



UNITED KINGDOM

Brief Background: The United Kingdom, which encompasses England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, is home to 162 higher education institutions offering postsecondary degree programs.

In 2016-17, the UK enrolled 442,375 international students. Of the more than 16,900 US students pursuing full degrees in the UK, about 5,800 were undergraduates. The most popular courses of study for American students include social studies, historical and philosophical studies, languages, business and administrative studies, and creative arts and design.

Times Higher Education's World University Rankings 2017-18 listed four British institutions among the top 20 universities in the world: The University of Oxford, University of Cambridge, Imperial College London, and University College London. These institutions are members of the distinguished Russell Group, an organization representing 24 leading UK universities committed to outstanding research and teaching.

The British Council, the UK's official education and cultural relations organization, notes that 93.3 percent of full-time undergraduates who received their degree in 2014-15 were either employed or pursuing further study in the UK and beyond within six months after graduation.

Good to Know: A bachelor's degree in England, Northern Ireland, and Wales can be completed in three years; in Scotland, four years is standard. The term course refers to what US institutions typically call a major or program of study and are declared during the application process. Degree programs are very focused. Students will be enrolled in classes, known as modules, aligned with their major right from the outset of their studies, instead of a more broad-based liberal arts curriculum. Most programs are honors courses, which typically require students to produce a dissertation or capstone project based on independent research in their final year.

Some UK universities have created courses that allow students more flexibility in their studies. Some of these courses are called liberal arts or arts and sciences on the institutions' websites. Students who are unsure of what they want to study might want to focus on Scottish universities, as these allow students to explore additional subjects during their first year. Students should weigh this additional flexibility against the cost of a four-year degree.

Professional degrees—such as law, medicine, veterinary science, and dentistry—are available at the undergraduate level and typically last between three to five years. It is important to note that entry requirements for these programs are more demanding than those for other majors. There might also be additional steps involved to practice with this degree in the US.

Law

In the UK, students can study law straight after high school and the degree takes three years to complete. If a student decides at the end of their course that they want to become a legal professional, there are opportunities to pursue a Graduate Diploma in Law. After successful completion of this one-year course, students receive Qualifying Law Degree status, which is needed to practice law in the UK.

Students thinking of practicing law in the United States with a foreign law degree should keep in mind that each state has different requirements. The requirements for each are listed on the state-specific bar exam website and are summarized by the National Conference of Bar Examiners' Bar Admission Guide.

Law is also offered as an academic subject that can be combined with another discipline for students who are interested in law, but may not want to practice. For example, there are dual honors options such as BA (Hons) Business and Law, BSc (Hons) Law and Psychology, and BA (Hons) Law and International Relations.

Special Entrance Requirements: The National Admissions Test for Law (LNAT) is a two-part test that is used to help admission tutors assess aptitude for studying law. LNAT is required for most law courses at the universities of Bristol, Durham, Glasgow, Kings College London, Nottingham, Oxford, SOAS University of London, and University College London. Students should take the test prior to submitting their application via UCAS.

Application Deadline: The majority of institutions expect international students applying to law to apply by the Jan. 15 deadline.

Medicine

There are 33 medical schools in the UK that offer an undergraduate medicine program. These programs provide students the opportunity to pursue a professional subject without a prior degree, and typically take five to six years. Although the cap on international students admitted to undergraduate medical programs has been lifted for 2018 entry and beyond, the application process for international students will remain extremely competitive due to capacity, the volume of applications, and high academic qualifications.

Applications must be made through UCAS. Students can submit four medical school choices plus a back-up. The back-up cannot be dentistry or veterinary science, and is recommended to be an allied health program or life science.

Entrance requirements typically include:

- The equivalent of 13 years of secondary school (although, in some cases, exceptional grades in 12-year schooling systems are accepted)
- Excellent grades in chemistry and/or biology
- Academic excellence in another science or math course (e.g., chemistry, biology, physics)
- Significant experience in a health care environment gained prior to the application submission. Experiences can be voluntary, paid work, or informal. Students are evaluated highly when they can demonstrate that they have exceeded expectations.
- Additional tests, such as the UK Clinical Aptitude Test (UKCAT) and Biomedical Admissions Test (BMAT) are commonly used to assess aptitude. Applicants must find out whether additional tests are required and, if so, which tests are required by their university choice.

Interviews for medical courses normally take place in the UK between November and March. When a university receives a high volume of quality applications from a particular geographic region, interviews may be arranged at an alternative location.

The American Medical Association includes an informational page for graduates of foreign medical school programs if they wish to practice in the US.

Application Deadline: Oct. 15 in the year before the student wants to enroll.

Veterinary Science

In the UK, students can pursue a Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery (BVMBVS), or Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine (BVetMed). These degrees can be completed within four to six years.

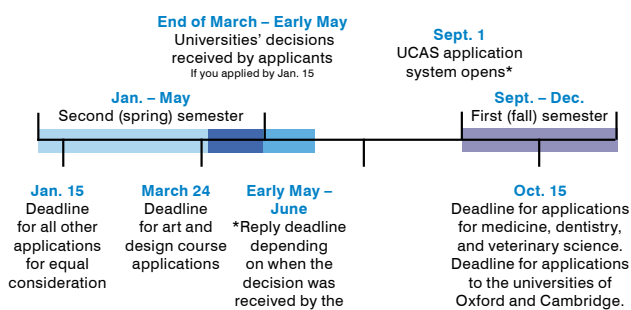
Some veterinary medicine courses in the UK are accredited by American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and/or the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE), giving students the ability to practice throughout UK, Europe, North America, and Australasia.

Special Entrance Requirements: International academic entry requirements vary by institution for veterinary medicine courses, and in some cases, may be more rigorous than for BA or BSc courses. Applicants are typically expected to have relevant practical experience with handling animals. UKCAT, BMAT, or an institution's own test may be required. This will be stated on the entry requirements page of the institution's website. Interviews are required for most veterinary medicine courses.

Application Deadline: Oct. 15 in the year before the student wants to enroll.

As part of their degree programs, many UK universities offer work placements, sometimes referred to as a sandwich year. Sandwich years are typically undertaken between the second and final year of the degree, and allow a student the opportunity to put their knowledge into practice, network with companies in their field, and earn money. This experience does not usually require an additional visa, as it is closely tied to a student's academic course. The sandwich year might also be used to study abroad.

Academic Calendar: UK academic years run from September to May, with breaks in mid-December to early January and in March to mid- to late-April. Major exam periods are usually in January and May.



*Students are recommended to apply as early as possible at wwwucas.com/apply.

Search: The [British Council's website](#) gives students information about selecting a course and institution. Students can search for courses and institutions through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). The nonprofit organization offers a UK-specific online application system comparable to The Common Application. UCAS also provides tips and other guidance to potential students and families. Another useful website

is [Unistats](#), which allows students to compare three courses alongside one another.

UK media outlets publish university and subject league tables, which are similar to rankings. Because the UK university system is geared toward a student's course of study, subject league tables may provide useful perspective or serve as a starting point for students looking to study a particular major. However, methodologies vary; students are urged to read the fine print, such as the number of people surveyed and the year the information was gathered.

Examples include:

- [The Guardian's University Guide](#)
- [The Complete University Guide](#)
- [Times Higher Education World University Rankings](#)

Apply: Most students, domestic and international, apply to British universities through UCAS. Twenty-seven British universities also participate in The Common Application. Some universities also accept applications made directly to their institution; the individual institution's preference should be indicated on its website. If a student is applying to more than one course in the UK, they should use UCAS.

Students can apply to a maximum of five courses in the UK, regardless of application method. The British Council recommends students apply to three target and two safety courses. Target courses are those for which a student is likely to meet the entry requirements, and safety courses are those that may require grades slightly below the student's expected results. A student can apply to more than one course at the same institution. Admission officials at the universities where a student has applied cannot see where else the student has submitted an application.

or dental sciences, can apply to only four courses of that nature. Their fifth choice must be a course outside that professional science category.

Students considering Oxford or Cambridge can apply to only one of the two institutions. For more on the Oxbridge application process, see page 73.

Students will be expected to enter their complete academic course history in the UCAS section on modules, that is, what US students typically call classes. In addition to completing the UCAS application form, students will submit one personal statement and a letter of recommendation from an advisor, teacher, or similar academic professional. Final grades and an academically oriented personal statement are important parts of the application.

Personal statements should show “a student’s passion and motivation for applying and why they are suitable for the course,” according to UCAS. Applicants have 4,000 characters to write one statement, which is sent to all the universities where they have applied. The statement should straightforwardly reflect why the student wants to study their chosen course. Topics such as extracurricular interests or hardships overcome are inappropriate unless students can draw a clear link to a particular course.

If a university requires additional application documents, the student will be asked to upload the documents in a Supplementary Application Questionnaire that is sent to them electronically after they have submitted their UCAS application. Counselors are sometimes required to submit supplementary documents upon request by the university.

APPLICATION ADVICE

Advise students to apply to courses which are very similar. A personal statement that tries to weave together too many different courses will not be read favorably. For example, a student should not apply for engineering at one university and business at another.

References: Letters of reference should focus on the applicant’s suitability for studying the intended course. Application readers—admission officers or professors who teach the course—want to know whether the student is knowledgeable about the subject and has demonstrated an interest in various ways, to gauge whether they can successfully study it in depth. The letter of reference should also include a link to the school profile—particularly the curriculum—and cite any extenuating circumstances.

Photo courtesy of Imogen



“Logistically, I suppose, I had to think about buying adaptors for my appliances and buying bedding in the English sizes. But none of the solutions involved rocket science, surprisingly. Don’t let any sort of logistical challenges discourage you from at least applying to go to school abroad.”

—Imogen Evans, Georgia, King’s College London

The teacher or counselor who serves as the applicant’s academic referee will also be asked to predict final year grades or exam results. Such predictions are based on professional judgment, the student’s past performance, current progress, and the school’s historical performance. Referees are encouraged to work with department heads and other officials to provide predictions, however UCAS is aware that this is an imperfect science. Although some universities require predicted grades for the application to be considered complete, others will accept applications without them. Check with the university’s International Office to find out how critical the predicted grades are to the application. Because most offers of admission are conditional on achieving the predicted grades or scores, counselors and teachers should do their best to make fair and accurate predictions. Inflating a student’s predicted grades may result in a student missing out on a conditional offer. See the Upon Acceptance section below for more details.

Deadlines: The application season opens on Sept. 1. The deadline for applying is Oct. 15 for Oxford and Cambridge, as well as medicine, dentistry, and veterinary science courses. Jan. 15 is the equal consideration deadline for all other UK universities, which students are encouraged to meet. Some

institutions, however, may accept applications after the equal consideration deadline, and up to as late as six weeks before the course starts.

Some art and design courses have March deadlines so that applicants have adequate time to prepare a portfolio.

Application Fees: UCAS charges applicants 13 pounds for one course, or a total of 24 pounds for multiple courses, up to five.

Admission Requirements: Entry requirements for UK institutions are generally transparent and straightforward, and can be found on university websites or by contacting individual admission offices. A counselor can easily confirm the minimum GPA, test scores, and other requirements for admission.

Requirements typically include a combination of advanced coursework such as AP courses and test results; IB or college credits; SAT, ACT and SAT Subject test scores; as well as a high school diploma.

Typically, students apply through UCAS without submitting a high school transcript. The high school transcript, one of the most important elements of the application process in the US, is not usually considered for US applicants to the UK, though some universities may ask for it. Rather, on the UCAS application students will indicate qualifications they have already received. Examples include results on exams and standardized tests taken from ninth through 11th grade, and qualifications that are pending, such as AP and IB exams that will be taken in May of senior year.

Upon Acceptance: UK universities are usually able to offer admission electronically within two months of an application's submission. Students may be admitted unconditionally or conditionally.

An unconditional offer means that the student has no conditions to meet and has a place at the institution if they choose to accept it.

A conditional offer is the most common offer made to both UK and international students. If a student has a conditional offer this means there are certain

requirements outlined by the institution that the student must meet to secure their spot, such as obtaining a certain final exam score (AP exams; IB scores; ACT, SAT or SAT Subject tests scores) or certain GPA. These offers are legally binding on the part of the university and cannot be rescinded.

Students who applied to five universities and received no offers of admission may have the option of adding an extra choice. UCAS Extra is a free service that allows these students to apply to one course at a time from late February up until early July. A final option, called clearing, is the period during which universities are allowed to fill any places they still have available. Clearing runs from July to September each year.

Once a student is notified of decisions, UCAS enables a student to hold two offers from institutions in the UK. The first is a firm choice, or the student's first choice, and the second is an insurance choice, which provides the student with a safety net should they not obtain the results required by their firm choice.

Tuition and Fees: Each university sets its own fees. Annual tuition fees for international students range from about 10,000 to 21,000 pounds per year, with the exception of medical courses which can be up to 38,000 pounds per year.

US students are eligible to use direct loans from the US Federal Student Aid program at most UK universities. Some scholarships are available for international students. The [British Council website](#) can provide more details.

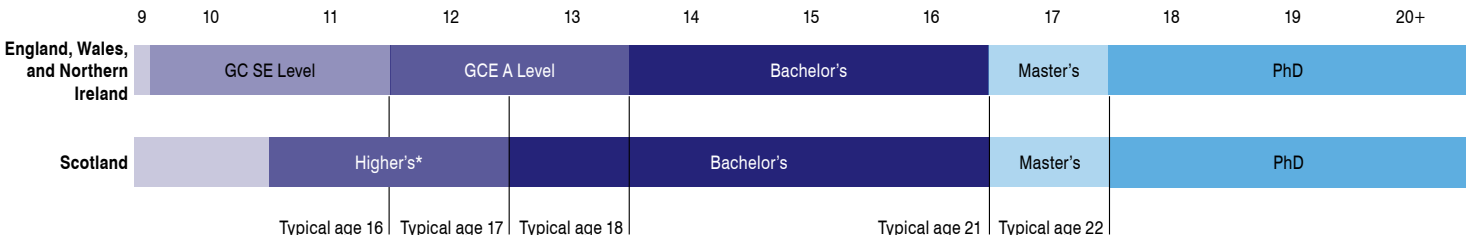
Housing: Many universities guarantee on-campus housing—typically single-occupancy—for first-year international students. International students are usually integrated into first-year housing with domestic students. Many student residences are self-catered, meaning students prepare and cook their own meals. In cities, for-profit, privately run residence halls are common. Many students elect to live in these private dorms or other private rental accommodations after their first year.

Minimum monthly costs for housing and other living expenses in 2017 were estimated at 1,015 pounds outside London and 1,265 pounds in London.

United Kingdom

Years in Formal Education: Comparing England, Wales, and Northern Ireland to Scotland

Chart courtesy of the British Council



*Some universities require advanced highers, which is an additional 1-year course. If advanced highers have been taken, a student would not complete their bachelor's degree until the age of 22.

Visa and Other Permits: Universities typically advise admitted students on how to apply for a student visa. Visas are issued by [UK Visas and Immigration](#) (UKVI).

Students are advised to apply for a visa as soon as their offer of admission becomes unconditional. Students must receive a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) from the institution they plan to attend to complete the visa application. Most US students meet the requirements for what is called the Tier 4 student visa, which is good for the duration of an undergraduate degree program, for up to five years. To obtain a visa, students must demonstrate they have sufficient funds for living costs. However, US citizens applying from within the USA do not need to show evidence of funds.

The visa application cost is 335 pounds. See the UKVI website for more information.

Though US students do not need to prove they have private health insurance, they will be asked to pay an annual health care surcharge upfront as part of the visa application process. Students must pay the per year fee (150 pounds in 2018) for the duration of the visa.

International students are allowed to work up to 20 hours per week while courses are in session, and full-time during university breaks.

Advice from the Field: The British Council provides numerous resources for counselors advising students on higher education in the UK, including a [College and University Guidance Counsellor Handbook](#).

Additionally, [UCAS has a guide for counselors](#) that explains the application process and how advisers can monitor a student's progress. Counselors can fill out a practice UCAS application, allowing them to see what students will encounter when formally applying.

Counselors who have specific questions pertinent to an individual university are advised to contact the institution's international admission officer. In most cases contact information is accessible by inserting the institution's name into the [Universities UK website](#).

Counselors should be aware that applicants have the right to request access to their recommendations under UK law. This law applies to all UK schools and their applicants, regardless of whether students have waived their FERPA rights on The Common Application.

A note on admission to medical programs: The majority of seats will go to UK applicants. Furthermore, there are additional requirements to practice medicine in the US with a UK degree. These are outlined by the [British Medical Association](#) (BMA).

Many UK universities, particularly those in London, are known as city universities. Students should be advised that these do not have campuses in the traditional American sense. This can be daunting to students who are adapting to both college life and overseas living. Some American students prefer the familiar nature of campus universities, which look and feel more like many American institutions.

The [UK Council for International Student Affairs](#) (UKCISA) provides student visa advice as well as a wealth of information about other aspects of living and studying in the UK.

Many US cities are home to local chapters of UK university alumni associations which regularly host social, professional development, and volunteer events. Alumni can also stay connected with their university through newsletters and online networks. Similar to US universities, UK universities' career services will continue to offer their alumni support to help them progress and develop their career. Some alumni may also choose to become involved in connecting with prospective students and sharing their experience at student recruitment events.

In some major US cities, there are general UK alumni clubs or associations which are open to any alumni who have studied at a university in the UK. For example, the Study UK Alumni Network creates opportunities for UK universities to collaborate on alumni events in New York City. Alumni can [check if their university is a member of the British Council Alumni Network](#).

The British Council Alumni Awards celebrate the outstanding achievements of alumni and showcase the impact and value of a UK higher education. Award winners and finalists are leaders in their fields who have used their experience of studying at a UK university to make a positive contribution to their communities, professions, and countries. You can find out more about past winners and how to apply or nominate someone through the [British Council website](#).



OXBRIDGE APPLICATION PROCESS

The University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge—often referred to together as Oxbridge—are two of the most prestigious destinations for postsecondary study in the United Kingdom. Both universities are rated at the top of international rankings for quality of teaching and research. Students entering either Cambridge or Oxford can expect a challenging curriculum. Admission decisions at each university are based solely on academic indicators of a student's ability and potential, according to stated selection criteria for each course, and, importantly, the application process for Cambridge and Oxford differs from that of most other British universities.

Only a small number of courses are available for study (48 at Oxford and 30 at Cambridge), and programs of study are traditional and rigorous. The hallmark of an Oxbridge education is the focus on small-group instruction led by academic experts. At Oxford, these sessions are called tutorials; at Cambridge they are supervisions. Both systems allow students to debate and argue ideas with some of the best minds in the world.

An important caveat: Students are allowed to apply to either Cambridge or Oxford, but not to both. Both schools have the same UCAS application deadline: Oct. 15 at 6 p.m. local time.

Students who want to attend either university should familiarize themselves with entrance requirements early in their high school years, since both universities require specific qualifications and have early deadlines.

The College System

Oxford and Cambridge are collegiate universities, meaning that a successful applicant gains a place at the university and will be a member of a college for the entirety of their undergraduate course. A college is an academic community, and is the center of undergraduate life, including sporting, musical and dramatic pursuits, and socializing.

Each college at Oxford and Cambridge differs in a number of ways, including size, location, atmosphere, and facilities. Students should research colleges of interest prior to application.

Individual colleges are responsible for admitting their own students, although they do this on behalf of the university as a whole. Students either apply to a specific college or make an open application, meaning they will be assigned to a college based on space availability. Both universities also operate a pooling system—reallocating applicants from the most over-subscribed colleges to level out an uneven application field. Somewhere between 30 percent to 40 percent of undergraduates, depending on the subject, end up at a different college than the one to which they applied.

Oxford or Cambridge?

Bright and motivated students who have an academic passion for a particular subject may find it difficult to decide between Oxford and Cambridge. Students must choose their course when applying, rather than declaring a major while at university. When deciding between Oxford and Cambridge, students should look first at the degrees offered by each institution, as these vary considerably. Oxford offers more joint-honors courses (e.g. philosophy, politics, and economics; or computer science and philosophy), whereas Cambridge tends to offer more single-subject honors courses, though it has recently introduced joint programs in history and politics, as well as history and modern languages.

For subjects such as history or law that are offered by both universities, students are advised to research the content of the degree course before making a final decision. Note the compulsory and optional modules, opportunities for studying abroad, and teaching and assessment methods.

Apply: International student application requirements are online.

- [University of Oxford](#)
- [University of Cambridge](#)

University of Oxford

Qualifications:

IB Diploma: Depending on the program of study, students are expected to have a total of 38, 39, or 40 points, including the core points. Specific minimum scores in certain courses may be required; students should check online for course-specific requirements. See the [course listing](#) and [international qualifications](#) webpage for details.

SAT: Oxford will accept the SAT. Students taking the SAT will need to achieve a total score of at least 1,470 out of 1,600. Oxford does not require the optional essay.

ACT: A minimum score of 32 out of 36 is required.

AP/SAT Subject Tests: SAT and ACT scores should be supplemented by at least three or more AP tests in appropriate subjects with scores of 5, or three SAT Subject Tests in appropriate subjects with scores of 700 or better.

Other Tests: Most programs also require students to take additional, subject-specific tests. Students seeking a bachelor's in law must take the National Admissions Test for Law (LNAT), for example, and math applicants must take the Mathematics Admissions Test (MAT). Results help to determine which candidates will be invited to interview. Some tests need to be completed before the application deadline, while others are completed after application, but before the interview. Students must check course websites to learn what tests are required and should schedule them early in the process. Most tests are administered in early November or late October. Students should check the details of which test(s) they need to take no later than early September to allow time to find and register at the nearest test center. Students are not expected to come to Oxford for their test(s), but their nearest test center may not be local. Schools and colleges may be able to register as a test center, if they haven't already. Further details can be found through [Oxford's website](#).



Writing Sample: Many courses require a [writing sample](#) that demonstrates the student's analytical, reasoning, and writing skills.

Students must submit their work by the deadline. The college that is considering their application may have particular format requirements (e.g., in PDF form), so it is important that students ensure their submissions meet these requirements.

Interviews: Course faculty, known as tutors, typically create a short list of candidates by late November or early December and then invite selected students for an interview. Applicants may receive very short notice of an interview date. Note that any travel costs incurred are at the student's expense. The college considering the application may choose to interview the student via telephone or Skype, but this is not guaranteed. Interviews for specific subjects take place within a designated time frame, and applicants must make sure that they are available on the dates required for their subject, although remote interviews may need to be scheduled outside of this time period, subject to the availability of the professors.

Interviewees should be well-read and knowledgeable about the subject matter of the course to which they are applying. They should also thoroughly review the selection criteria for their course, be fully familiar with what they wrote in their personal statement, be cognizant of relevant arguments, and be prepared to discuss their own views.

Offers: Students can expect a decision by the end of January of the year in which they plan to matriculate. An offer may come directly from the college to which a student applied, or it may come from another college within the university. For students who have not yet completed high school, the offer will likely be conditional on final results.

Resources:

- [US and Canada-specific information](#)
- [Interview Arrangements for International Students](#)

University of Cambridge

Qualifications:

IB Diploma: Students should have a total of between 40 and 42 points, with 7/7/6 in IB Higher Level subjects. Applicants may be required to achieve a 7 in a particular subject, depending on individual circumstances.

SAT: Cambridge accepts minimum SAT scores of 730 in the reading and writing section and 730 on the mathematics section are required.

ACT: A minimum score of 32 out of 36 is required.

AP/SAT Subject Tests: Applicants must submit a minimum of five AP tests (with scores of 5) in appropriate subjects. Note that SAT Subject Tests are not normally viewed as being equivalent to A Level/IB Higher Level/Advanced Placement (AP) Tests.

COPA: The Cambridge Online Preliminary Application (COPA) is required of all applicants outside the European Union. A student's application will be considered invalid unless the COPA is received by Oct. 19 at 6 p.m. GMT. The application fee is 30 pounds. The applicant must ensure the college of choice (see The College System section) on a student's COPA matches the college indicated on the UCAS application. If a student does not have a college preference, the UCAS and COPA applications should reflect the open application option. Cambridge will match open applications with a college.

Transcripts: Transcripts must be submitted or the application will not be eligible for review. More information about transcript submission deadlines can be found on the [University of Cambridge's website](#).

SAQ: After students have submitted their UCAS application, they will receive a SAQ—an online form that collects additional information not found in the UCAS application. The SAQ is an opportunity for students to write about issues specific to Cambridge that are not addressed in their UCAS application. Students are advised to pay close attention to the deadline for the SAQ. The 2018 deadline for most students will be 6 p.m. GMT on Oct. 22. Students for whom a different deadline applies will be notified by their college. Also, be aware a student must include their COPA code, received after submitting the COPA, in the SAQ.

Other Tests: Other tests may be required, depending on the course of study. For example, applicants to mathematics and related courses must complete the Sixth Term Examination Paper (STEP). Students are urged to check the specific course website for details about any required tests; some exams may need to be completed prior to the application deadline, while others are completed after application.

Interviews: Admission decisions at the University of Cambridge are based solely on academic criteria and all applications are reviewed by academic staff members within the college that the student has applied to or been allocated. Applicants with a realistic chance of being offered a place are invited to attend an interview—usually around 75 percent of applicants each year. Cambridge interviews vary from subject to subject and from college to college, but the main focus of interviews is to explore the candidates' academic potential, motivation, and suitability for the chosen course of study. Interviews are similar in many ways to supervisions and help selectors gauge how candidates would respond to the teaching methods used at Cambridge.

Offers: Students can expect a decision by the end of January of the year they plan to matriculate. An offer may come directly from the college to which the student applied or it may come from another college, through the pooling system. For students who have not yet completed high school, the offer will likely be conditional on final results.

Resources:

- [US-Specific Information](#)
- [COPA Cambridge](#)
- [SAQ Cambridge](#)

