



Ref. FOI/2017/July

11 August 2017

Reply to request for information under Freedom of Information of Act	
Your Ref	Email dated 14 July 2017
Address	What do they know.com
Request	Please could you send me copy of spreadsheets, forms, assessment tools and/or criteria that are used to select which applicants are chosen for interview for Chemistry, Physics, Maths, PPE, Economics, Law and English. Also the same documents/criteria used when assessing interviewees for an offer.

Dear Mr Pattison,

I write in reply to your email of 14 July 2017, requesting the information shown above.

The selection criteria for each subject are available on the University website [here](#).

I attach additional information, where available, on the criteria used to shortlist applications and assess interviewees. Information that falls outside the scope of your request has been redacted.

Yours sincerely

(Max Todd)  
**FOI OXFORD**

## Chemistry UCAS form grading

Each candidate will be given a mark 1-5 on their UCAS form (5 = high) by tutors in the C1 college

### *Guidance for grading:*

Grading will be based on the following 4 criteria

- (i) A level grades or equivalent (obtained or predicted)
- (ii) AS grades (if applicable)
- (iii) GCSE grades or equivalent
- (iv) Reference

Contextual data should not influence the grade given, but must be considered carefully if a recommendation is made not to interview. University policy is that if a candidate is predicted grades consistent with our standard offer, and has both a prior school flag and a postcode flag, then there is a strong recommendation that they should be interviewed. There is a similar recommendation for candidates with a care flag.

ADSS provides a statistic which analyses the GCSE score in comparison to other applicants in all subjects from Schools with comparable GCSE performance. This may pick out students who do not look stunning but have performed much better than expected, and the converse.

A\* grades at A level correlate reasonably well with our interview assessments, although we reject a large number of candidates who ultimately gain 3 or more A\* grades. The number of A\*s gained is also a reasonable predictor of success at Prelims and Part IA – better than any other measure we have at present.

Since the standard offer is now A\*A\*A candidates who are predicted A\*AA are unlikely to be competitive; occasionally schools will not predict A\* grades as a matter of policy: if this is the case then they should say so in their reference. An additional complication this year is that this is the first cohort taking the new linear A levels, and Schools are finding prediction more difficult. Such candidates should not be ruled out automatically, as predictions are not always accurate but should be considered carefully. It is also worth pointing out that the proportions of candidates gaining A\* grades varies with A level subject – in 2016 it was Chemistry 8%, Maths 18%, Further maths 29%, biology 8%, physics 9% (candidates selecting further maths are a self-selecting set).

You can only grade on the basis of the information provided. Some overseas students will not have equivalents to GCSE or AS and this should not be a reason to exclude them from the shortlist. The criteria below are typical rather than restrictive.

A **5/5** candidate would typically have: predicted or achieved grades of 3 or more A\*s in chemistry, maths and one other A level or equivalent; all AS levels at A grade (if applicable); a large majority of GCSE at A\* including all important subjects and a reference recommending them as an outstanding candidate.

A **4.5/5** candidate would typically have at least 3 A\* grades predicted or gained, including chemistry and maths, no obvious weakness at AS, a majority of GCSEs at A\*, including the important subjects, but with lower grades in non-scientific subjects.

A **4/5** candidate would typically have most of the attributes of the 5/5 candidate, but might fall down in **one** area only: there must be a confident prediction of A\*A\*A at A level, or equivalent, with the A\*s in science or maths, but the GCSE results might be good but not outstanding (still with A\* in the important subjects). Such a candidate would be expected to have a strong rather than an outstanding reference.

A **3/5** candidate would typically be predicted at least A\*AA at A level or equivalent, but there may be a good reason to suspect that the candidate has the potential to be better than this. Such candidates may

or may not be invited for interview, but should be considered carefully before excluding them from the shortlist. Last year we made 5 offers to candidates predicted A\*AA, 4 of these were successful, two outperforming the prediction, and indeed one gaining A\*A\*A\*.

A **2/5** candidate would be expected to have: at least A in Chemistry/Science double subject and maths GCSE; predicted or achieved grades of at least A\*AA in A level or equivalent. Experience shows that candidates graded this low are extremely unlikely to be successful and we would not normally shortlist them unless there is a good reason to consider them.

A **1/5** candidate would typically have predictions of AAA or lower at A level or equivalent, or be offering insufficient science. We would not normally invite these candidates for interview.

Any comments or suggestions for improvement would be gratefully received.

## **Economics and Management Admissions**

Candidates are shortlisted for interview according to the factors in the following table with weights – High/Medium/Low – as indicated. For those shortlisted, performance at interview is an additional assessment factor considered alongside those shown which remain important.

Factor	High	Med	Low
Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA) Test	•		
GCSE (or similar) profile	•		
Predicted performance at A-level (or similar)	•		
UCAS reference		•	
AS level module grades			•
UCAS personal statement			•

## **ELAT scores**

**ELAT marks will be uploaded to the system by 5pm on Monday 21 November (MT Week 7).**

Candidates will sit the ELAT at test centres round the world on 2 November 2016. The test consists of a single writing exercise and is marked out of 30. Each test is at least double marked and the candidate will receive a final score out of 60, on the basis of which candidates will be banded into 4 bands.

ELAT marks will be uploaded to the system by 5pm on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> week, and the banding meeting will take place 11am-1pm that day. The score (out of 60) is used in pre-interview ranking and allows fine discrimination between candidates. The banding (1-4, where 1 is high) is a broad categorization which makes comparison

between different years' cohorts possible (because the actual spread of scores on ELAT differs from year to year depending on difficulty).

The 4 bands will indicate the following:

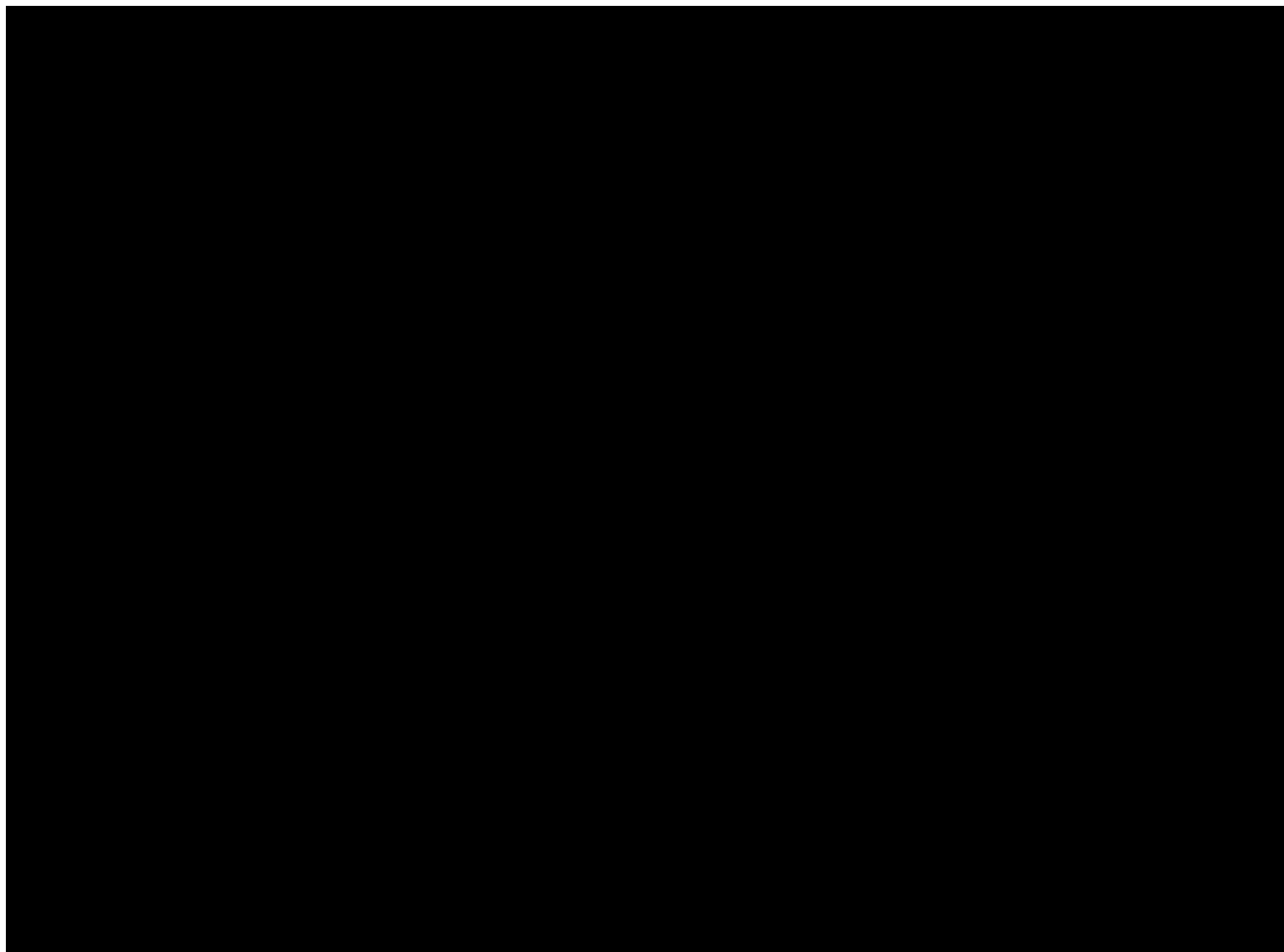
The top Band will identify those candidates who should definitely be called for interview (unless other indicators strongly suggest otherwise)

The second Band will indicate candidates who should be invited, provided other information supports this

The third Band will contain candidates who may not be called unless there is other convincing evidence to suggest they ought to be interviewed.

The fourth Band identifies those students who are unlikely to be invited, though other factors may outweigh the evidence of the test.

Tutors will be able to view a scanned image (PDF) of the ELAT script by clicking on the link associated with the candidate's first name on the ELAT page.



## Pre-interview Ranking and Banding

All marks are standardized against the applicant cohort. Unified rankings are created using each standardized mark in different proportions (as in 2015):

- 40% ELAT mark out of 60
- 25% Written Work mark out of 10
- 17.5% UCAS score out of 10
- 17.5% Contextualized GCSE score.

English is for the second year trialing a new model for contextualised GCSE (rather than GCSE A\*) in 2015. Where the Contextualized GCSE score is unavailable, imputation is used (a 'best guess' at what the candidate's GCSE score would have been, based on their other scores). There is no need to perform the same upranking where there is no ELAT or WW score, as failure to sit/submit these is grounds for deselection. However, tutors are free manually to rescue any candidate who has a genuinely good reason for having failed to take the ELAT (please alert the Admission Co-ordinator to this.)

Once ranked, applicants will be placed into one of ten bands, where 1 is high. These bands serve as the tutors' guide to shortlisting.

## Shortlisting and deselecting candidates

**Decisions on reserving and deselecting candidates must be made by the deadline of 6pm on Wednesday Week 7.**

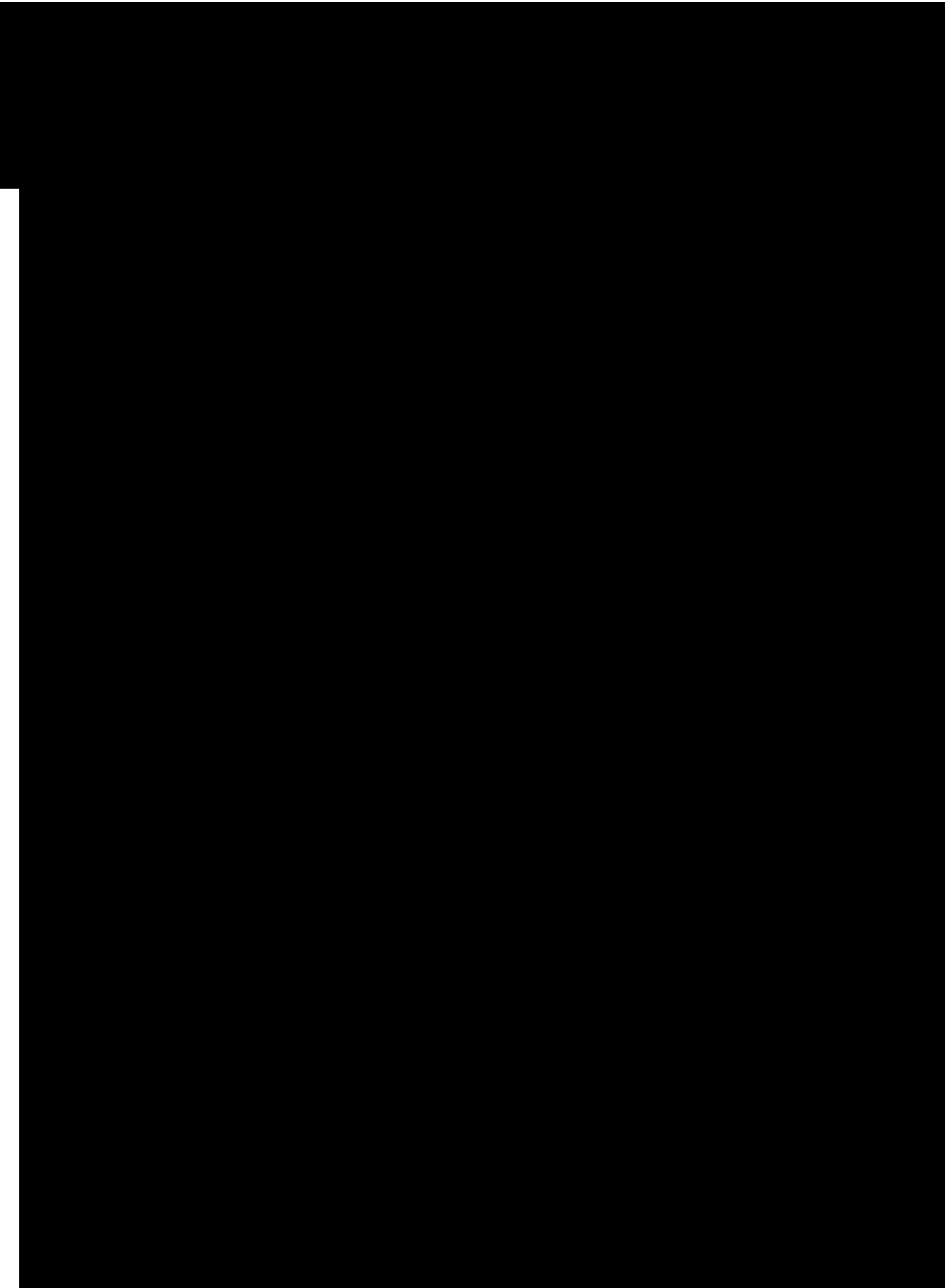
Pre-interview banding will be done by Tuesday morning 7<sup>th</sup> week. Colleges then have until 6pm on Wednesday to make shortlisting/reserving/deselection decisions.

Guidelines are as follows:

- Shortlist bands 1-5 inclusive.
- Shortlist or deselect band 6 (unflagged) at tutors' discretion; shortlist all Access-flagged candidates in band 6.
- Shortlist Access-flagged candidates in lower bands *unless strong negative indicators suggest otherwise*.
- Please contact the Admissions Co-ordinator if you are concerned about selecting/deselecting any particular candidate.

*Strong negative indicators* which mean that candidates may not be selected for interview include: missing ELAT (although tutors may summon such candidates if they consider there were very strong mitigating circumstances; ELAT band 4; written work marked below 5; not predicted at least AAA or equivalent at A2. Such conditions only come into play with WP flagged candidates, as non-flagged candidates in the lower bands need not be considered for selection unless tutors wish to 'rescue' them.

*The Faculty goal is that all colleges should shortlist to the same standard across the university; once Access flags have been taken into account, no college should shortlist any applicant they would not wish to interview themselves (within the parameters of automatic shortlisting for bands 1-5).*





## Interview Week Arrangements

Some colleges may call candidates earlier than the dates given in the prospectus. Colleges with higher quotas, who find the number of interviews very strenuous, are recommended to explore the possibility of beginning interviewing on Sunday afternoon.

The alphabetical principle is entirely discretionary – colleges should prioritize filling up Sunday/Monday, so that exporters have as clear a picture as possible by Monday evening, and importers can keep second interview slots free on Tuesday.

**It is *strongly recommended* that all importing colleges preserve slots on Tuesday for second interviews;** the situation whereby the assigned second college can only see a Monday applicant on Wednesday, leaving other colleges wondering whether to risk seeing them on Tuesday (and thus not seeing other applicants), is as far as possible to be avoided.

EML and CLENG candidates will also sit tests during the interview period.

Interview performance should be judged according to the published interview criteria (see Appendix 1: **English admissions criteria**, p.12). Colleges should enter their interview scores onto ADSS using a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest score. The sooner interview scores are entered into ADSS, the more helpful this information will be to colleges looking to arrange second-choice interviews. **College tutors should enter interview scores by 7.00pm each day for the candidates seen that day.**

## ***Appendix 1: English admissions criteria***

The English Faculty seeks:

- To provide challenging undergraduate courses that engage the critical intelligence, imagination and creativity of the students; that develop their independent thinking by drawing on technical skills in literary analysis; and that increase their sensitivity to the critical and linguistic issues that lie at the heart of English literature.
- To promote in all its students skills and aptitudes which are transferable to a wide range of employment contexts and life experiences.

Our admissions procedures are designed to select those students best fitted by ability and potential to benefit from the intensive, tutorially-based learning methods employed by the Faculty to achieve those goals. While academic staff will be guided in their decision-making by the criteria that follow, it is important to remember that selection involves complex professional judgements and that selection for places at Oxford takes place in a highly competitive environment. On both counts, mere possession of the qualities indicated below does not guarantee a candidate the offer of a place.

The following criteria are to be applied in the assessment of candidates for English. In the case of candidates for the Joint Schools with English, these criteria are to be applied in assessment for the English side of each school.

### **Written Work Criteria**

- Literary sensibility
- Sensitivity to the creative use of language
- Evidence of careful and critical reading
- An analytical approach
- Coherence of argument and articulacy of expression
- Precision, in the handling of concepts and in the evidence presented to support points
- Relevance to the question
- Originality.

### **Interview Criteria**

- Evidence of independent reading
- Capacity to exchange and build on ideas
- Clarity of thought and expression
- Analytical ability
- Flexibility of thought
- Evidence of independent thinking about literature
- Readiness and commitment to read widely with discrimination

Candidates will be assessed on the basis of information derived from the following sources:

- UCAS forms, including, in particular, personal statements, school reports, qualifications achieved and qualifications predicted
- Performance in the ELAT
- Written work submitted by candidates
- Performance in interviews
- Comparison, in all these areas, with other candidates

Every effort will be made to take into account the special needs or particular circumstances of candidates in making judgements on these matters.

**(j) Selection for Interview**

**1. Criteria for Selection for interview**

The required standard in school leaving qualifications is as follows:



<b>A-level</b>	<b>AAA in any subject except for General Studies.</b>
<b>Internat. Baccalaureate</b>	<b>38 + inc. Bonus points.</b> (with at least 6,6,6 in higher level papers)
<b>European Baccalaureate</b>	An average of <b>85% or above</b> , with scores of between <b>8 and 9</b> in specified subjects.
<b>Scottish Candidates</b>	<b>AA in Advanced Highers</b> plus <b>either</b> a B in a third Advanced Higher <b>or</b> an A in a Standard Higher (where that Standard Higher is in a different subject from each of the Advanced Highers)

Required achieved or predicted grades in respect of other qualifications can be obtained online:

[www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate\\_courses/international\\_applicants/international\\_qualifications/index.html](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate_courses/international_applicants/international_qualifications/index.html)

If a candidate has not achieved, or is not predicted to achieve, the required standard in A-Level or equivalent examinations (or, where relevant, in a first undergraduate degree), then, in the absence of exceptional circumstances, that candidate will not be invited for interview. It is often the practice of colleges to contact candidates with missing predictions and ask for such predictions to be provided by a relevant person.

**If this occurs, and such evidence is received, colleges should be aware of the need to pass such information on to the Faculty Selection Committee (via the Student Administration Officer: [helen.steffens@law.ox.ac.uk](mailto:helen.steffens@law.ox.ac.uk)) if the candidate in question is not pre-selected.**

Applications for standard (ie not Senior Status) undergraduate courses should be assessed in a single gathered field, irrespective of whether the application is for a first or a second degree. This means that 2nd BA applications no longer exist as a separate category and hence that, if a college offers undergraduate places in a subject, it must also consider applications from those who already have a degree.

Candidates will normally be invited for interview if they meet the following criteria:

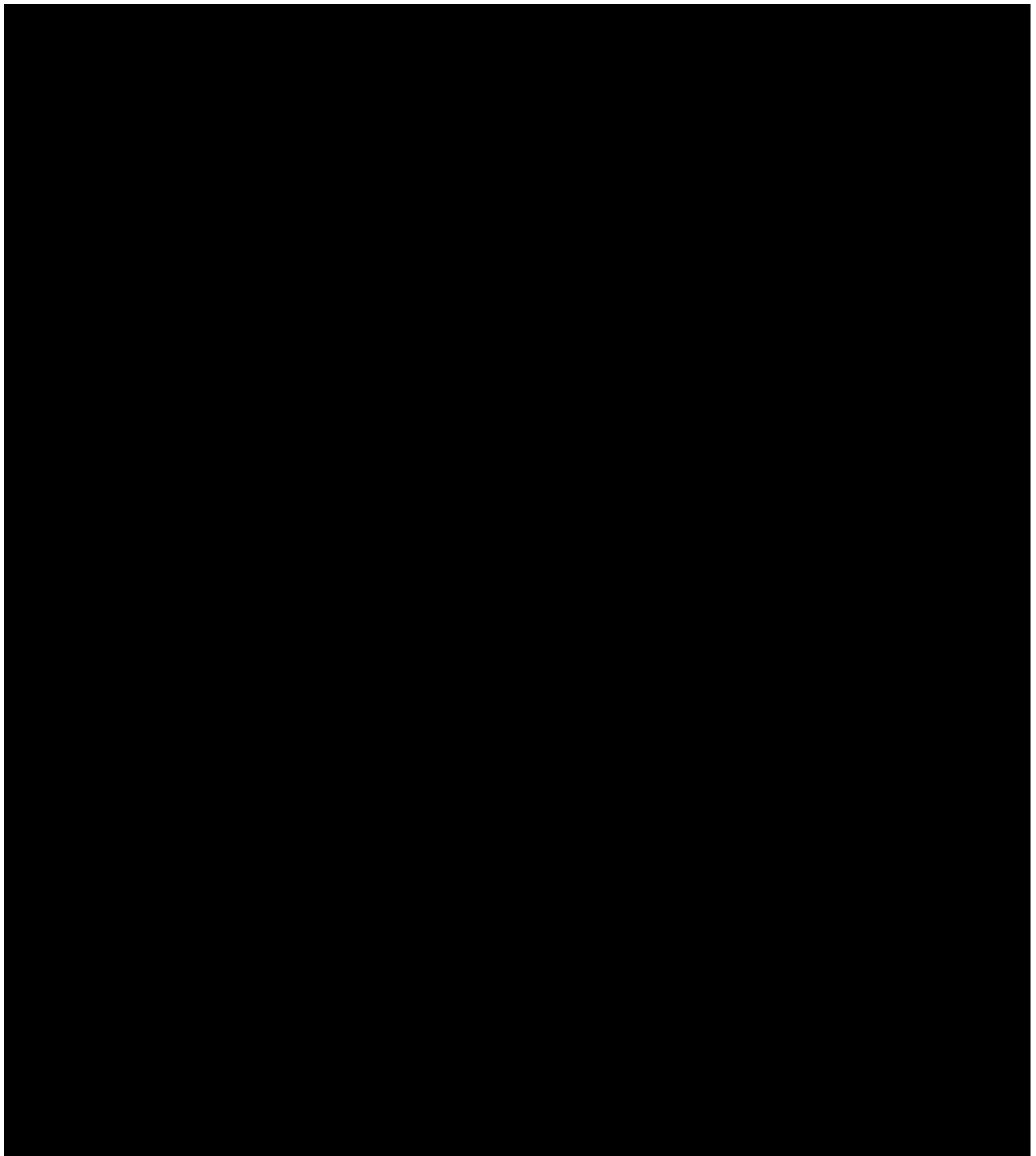
- (a) Results in official examinations to date, especially GCSE/A-levels/examinations in the first degree, are at the highest level ([Appendix A](#));
- (b) The school report/reference is entirely positive and contains no negative aspects relevant to the admission criteria ([above, p.10](#));
- (c) Results in the Law National Admissions Test are at the highest level.

**Candidates may still be invited for interview if their applications do not display all of these factors if the paper application reveals a clear and objective justification for the shortcoming(s) and strong and convincing alternative evidence of the candidate's future promise. In particular, outstanding strength in one field may compensate for weakness in another.**

These criteria are modified as necessary to apply with similar effect to candidates who are not in UK secondary, further or higher education. There will be no overseas

interviews this year, therefore no overseas interview scores will be available. All overseas candidates will be assessed based on the same criteria as above.

Some non-UK candidates may not have completed any formal assessments at the point of application. In the absence of existing academic qualifications, colleges are free to adopt their own policies with regard to these candidates. Colleges should be aware that the Faculty Selection Committee, when considering such applications, will necessarily place particular weight on the candidate's LNAT performance. Candidates are encouraged to include all relevant existing academic qualifications when making their application. If colleges receive evidence of existing academic qualifications beyond those mentioned in a candidate's UCAS form, colleges should be aware of the need to pass such information on to the Faculty Selection Committee (via the Student Administration Officer: [helen.steffens@law.ox.ac.uk](mailto:helen.steffens@law.ox.ac.uk)) if the candidate in question is not pre-selected.





## **2. Criteria for assessing interviews**

Interview questions may include legally-related questions as well as more general intellectual puzzles calling for analysis of a type similar to legal analysis. Many law tutors will present candidates with a short extract from a judgment or newspaper article (two or three sides of A4) and discuss this with them during the interview (having given them half an hour to read the extract beforehand). Knowledge of the law, other than such knowledge as can be learned from such an extract, if any) is not being assessed and is irrelevant to the assessment of the interview). Interviewers will be looking for

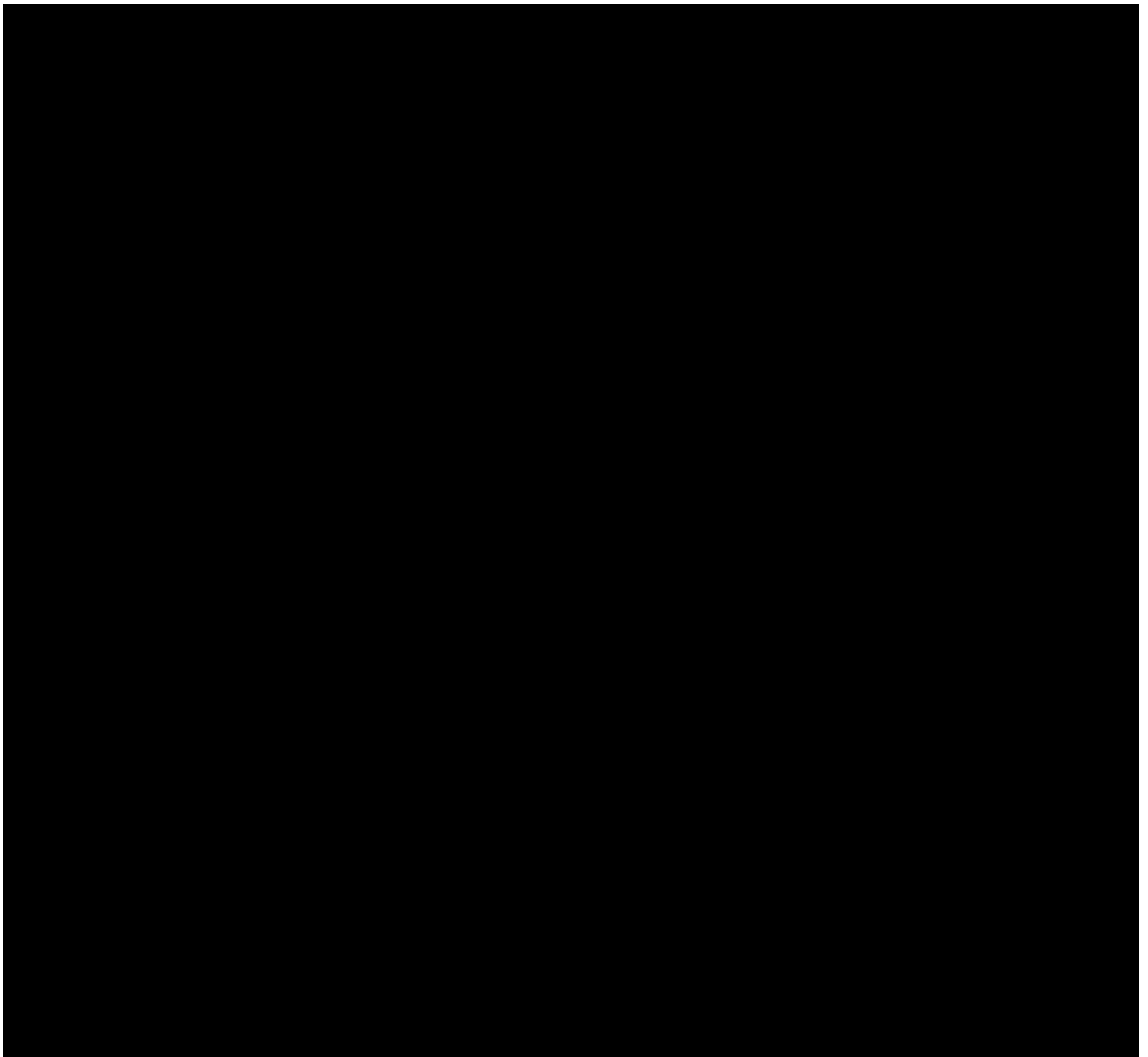
evidence relevant to each of the general admissions criteria. Reflecting these criteria in turn, high scoring interviews will normally exhibit:

(1) Application: a high degree of concentration on the matter under discussion, free of distraction and digression, and a clear enthusiasm for pursuing a problem to its solution;

(2) Reasoning ability: thoughtful reactions to novel problems or novel versions of a problem posed by the interviewers, an ability to maintain a line of argument free of contradiction or equivocation (evidence of which may include quick detection by the candidate of contradictions or equivocations in what the interviewer or the candidate has said), and an ability to break free from a line of thinking which is proving unproductive;

(3) Communication: clear responses carefully articulated.

Interviewers may ask questions about the candidate's interests and enthusiasms in order to ease the candidate into the interview proper, or in order to assess the candidate's motivation. The candidate's general accomplishments, tastes and virtues are irrelevant except insofar as they bear on one or more of the general admissions criteria.





## Appendix B(a): Example of Admissions assessment form

### LAW ADMISSIONS Candidate Evaluation Notes<sup>1</sup>

UCAS Form	
GCSE results	
A – Level predictions	
Reference	
Personal Statement	
Disability	

<b>LNAT/Law Faculty Written Test</b>	<b>Score</b>
Multiple Choice	
Essay Part	

<b>Pre-Interview Decision</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Justification</b>
Invite for Interview/pass on to Faculty Selection Committee (please specify)		

<sup>1</sup> This form is provided for use in conjunction with the *Faculty of Law Criteria for Admission to the BA programme in Jurisprudence (including Law with Law Studies in Europe)*.

## Appendix B(b): Example of Interview assessment form

<b>Candidate Name:</b>			<b>Assessor Name:</b>		
<b>Interview</b>	<b>Additional Comments</b>		<b>Evaluation Score 1 - 10<sup>2</sup></b>		
<b>Application:</b> Concentration and enthusiasm					
<b>Reasoning:</b> Ability to make a sustained and cogent argument					
Ability to distinguish relevant from irrelevant					
Ability to identify and explain weaknesses in argument					
Creativity, flexibility of thought, lateral thinking					
<b>Communication:</b> Ability to give clear and carefully articulated responses					
<b>Overall evaluation of interview<sup>3</sup></b>					

<sup>2</sup> Evaluation Scores: 1-2 Very poor; 3-4 Poor; 5 – 6 Average; 7-8 Good; 9-10 Very Good.

<sup>3</sup> Please give general evaluation of interview with reference to the Faculty of Law Criteria for Admission.

Post-interview report form for candidates applying to  
MATHEMATICS, COMPUTER SCIENCE, and JOINT SCHOOLS

Interviewing college:

Candidate's name	Interviewers	Date	Time	Course	Year

School name	"X" and "Y" statistics	3 yr record	GCSE summary	A-level predictions
		---		

Test

Questions	Total	Rank & Subrank	PSI	Notes

**REPORT ON INTERVIEW** (for each criterion circle score in range 1 low to 9 high)

Technical (ability to manipulate mathematics, independently apply known techniques)	[ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ]
Reasoning (clarity of logical argument, ability to argue independently)	[ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ]
Capacity to generate new ideas and adapt known techniques	[ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ]
Capacity to absorb new ideas and techniques	[ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ]
Motivation and enthusiasm	[ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ]

**INTERVIEW COMMENTS**

**OTHER INFORMATION AFFECTING OVERALL GRADE** (e.g. written submission)

Interview grade [1 2 3 4 5 6 6+ 7- 7+ 8 9]

(First college only)

**PROVISIONAL OVERALL GRADE** [1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9]

An evaluation of all the information available on the candidate, including UCAS form, test and all interviews.

Numerical grades: 9: exceptional accept, 8: accept, 7: borderline, 6: below borderline, 5: probably reject, 4: reject, <4: clear reject.

**Candidate Name:**

**College:**

**Physics Admissions Interview Assessment Form**

(a) Motivation: a real interest and strong desire to learn physics

1	2	3	4	5
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(b) Ability to express physical ideas using mathematics; mathematical ability

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

(c) Reasoning ability: ability to analyse and solve problems using logical and critical approaches

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

(d) Physical intuition: an ability to see how one part of a physical system connects with others, and to predict what will happen in a given physical situation

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

(e) Communication: ability to give precise explanations both orally and numerically

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Comments

**Interview number**

**Overall Interview Grade**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Unacceptable			Problematic		Acceptable		Good		Excellent
D	C	BC	B–	B	B+	B++	AB	A–	A

Maths	Physics	Total

**Candidate Name:**

**College:**

**Physics Admissions Interview Assessment Form**

(a) Motivation:	1	2	3	4	5
(b) Mathematical ability:	1	2	3	4	5
(c) Reasoning ability:	1	2	3	4	5
(d) Physical intuition:	1	2	3	4	5
(e) Communication:	1	2	3	4	5

Comments

**Interview number**

**Overall Interview Grade**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Unacceptable</b>			<b>Problematic</b>		<b>Acceptable</b>		<b>Good</b>		<b>Excellent</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>BC</b>	<b>B–</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>B++</b>	<b>AB</b>	<b>A–</b>	<b>A</b>

**Maths test      Physics test      Total**

## 4.1 Shortlisting criteria

The criteria for shortlisting for interview are specified on the university webpage as follows:

“We only interview those who have a realistic chance of getting in, when judged by past and predicted exam results, school reports, personal statements and the pre-interview test. Candidates from overseas may be considered without interview.”

The TSA results (and the banding of candidates according to TSA) are only a component part of making the decision to interview a candidate. Research by Cambridge Assessment on the correlation of the TSA with prelims has shown a correlation between the TSA and economics and philosophy prelims but not with politics. Therefore, it is important that the TSA informs our picture of the candidate rather than determining it. The weighting given to the information on a candidate should be as follows:

Factor	High	Med	Low
Pre-interview Admissions Test	•		
GCSE (or similar) profile	•		
Predicted performance at A-level (or similar)	•		
UCAS reference		•	
AS level module grades			•
UCAS personal statement			•

To achieve consistency of short-listing decisions across colleges, all applicants will be allocated to *bands* according to their TSA overall score, as follows:

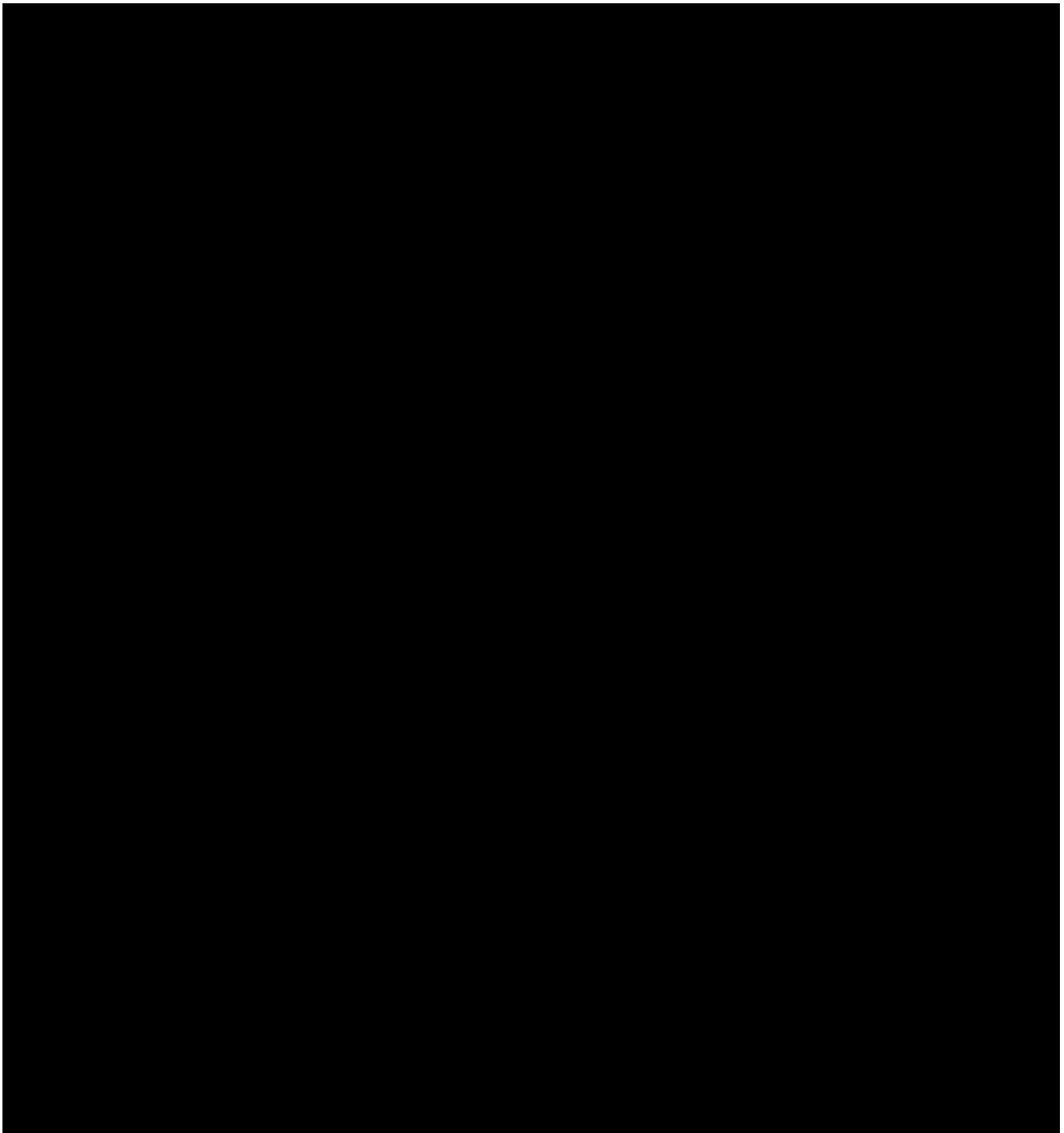
Band	
1	Almost certainly shortlist
2	Probably shortlist
3	Marginal – use other information.
4	Probably Deselect
0	TSA score currently Unavailable; use other information.

<sup>1</sup> This is the ratio of interviews per place agreed for PPE under the Common Framework.

The band for each candidate will be displayed on the 'PPE Reserve Shortlist and Deselect' screen in ADSS.

In addition to the band for each candidate, each college will be given a target number of applicants to deselect. The cut-off scores for each band will be chosen so that, if colleges follow this shortlisting guidance, the target of 2.75 interviews per place for PPE *as a whole* will be achieved. The college's individual target will be calculated according to the number of applicants it has in each band. **Each college must meet its Deselection target by deselecting the indicated number of candidates.** This is a requirement for the automatic reallocation procedure of candidates to first interviews to work (see section 4.4).

***Colleges that wish to interview candidates above their quota may do so,*** by rescuing the candidates ***after*** the reallocation has taken place (section 4.5).



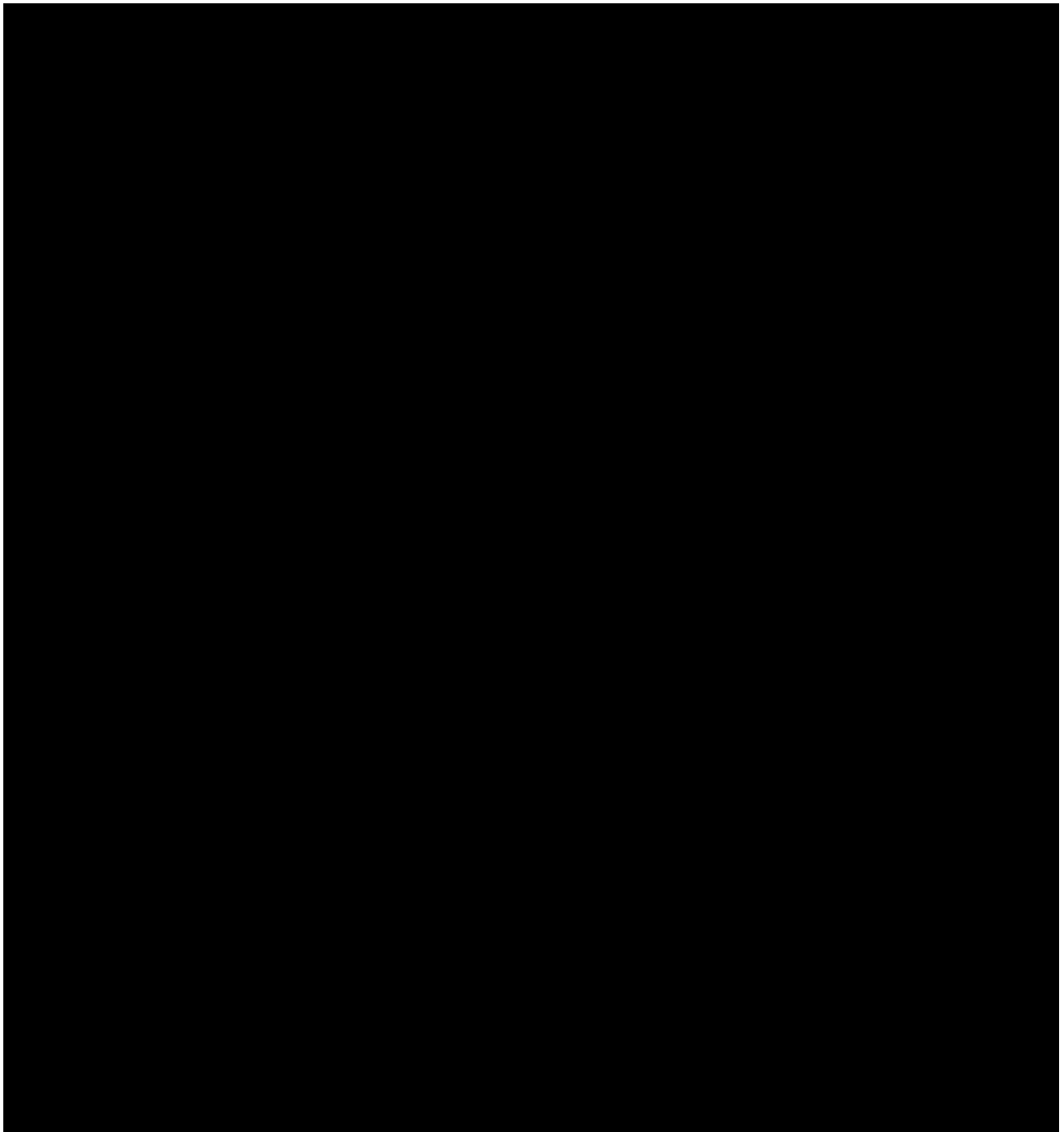
“Pending”. You should be able to change the status of a candidate from “Pending” to “Reserved”, “Shortlisted” or “Deselected” by clicking on the appropriate blue button.

In general, a college that has more than 2.75 candidates for interview per place after deselection should expect to *reallocate* (export) candidates, while a college with *fewer than 2.75* should expect to *receive* (import) candidates. The expected number of imports or exports will also be displayed.

A college that expects to export candidates may **Reserve** some candidates as unavailable for reallocation. Following consultation with the College Groups in December 2007, the **PPE Committee has agreed that number reserved should be no more than 1.5 X the number of places at the college.**



*De-selection and Reservation decisions must be entered on ADSS by 3pm Tuesday of 7<sup>th</sup> week.*







*The deadline for final **Rescue** decisions to be entered on ADSS is 1pm on Wednesday of 7<sup>th</sup> week.*

## 5. Interviews and decisions

Interviews at the first-choice college are held between Monday and Tuesday of 9<sup>th</sup> week. **Candidates are required to remain in Oxford until the morning of Wednesday of 9<sup>th</sup> week**, in case they are required for interviews at other colleges.

### 5.1 Criteria for the conduct and content of interviews

Under the Common Framework it has been agreed that for PPE:

- applicants will normally have at least two interviews at their first choice college, although some colleges may have a single longer interview
- most colleges will have a minimum of two interviewers per interview, and require interviewers to have received basic interview training
- colleges normally wish to involve tutors from all three subjects, but since there are no specific subject requirements, and the content of the interviews is not subject-specific, it is not necessary to ensure this.

What is expected to happen at interview is described on the university webpage (<http://www.ppe.ox.ac.uk/index.php/interviews>), as follows:

“The interview is aimed primarily at assessing the candidate's potential for future development. Interviewers will be looking for evidence of genuine interests and enthusiasms, and the motivation to work hard at them. The candidates should listen effectively, absorbing facts and ideas presented to them and assessing their relevance. They should be ready to respond to problems and criticisms put to them. They should present arguments and reasoning in a clear and carefully articulated manner.

The interview is not primarily a test of existing knowledge, and in particular, is not a test of philosophy, politics or economics, unless these subjects have been followed at school. The candidates are expected to show reasons for their expressed interests in PPE. Candidates' general accomplishments are not relevant except insofar as they bear on one or more of the general admissions criteria.”

### 5.2 Interview scores

Up to three interview scores can be entered on ADSS. These may be separate grades for the politics, economics, and philosophy aspects, or non-subject-specific grades for different interviews.



*Enter first interview scores for all candidates by 5pm on Tuesday of 9<sup>th</sup> week.*



### *Mark scheme for interviews*

Interviews are marked on a scale of 1-100, and marks are interpreted as follows:

70-100	Excellent	A mark above 70 is a strong indicator for admission
65-69	Positive	Most candidates admitted will have interview scores above 65.
60-64	Neutral	
50-59	Weak	A candidate with interview and test marks consistently below 60 is in a weak position
49 or less	Very poor	Interview strongly suggests that the candidate is not suitable

### *Standardization of scores*

In order to improve the comparability of interview scores across colleges, the PPE committee has agreed to standardize the individual college's scores. This is mainly to help with the allocation of Second Interviews as some tutors had previously noted that some Colleges (or subjects) marks deviated significantly from the pattern elsewhere. To this effect, a new column 'Interview Stand. Average' has been added next to the previous 'Interview Average' in the relevant ADSS views (see section 5.4).

The standardized score is a reworking of the z-score of the raw average of interview scores. A z-score is simply:

$$z_c = \frac{\text{Raw average} - \mu_c}{\sigma_c}$$

where  $\mu_c$  is the mean of the raw interview average marks within each college and  $\sigma_c$  the corresponding standard deviation. This score is dimensionless, so ADSS reports a re-scaled interview mark by using the mean  $\mu$  and standard deviation  $\sigma$  of the population of applicants (all colleges):

$$z = z_c \times \sigma + \mu$$

This effectively forces the standardized scores within each college to have the same average and standard deviation as in the whole population of applicants.

## APPENDIX B: Admissions Criteria for PPE<sup>5</sup>

PPE tutors are looking for evidence of the following qualities in applicants:

**Application and interest:** capacity for sustained study, motivation and interest, an independent and reflective approach to learning;

**Reasoning ability:** ability to analyse and solve problems using logical and critical approaches, ability to assess relevance, capacity to construct and critically assess arguments, flexibility and willingness to consider alternative views;

**Communication:** willingness and ability to express ideas clearly and effectively on paper and orally; ability to listen; ability to give considered responses.

Throughout the admissions process, tutors will be seeking to detect the candidate's future potential as a PPE student. Existing achievement (as revealed in official examinations, predicted examination results, and school reports), as well as performance in the written test and interview, is relied upon mainly as evidence of future potential.

Candidates are not expected to have studied any philosophy, politics or economics at school, but should be interested and be prepared to put their minds to problems of philosophy, politics and economics presented to them.

In the case of candidates whose first language is not English, competence in the English language is also a criterion of admission.

Final decisions about offers of places will use the full range of evidence available, including past and predicted exam results, the school report, the personal statement, the pre-interview test and the interviews. Entry is competitive, which means that not all candidates who satisfy the admissions criteria will receive offers.

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<sup>5</sup> The Admissions Criteria are publicly available on the PPE website ([www.ppe.ox.ac.uk](http://www.ppe.ox.ac.uk))

