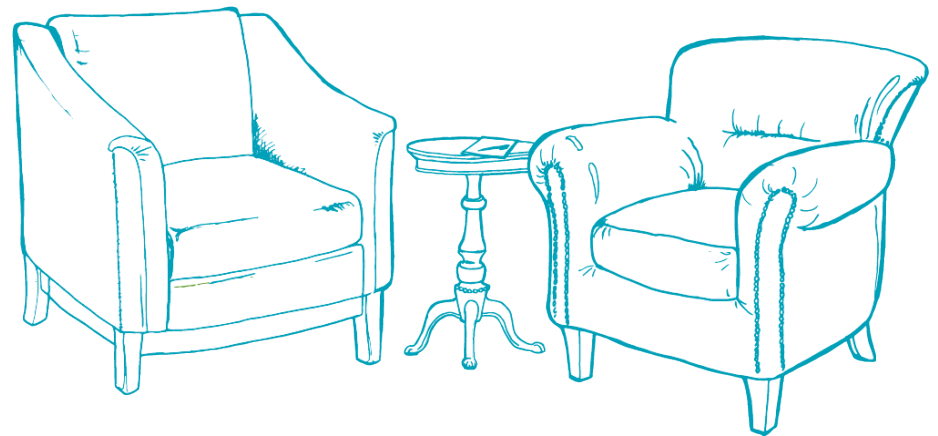
Candidates should be able to demonstrate:

- ✓ Subject knowledge and interest
- ✓ Fluency in expressing core knowledge and concepts
- ✓ Enthusiasm for engaging with new ideas
- ✓ Ability to apply existing knowledge to new situations
- ✓ Ability to assimilate and apply new concepts
- ✓ Flexibility of thought and responsiveness to new information
- ✓ Clarity of thought and reasoning
- ✓ Ability to think analytically and critically

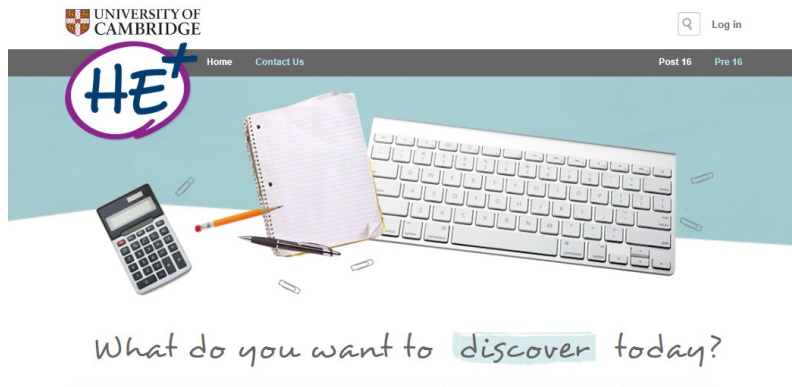


Interviews: How to prepare

- Encourage students to refresh their memory about super-curricular work they've done
- Give students opportunities to discuss academic work and ideas as this is a core part of the interview format
- Review personal statement
- Watch the interviews films
- Don't worry about what to wear!



Supporting your students



Home of Big Questions

OX?PLORE

- Encourage them to explore what interests them
- Use free online resources – HE+/ Oxplore, MOOCs, podcasts, journals
- Look at University reading lists for inspiration
- Encourage them to research the course content at multiple universities – are we definitely offering what they find interesting?

Keeping up to date

- Our websites
- International events webpages:
 - Country-specific events
 - Counsellor Conferences
 - Cambridge webinars— sign up online
- Attendance at international conferences
- Email and phone – please get in touch if you have any questions!



Coronavirus update: Supporting current offer holders

- Both universities would like to stress that our offer holders are very much in our thoughts and we are here to support them as much as we can in these uncertain times
- We understand that students want to know how the disruption of schooling will affect the awarding of qualifications and their offer of study at Oxford or Cambridge
- We are working hard to provide the clear answers teachers and students need as quickly as possible and want to reassure you and your students we will continue be in touch over the coming months with advice and guidance
- Both Universities have dedicated websites for offer holders where new information will be published regularly

www.ox.ac.uk/students/coronavirus-advice/offer-holders-and-applicants

www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/coronavirus

Coronavirus update: Investigating alternative activities

Open Days

- Both Universities will offer a form of alternative Open Day in July. Keep an eye on the websites for more information.
- Both universities plan to run in-person events later in the year, if it is safe to do so

Supporting learning from home

- Cambridge
 - Will be launching a new virtual tour platform over the Summer, giving your students the opportunity to 'look around' the departments and Colleges.
 - The HE Plus website is still a great resource for students to begin exploring super-curricular topics in a wide range of subjects.
- Oxford
 - Will be launching a range of digital resources created by the University to support students in learning from home whilst schools are closed.
 - In addition we continue to offer new Big Questions on our Oxplore site to encourage super curricular learning at home

www.ox.ac.uk/access

www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/events

Thank you
for listening



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