

Archaeology & Anthropology Admissions 2024

This year 104 candidates applied to read Archaeology & Anthropology, a decrease -12,5% from 122 in 2023. All applications were for admission in October 2025.

A total of 27 offers were made for October 2025 (Table 1 & 2), as in the previous year (for 2024). Four offers were made on behalf of the subject as a whole (excluding Harris Manchester College and Hertford) by Keble, St Hugh's, St John's and St Peter's.

Table 1. Archaeology & Anthropology Applications 2023

| | <i>Applied</i> | <i>Desummoned/ Withdraw</i> | <i>Rejected</i> | <i>Places</i> |
|-----------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <i>School type/domicile</i> | | | | |
| UK State | 41 | 12 | 18 | 11 |
| UK Independent | 17 | 3 | 6 | 8 |
| EU/EEA | 1 | 1 | | 0 |
| International | 45 | 29 | 9 | 7 |
| <i>Gender</i> | | | | |
| men | 29 | 14 | 6 | 9 |
| women | 71 | 27 | 28 | 16 |
| IUAT or PNTS | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| total | 104 | 42 | 36 | 26 |

**IUAT – I use another term; PNTS – prefer not to say [These are new UCAS gender identifications used in this admissions round] Numbers have been aggregated due to low values to prevent identification of individuals*

Table 2. Applications and places by College

| | <i>Applications</i> | <i>Places</i> |
|-------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Harris Manchester | 2 | 2 |
| Hertford | 23 | 4 (+1) |
| Keble | 19 | 5 |
| St Hugh's | 23 | 7 |
| St John's | 24 | 3 |
| St Peter's | 16 | 5 |
| Total | 107 | 26+1 = 27 |

NB – One each of the places offered by Keble, St Hugh's, St John's and St Peter's is a pool offer made on behalf of all the Colleges, except Harris Manchester. Additionally, Hertford retained one candidate who deferred from the 2023 round (in brackets above).

Number and quality of applicants

The number of applicants was slightly down on last year (n=122) and the record total in 2021(n=132). Several of those applying had attended our Open Days.

The overall success rate for all applicants was 25%, slightly higher than last year (22%). Of those applying, 59 (57%) were called for interview, a small drop from last year where the figure was 73 (60%). Five candidates withdrew before decisions were taken about desummoning or were deemed to have withdrawn because they failed to submit the written work required of them. All shortlisted candidates were interviewed online and all those interviewed were seen by two Colleges. In total, EU/EEA-based and overseas-based candidates accounted for 44% of all applications this year, compared to 50% in 2023 and 45% in 2022. This reflects a continuing strong interest in the degree from non-UK applicants. Sadly, however, residents of the EU/EEA, now burdened with the imposition of significantly higher fees, were relatively few in number, as they were in 2023 (n=7) compared to previous years (there was a -4.8% decrease in the proportion of overseas applicants from within the EU. Successful non-UK-based candidates came from North America and Asia.

The overall success rate for EU/EEA/international candidates, was better in comparison to previous years however, continued to reflect a disproportionately large number of weaker applicants with less strong references/grades/personal statements or written work, or poor interview performance. As a consequence, 30 non-UK candidates were desummoned (or deemed to have withdrawn) compared to 15 of those applying from within the UK. The overall success rate of EU/EEA and other international candidates (15%; 8% in 2023) was considerably lower than that for candidates applying from within the UK (33%; 34% in 2023).

Gender

In total, nine men (success rate 31%; the same with 2023), sixteen women (success rate 23%; 17% in 2023), and one IUAT were offered places. Looking only at applicants of school age from within Britain, the relevant success rates this year were 47% for men and 29% for women, compared to 44% and 25%, respectively, in 2023. The lower success rate of UK women is thus notable again this year.

School type and social disadvantage summary scores (United Kingdom only)

Of candidates resident and studying in the United Kingdom to whom offers were made, ten were from the maintained sector compared to eight from the independent sector. The maintained sector accounted for 71% and independent sector 29% of UK applications. These figures compare, respectively, to 72% and 28% in 2023 and 65% and 35% in 2022.

There was an overall decrease in the success rate of maintained sector candidates in comparison to those from the independent sector, with 23% of candidates (10 out of 41) being admitted from the maintained sector compared to 47% of those from the independent sector (8 out of 17). In comparison, relevant figures for 2023 were 34% and 35% and, for 2020, 35% and 25% respectively.

Of the twelve applicants in the most disadvantaged group and the fifteen in the next most disadvantaged group, seven were desummoned because they were predicted to obtain less than the minimum entrance offers (AAA/ 38 IB) or otherwise had particularly weak applications. (There was a total of eleven candidates in the most disadvantaged group and 10 in the next group last year.) Of those candidates from disadvantaged backgrounds who were interviewed this year, five of the former (45% of those applying) and two of the latter (20% of those applying) were awarded places. This compares to an overall success rate of 33% (34% in 2023) for all UK-based school-aged candidates and success rates for Band A of 40% and Band B of

40% in 2023 (compared to 45% and 19% in 2022).

Archaeology & Anthropology joined the Opportunity Oxford scheme in 2022. Eleven of the fifteen candidates identified as eligible were interviewed in this round. Of these candidates, five obtained places, a success rate of 33%, significantly higher than the success rate for all applicants (25%). None of those rejected at interview were considered appropriate for further consideration by the scheme.

Deferred entry

No applications were received for deferred entry in 2026.

Distribution of applicants between Colleges

The distribution of applicants between Colleges showed a significant number of applicants for St John's (24 in comparison to 12 in 2023), followed by St Hugh's and Hertford with 23 applicants.

Selection procedures

Tutors remain committed to providing interviews at two Colleges for all candidates interviewed in Oxford. A slight degree of reassignment of second choice candidates was necessary in order to achieve an equitable balance of workload between Colleges and was arranged by the Organising Secretary. Candidates were desummoned where appropriate, using the agreed selection criteria (see below). Following the conclusion of all interviews (marked on a 1-10 scale), candidates were discussed and ranked on an ABC system before places were confirmed.

Written work for all candidates was made available and interview scores were also recorded. All those deemed of high quality were designated for a place. All candidates were interviewed online using Microsoft Teams. In a very small number of cases, minor technical difficulties – candidates being unable to fully maintain a high-quality video as well as an audio link – led to an interview's length being slightly extended. In no instance, however, did this interfere with the successful conduct of the interview.

Aptitude testing

No pre-interview tests were used. In deference to interviewing all candidates online again this year, none were asked to read, and then answer questions on, an appropriate archaeological or anthropological passage as part of their interview. Some slight modification of other questions was required due to the inability of candidates to physically handle objects, but this did not prove difficult.

Short-listing criteria

Tutors employed the following criteria when selecting which candidates to interview: 1) A-level grades or equivalent (unless convincing extenuating circumstances could be demonstrated, AAA or 38 at IB as a minimum prediction/secured set of grades with candidates without this not being summoned for interview); 2) two pieces of submitted written work plus a 500-word essay ('What can we learn about people in the past OR in the present from their material culture?') showing evidence of logical argument and analysis, as well as sufficient

grasp of English to deal with the demands of an Oxford degree, the work being graded by Tutors from best to worst on a 5-1 scale; 3) a positive academic reference from someone acquainted with the candidate's academic background (subject to modification in the case of mature applicants); 4) a strong record of achievement, where relevant, in previous academic examinations, such as GCSE; 5) a personal statement showing a convincing degree of enthusiasm and motivation for studying the subject. Candidates who met all of these criteria were interviewed.

Reallocation and redistribution

Given the small numbers of places, candidates and Colleges involved, this remains an irrelevant issue for Archaeology & Anthropology and all interviewed candidates continue to be seen separately by two Colleges. However, in order to equalise the total burden of interviews between Colleges, a small number of second choice allocations were amended by the Organising Secretary.

Access

i) Open Days

Open Days linked to the University-wide Science Open Days continue to be successful in attracting applicants. We have maintained the fuller and, we believe, more effective programme initiated in 2017. In addition to a general talk about the degree and the admissions process, this includes taster lectures and the opportunity to talk with current undergraduates, including discussion of the fieldwork projects in which they have been engaged. Visits to the Ashmolean and Pitt Rivers Museum and the Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art continue to play an important part in our Open Day event. Outside Oxford, we will continue to support the London Anthropology and Archaeology Days and play a full part in those Oxford-Cambridge Student Conferences taking place in England and Wales. We remain keen to participate in those taking place in Scotland and Northern Ireland. We shall also continue to respond promptly and effectively to requests for further information sent on by the degree's Administrator to the Organising Secretary.

ii)

The Archaeology & Anthropology admissions website and related social media accounts continue to be maintained and updated.

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Organising Secretary, Archaeology & Anthropology admissions