

Computer Science and Joint Schools Admissions 2023*

January 2024

Application statistics

In 2023 a total of 1625 UCAS applications were received across the three undergraduate Computer Science degrees, for entry in 2024 or deferred entry in 2025. 419 applicants were shortlisted, and 148 were offered places for entry in 2024 or deferred entry in 2025. Table 1 shows the breakdown by course applied for at each stage of the admissions process.¹

Table 1: Number of applicants, shortlisted applicants, and offers made, by course applied for

	Applications	Shortlisted	Offers
Computer Science	872	171	57
Computer Science and Philosophy	137	42	17
Mathematics and Computer Science	616	206	74

Across the three Computer Science degrees, applications have doubled since the 2016/17 admissions cycle. As a result, many very able applicants were not offered a place.

Of those 1625 applicants,

- 1562 (96.1%) successfully registered to sit the Mathematics Admissions Test (MAT) by the registration deadline.
- 22.2% of applicants submitted an open application.
- 1038 applicants (63.9%) offered A-levels.

Applications for deferred entry

25 applicants applied for deferred entry in 2025. Of these, 7 were shortlisted and interviewed and a small number were offered places.

Gender

- 376 applicants were women (23.1% of the total).²
- Of the 376 women who applied, 90 were shortlisted and invited to interview, comprising 21.5% of the total shortlisted applicants.
- 37 shortlisted women were offered places, making up 25% of the total offers.

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¹The table shows the course the students applied for. For the purpose of this report if a student has applied for a joint honours course but received a single honours place, they will be counted as having applied, been shortlisted and received an offer by the joint honours course.

²From 2024 onwards UCAS data uses gender codes “Man”, “Woman”, “I use another term” and “Prefer not to say”. Prior to 2023, the codes were “Male”, “Female”, “Unknown”, and “Undisclosed” were used. For the purpose of this report we report on the number and proportion of applicants identifying as “Woman” to provide statistics on gender.

Domicile

- 57.5% of all applicants were domiciled in the UK; 7% were domiciled in the EU; 35.5% were domiciled outside the EU or UK.
- 59.2% of shortlisted applicants were domiciled in the UK; 6.2% were domiciled in the EU; 34.6% were domiciled outside the EU or UK.
- 56.1% of students who were offered places were domiciled in the UK; 6.1% were domiciled in the EU; 37.8% were domiciled outside the EU or UK.

Admissions Processes

Mathematics Admissions Test (MAT)

All applicants are expected to sit the Mathematics Admissions Test prior to shortlisting. This year the test was taken on Thursday 19 October 2023. Of the 1562 applicants who successfully registered to sit the test, 1547 sat it on the day.

Many candidates experienced technical disruption on 19 October with the online web platform for the MAT. Students for whom a special considerations form related to this technical disruption was submitted were invited to take an optional additional test on 14 November. The additional test consisted of ten multiple choice questions. This additional test was taken by 750 applicants for Computer Science or joint honours courses before shortlisting.

Table 2 gives the mean score by course applied for at each stage of the admissions process.

Table 2: Mean MAT scores of applicants at each stage of the selection process

	All applicants	Shortlisted applicants	Offer holders
Computer Science	43.7	62.9	70.4
Computer Science and Philosophy	40.6	53.5	59.2
Mathematics and Computer Science	53.5	69.7	80.3

The average score for Oxford applicants taking the additional mathematics test was 6.0.

Figure 1 shows admissions outcome by MAT score for the 1547 applicants who sat the MAT on Thursday 19 October 2023.

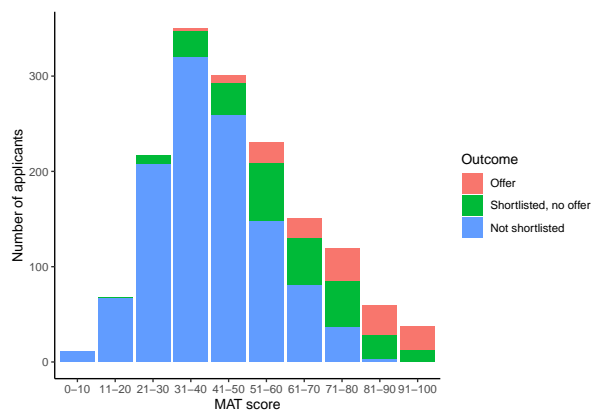


Figure 1: Outcome by MAT score

Shortlisting

In light of the competition for places, the purpose of shortlisting is to identify those applicants who are most likely to succeed in the rest of the selection process, giving interviewers time to consider each shortlisted applicant carefully. Usually we would shortlist to slightly less than 3 for each quota place; exceptionally this year we shortlisted to around 3.5 for each quota place.

Shortlisting was performed in accordance with the stated **admissions criteria**.³ All applicants are expected to sit the Mathematics Admissions Test prior to shortlisting, including questions designed to assess aptitude for Computer Science. Details of the test and several past papers and specimen papers with solutions can be found **online**. Tutors are guided by a statistically validated score derived from the MAT and the applicant's performance at GCSE relative to other students at their pre-16 school; they exercise discretion within thresholds determined for each degree subject by the subject coordinator. They take into account all information from the UCAS form and any relevant contextual information such as educational background, socio-economic background, or extenuating circumstances. Shortlisting decisions are reviewed by the subject coordinator in order to ensure consistency between colleges.

Among this year's 419 shortlisted applicants,

- 263 (62.8%) had taken five or more GCSEs. Among those candidates, the mean number of GCSEs at grades 9/8 was 8.2.
- 279 (66.6%) offered A-levels:⁴
 - All shortlisted A-level applicants offered A-level Mathematics.
 - 266 (95.3%) offered A-level Further Mathematics.

After shortlisting takes place, if an individual college has an unusually high number of shortlisted applicants per place, that college must reallocate a proportion of those applicants to a college with fewer shortlisted applicants per place (assuming that there exists such a college which is willing to receive the shortlisted applicants). The aim of this process is to increase fairness for applicants by evening out competition across colleges and ensuring that shortlisted applicants' chances of an offer are not affected by having applied to a heavily oversubscribed college. In December 2023, 18 shortlisted applicants were reallocated via this procedure, and 2 of those applicants were subsequently offered places by the colleges to which they were reallocated.

Interviews

All shortlisted applicants were invited for interview in mid-December. Almost all interviews took place remotely by video call, often using a shared virtual whiteboard. Each applicant is associated with a first college, either of their choosing, or selected for them in a way that aims to even out the competition for places across the colleges. Each applicant is also associated with a second college chosen randomly with the same aim.

Applicants were interviewed by both their first and second colleges, and a small number were invited to further interviews at a third college. Applicants for joint degrees are typically given separate interviews in the two subjects. In December 2023 most applicants were interviewed twice by their first college and once or more by their second college.

Interviews are academic and subject-focused in nature. The applicant's performance in each interview is judged according to the admissions criteria, codified on a numeric scale against agreed descriptors, and shared among all tutors involved in admissions, together with the applicants' UCAS forms and their test results.

³For further discussion of what Computer Science tutors look for in an applicant, see **here**.

⁴For the Computer Science degrees, Mathematics is essential at A-level or equivalent. Further Mathematics is very strongly recommended. Computer Science/Computing can be helpful and interesting if available, but it is by no means a requirement: tutors are just as happy for applicants to explore their interest in the subject outside of the school curriculum.

Making offers

The colleges use various procedures in a coordinated effort to ensure that the strongest applicants are admitted across the University irrespective of the college considering their application. These include complete transparency of all information gained about each applicant, supported by an online information system, and a final meeting where the strongest unplaced applicants are identified and open offers are agreed. This year, 35.8% of offers made came from a college other than the applicant's application college, or are open offers (meaning that the applicant is offered a place at Oxford at a college that will be determined in August).

Where an applicant for a joint honours degree has performed strongly in one of their subjects but will not be made an offer for the joint degree, tutors may consider offering them a place for a relevant single honours degree.⁵ 9 applicants for joint honours degrees were offered places for single honours courses.

Where an applicant is eligible and would benefit from it, tutors may nominate them for the **Opportunity Oxford** scheme. 6 applicants were offered places through Opportunity Oxford.

Following the end of the selection process, colleges write to applicants via UCAS with the results of their application. Standard conditions apply to those taking A-levels, the International Baccalaureate or Scottish Highers; for other applicants, tutors will seek advice from the subject coordinator or the college's admissions tutor in determining a comparable set of conditions.

MAT results and feedback

MAT scores are not released to applicants until the selection process has concluded and they have received their decision. Scores will be sent to applicants via email in January, shortly after colleges have communicated application outcomes.

Other than the release of MAT scores, feedback to applicants is a matter for individual colleges. Most do not automatically send feedback apart from the decision itself. Applicants may seek feedback from their first college about any aspect of the admissions process, but should wait until the process is complete and they have received their decision before doing so. Details of the procedure for requesting feedback may be found [here](#).

⁵Applicants for Mathematics and Computer Science may be considered for offers for either Mathematics or Computer Science. Applicants for Computer Science and Philosophy may be considered for offers for Computer Science. The University does not offer a single honours undergraduate course in Philosophy.