

Music

In the 2023-24 admissions round the estimated competition for places across Oxford was approximately 2.8 candidates per place.

Candidates were selected using **standard selection criteria**.

The majority of candidates who applied were called for interview. Shortlisting decisions are initially taken by the tutors in each college, but the Music tutors in all colleges which admit for the subject have access to the application materials and it is open to other colleges to call to interview any candidate not called by the first-choice college. Decisions are reviewed by the Faculty Admissions Coordinator in conjunction with the relevant college tutors. The Faculty additionally operated a coordinated reallocation procedure, in accordance with the University's Common Framework for Admissions, designed to ensure that the best candidates stood an equitable chance of being offered an academic place at Oxford, irrespective of their college preference. This meant that candidates from a number of oversubscribed colleges were reallocated to other colleges for interview. Every Music candidate had a minimum of two interviews with two different colleges, and some were also invited to Faculty interviews.

Music does not use an aptitude test. However, it does request written work in advance (two essays, one of which should normally be on Music, plus some harmony and counterpoint and/or composition). The written work was double-marked centrally within the Faculty and also by the first-choice college interviewing tutors. Candidates were also invited to submit a recording of a short recital; in college these were assessed by **Benjamin Nicholas** and Prof. Waltham-Smith. These scores formed part of final decision-making processes (but not shortlisting) and were considered alongside a range of other data (including academic track record, predicted grades where applicable, performance at interview, personal statements, and references).

Merton first-choice candidates had two interviews lasting approximately 25 minutes each, and candidates were given 45 minutes to prepare material before the start of each interview. The materials consisted of a mistake-stopping exercise, an

unidentified movement for analysis, and a short musicological text. After identifying and correcting mistakes in the harmony and counterpoint exercise, candidates were asked to comment on the most salient musical features of the movement for analysis and to discuss aspects of form, tonality, harmony, texture, rhythm, style or any other issues germane to the piece. In the second interview, candidates were asked to analyse the arguments in the text and to discuss critically the issues it raises and the ramifications of its claims. No particular knowledge of musical repertoire was expected. There was an opportunity for candidates to ask questions at the end of the interview, although this did not form part of the formal assessment process. Merton interviews were conducted by [**Professor Naomi Waltham-Smith**](#), [**Dr Matthew Thomson**](#), and [Dylan Price](#).