

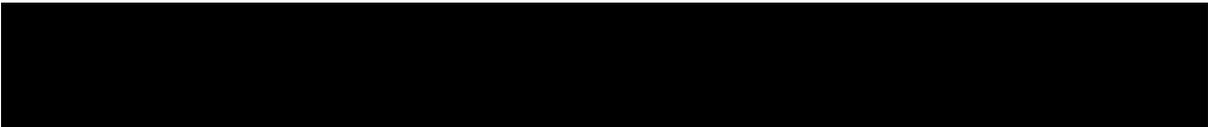


### 3. The Pre-Interview Test

The TSA test will be taken by all PPE applicants in schools or other test centres on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2017 and will be administered by Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing (CAAT). The test has 2 sections: a 90-minute *Thinking Skills Assessment* (TSA) multiple-choice test, and a 30-minute essay section. Information about the test, including a specimen paper, can be found at:

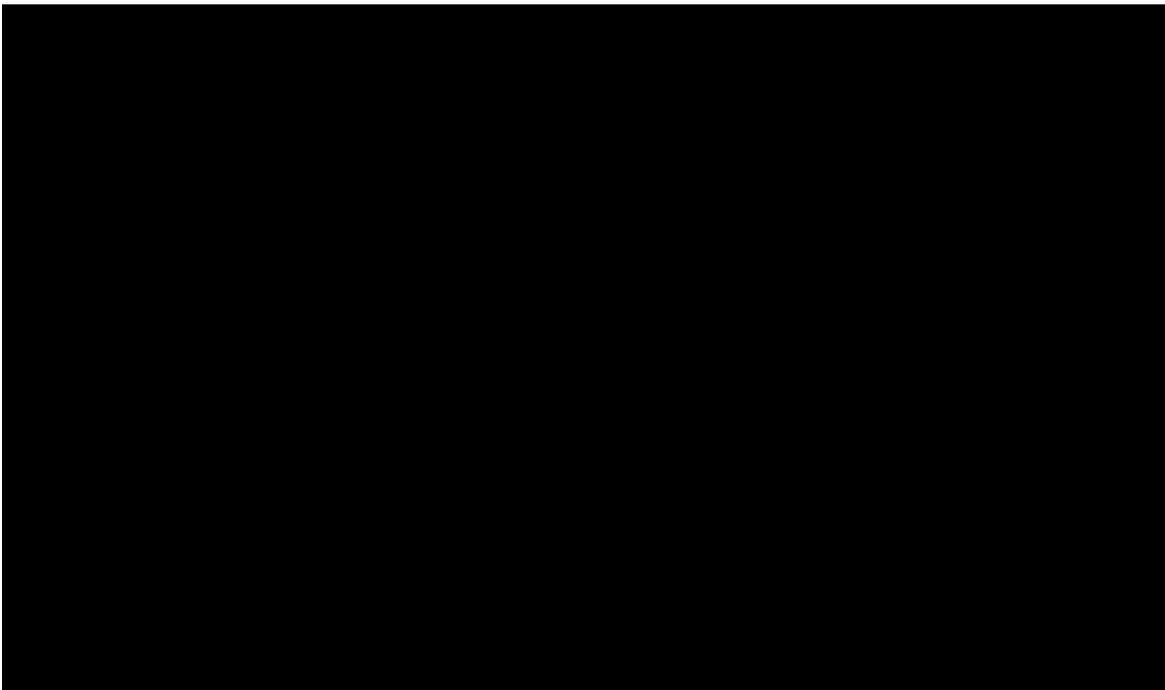
[www.tsaoxford.org.uk](http://www.tsaoxford.org.uk)

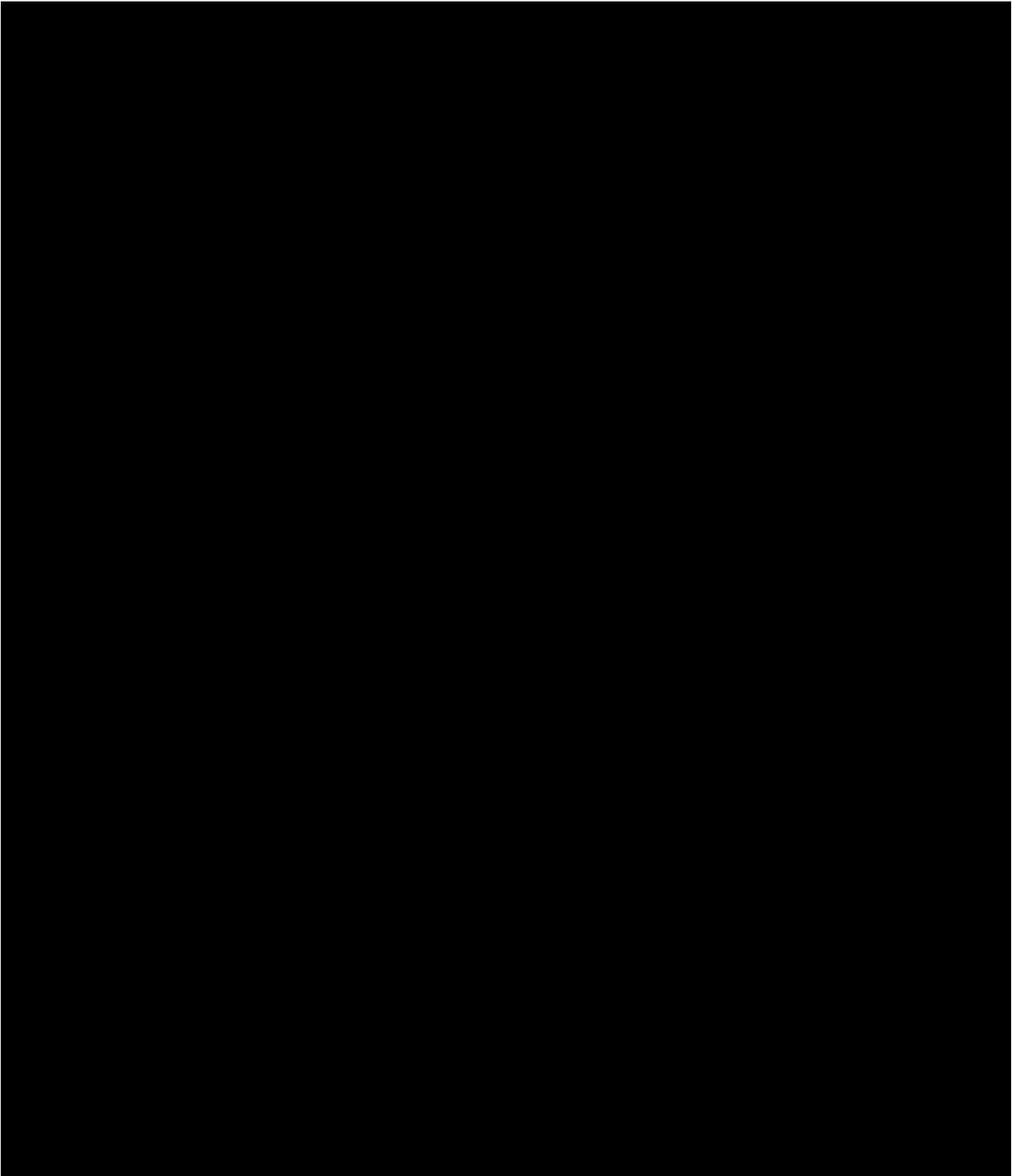
#### 3.1 TSA Scores



The overall TSA score is not a simple average of the two components, nor a percentage. It is a statistical estimate of a candidate's ability, taking into account the difficulty of questions and the overall difficulty of the test. See [www.tsaoxford.org.uk](http://www.tsaoxford.org.uk) 'Scoring and Results' for further information.

This score will also be used to construct a *banding* of candidates, as a guide for use in shortlisting (see Section 4.1 below).





#### **4.1 Shortlisting criteria**

The criteria for shortlisting for interview are specified on the university webpage (<https://www.ppe.ox.ac.uk/interviews>) as follows:

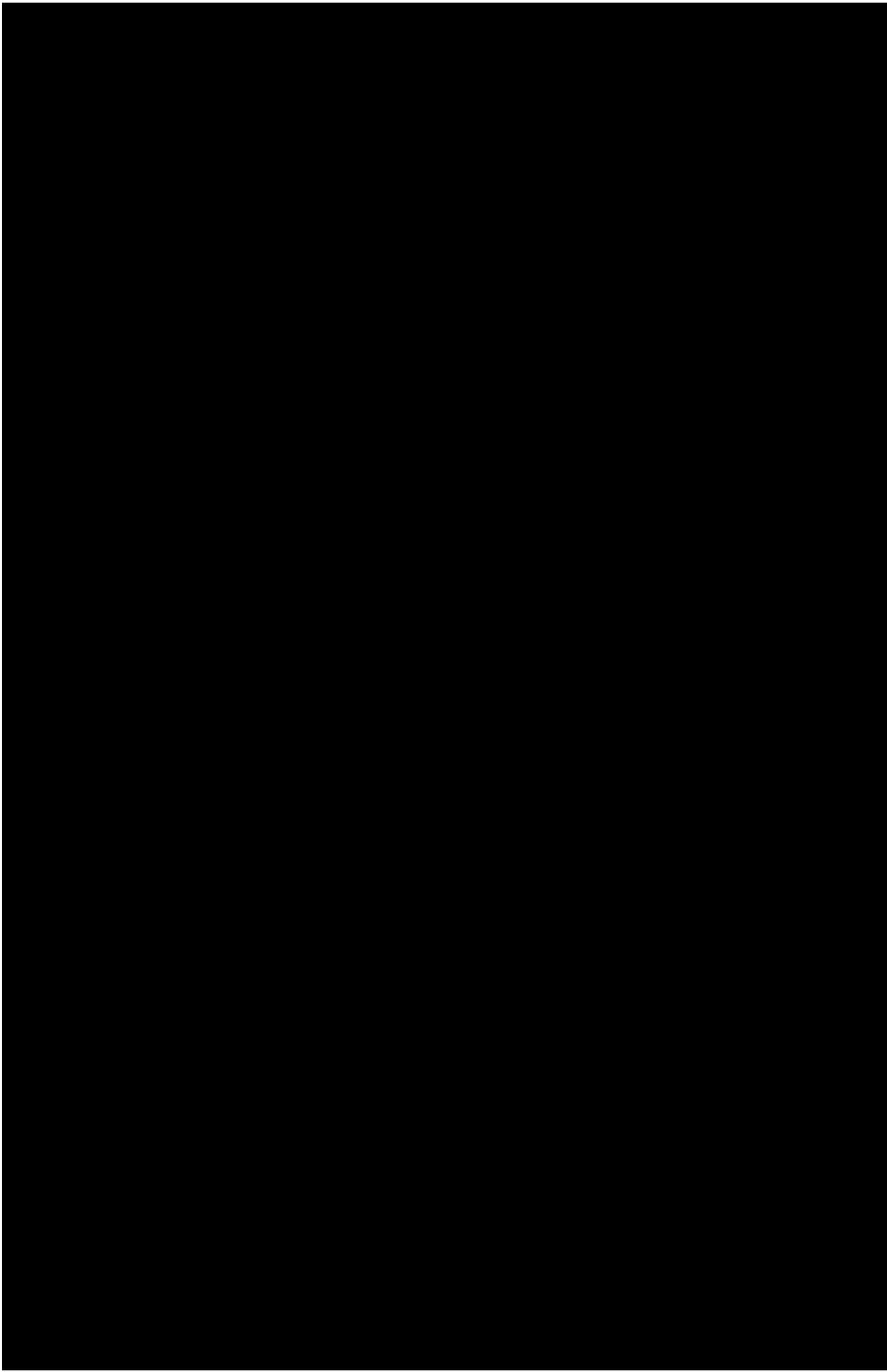
“We only interview those who have a realistic chance of getting in, when judged by past and predicted exam results, school reports, personal statements and the pre-interview test. Candidates from overseas may be considered without interview.”

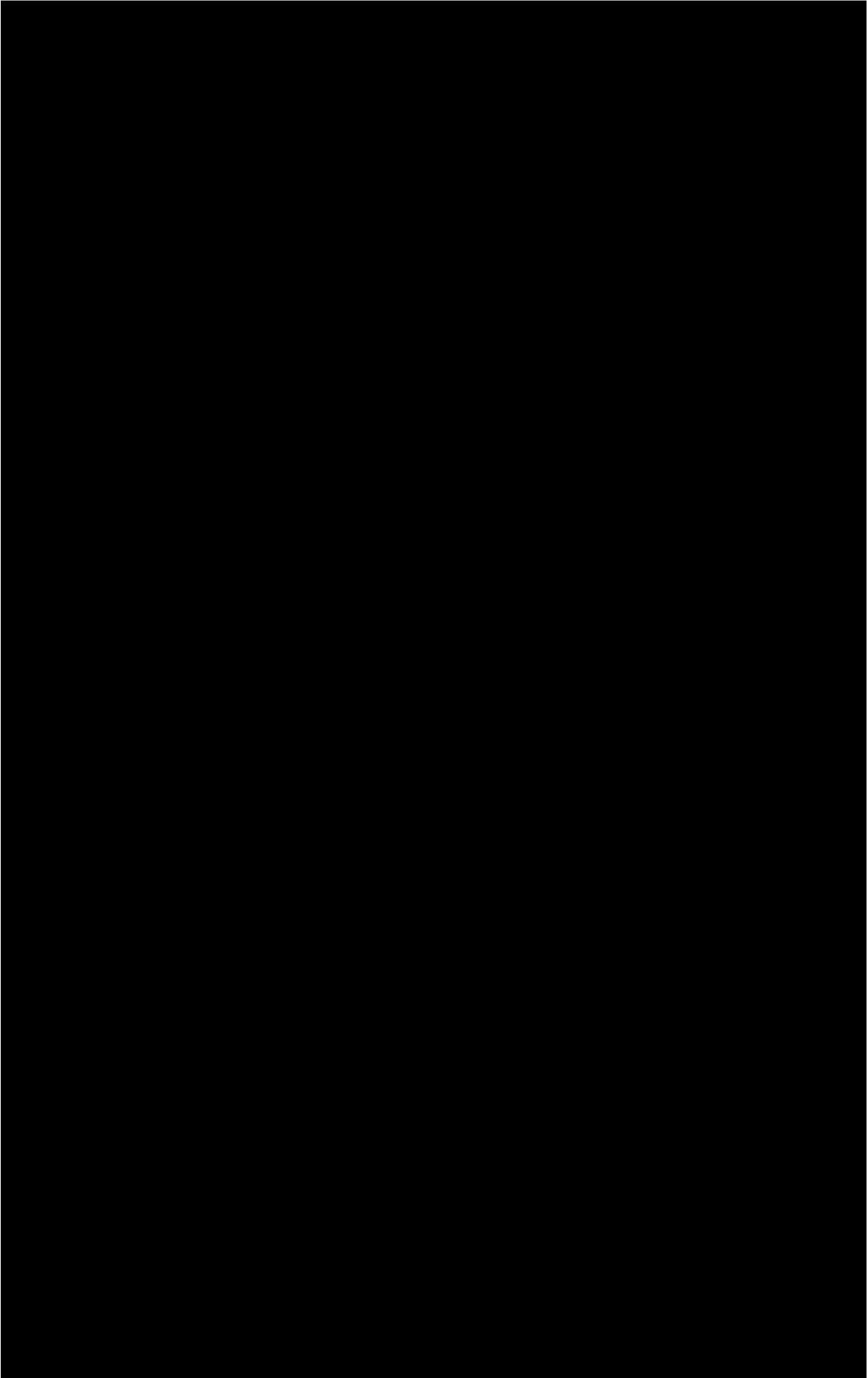
The TSA results (and the banding of candidates according to TSA) are only a component part of making the decision to interview a candidate. 



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			•





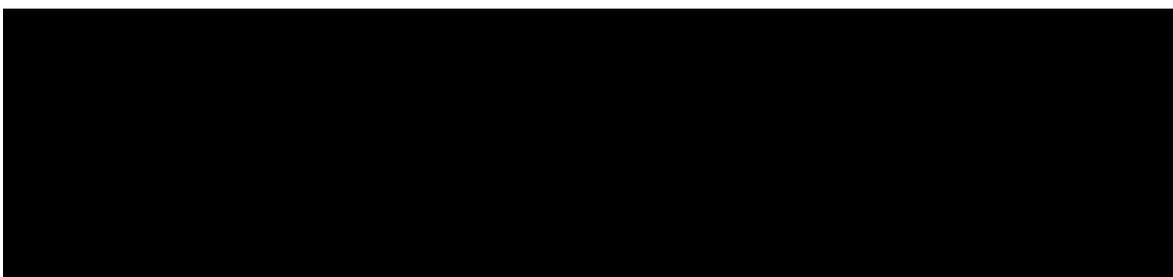
What is expected to happen at interview is described on the university webpage (<http://www.ppe.ox.ac.uk/index.php/interviews>), as follows:

“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.”

The admissions criteria are at <https://www.ppe.ox.ac.uk/admissions-criteria>.

## 5.2 Interview scores



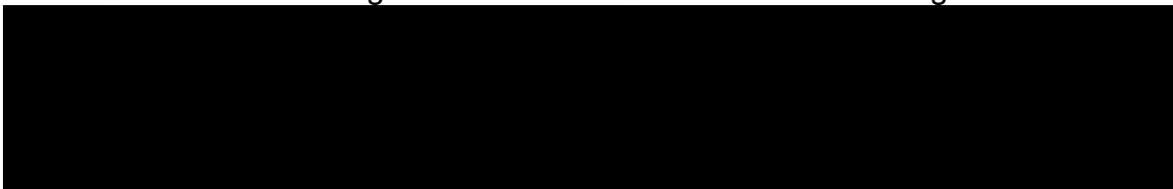
### *Mark scheme for interviews*

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



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.

### **5.3 Between First and Second Interviews**

After completing first interviews you should enter **decisions on all candidates** interviewed by your college. This year, for the first time, colleges opting out of second interviews may fill all places after first interviews (previously, colleges with n places could only offer a place to n-1 candidates; decisions about the nth place had to be made only after completing second interviews). You may, if you wish, reserve one of the applicants who has not been given a place, though that person will not definitely be given a second interview at another college. You may also recommend other candidates for second interview, but again, those candidates are not guaranteed a second interview.

At the end of second interviews, you retain priority over the candidate that you reserved, but not over the others that you have recommended for second interview.

### **5.4 Second interviews**

second interviews will be freely scheduled by the colleges themselves. However, the PPE Admissions Co-ordinator will still oversee the procedure and provide some guiding, as follows.

you need to indicate how seriously your college is looking at candidates for second interview. This year there will be three possible statuses for second interview: 'urgently', 'seriously', and 'interested'

the PPE Admissions Co-ordinator will rank all the applicants recommended for second interview (reserved and unreserved) according to a formula that predicts results in FHS from three quantitative scores:

$$\text{FHS score} = 0.0913 \times \text{TSAoverall} + 0.0980 \times \text{TSAessay} + 0.0654 \times \text{AvgInterviews}^3$$

The PPE admissions Co-ordinator will inform the Lead tutors in each college when ranking is completed. However, colleges may disregard this ordering and choose candidates based on other information in their UCAS forms and interview records.

Colleges may also disregard the list of applicants recommended and interview candidates who have been rejected by their first college.

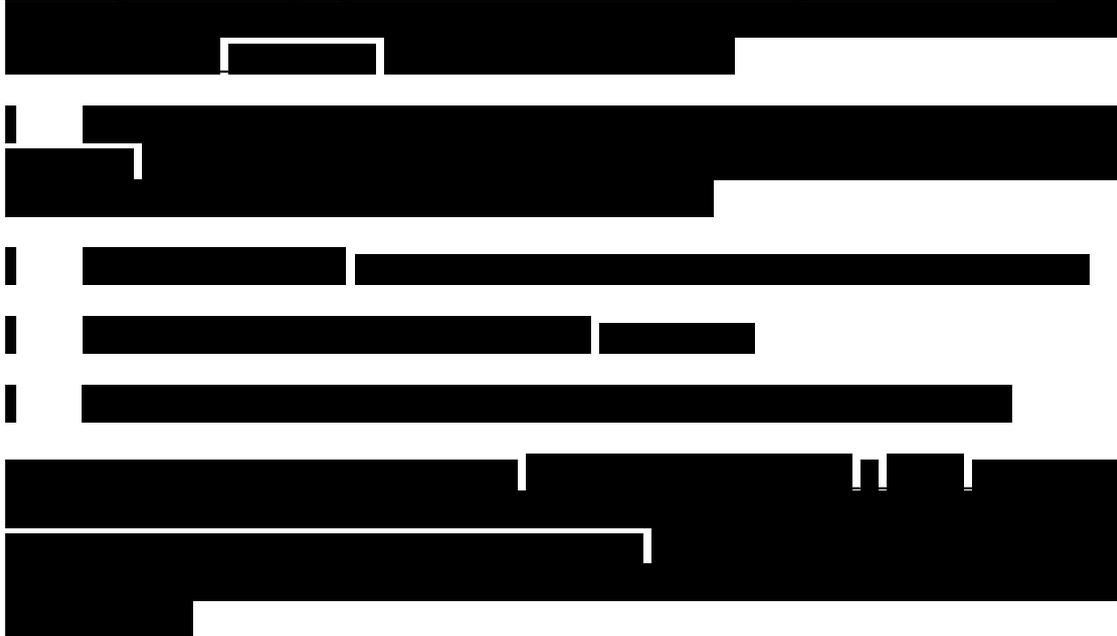
<sup>3</sup> The AvgInterviews is the standardized score described in section 5.2.



*Time slots and number of interviews*

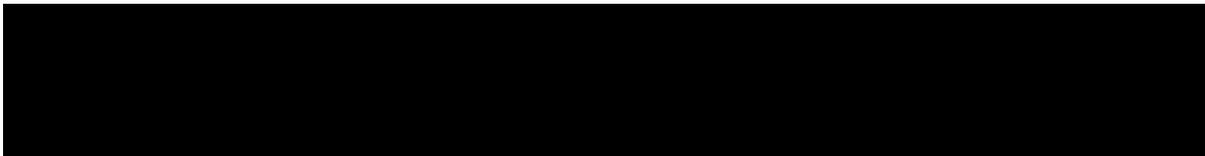
In order to prioritise the colleges in greater need of second interviews, the following restrictions will be enforced by the PPE Admissions Co-ordinator:

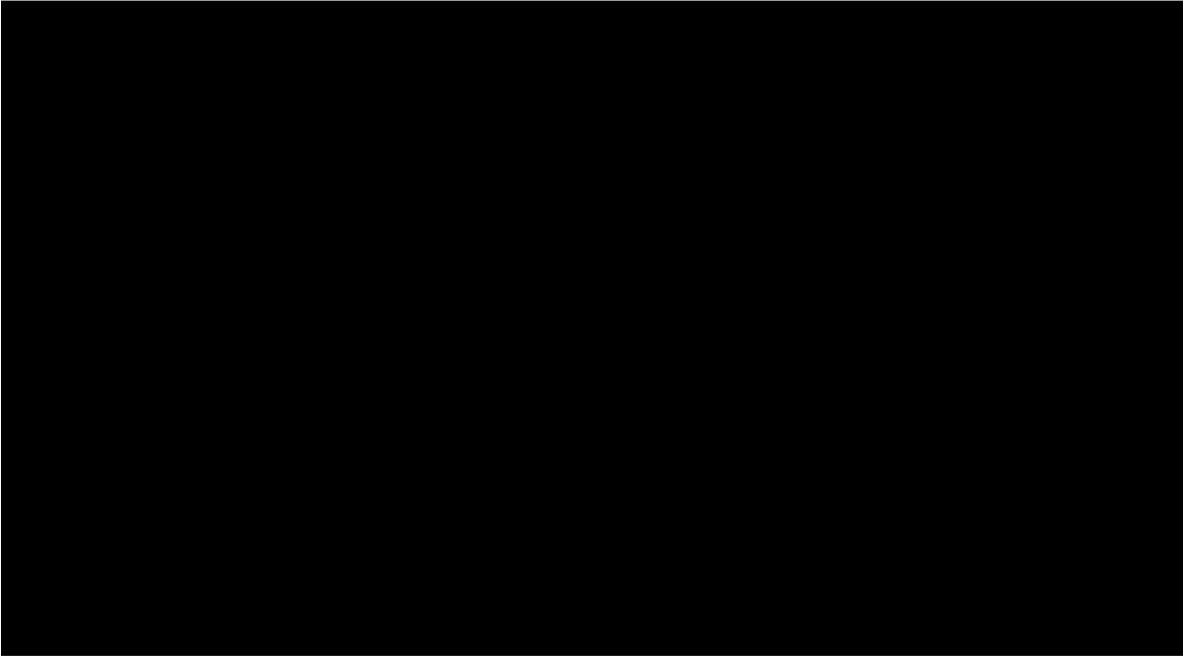
1. Colleges declaring a greater need for candidates will get to choose first.



2. Colleges will have a restriction on the number of interviews they can schedule during their time slot. Each college can schedule up to the number of unfilled places after first interviews plus one. For instance, a college that has 6 places for entry in 2017 and makes offers to five (reserving a 6<sup>th</sup>) can schedule two second interviews. If, however, it had only made firm offers to three then it can schedule up to four interviews. This restriction is destined to guarantee that the pool of applicants recommended for second interviews is sufficient to meet the colleges' needs.

Colleges that are happy with making final offers to the candidates they interviewed in the first place **can opt out from holding second interviews by informing the PPE Admissions Co-ordinator.**





*Second interview scores*

Second interviews are graded in the same way as first interviews, on a scale of 1 – 100 (but they will not be standardized).

[Redacted text]

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