

A Parent's Guide to Oxford Admissions

ALTHEONE

Three questions to ask before your child applies

1. How can I tell if my child is competitive?

Excellent grades are important, but they are only part of the picture. A serious Oxford applicant should usually demonstrate three things:

Academic strength

Are their results appropriate for the published requirements?

Subject curiosity

Do they explore their subject independently beyond schoolwork?

Academic thinking

Can they work through unfamiliar problems and explain reasoning?

A student with outstanding grades is not automatically a strong Oxford candidate. Competitiveness should always be assessed against the requirements of the particular course.

Parent Question

Instead of asking "Does my child have enough achievements?", ask "Can my child demonstrate genuine academic engagement with this subject?"

2. When should preparation start?

Earlier does not necessarily mean more tutoring. It means more time for genuine intellectual development.

Years 10–11

Explore. Encourage curiosity. Read, attend lectures, enter competitions, discover which subjects genuinely hold attention.

Year 12

Develop. Subject exploration becomes deeper. Investigate courses, understand requirements, identify admissions tests.

Summer before Y13

Prepare. Clear course choice, understand timeline. Admissions test preparation begins.

Year 13

Execute. UCAS submission, admissions tests, written work and interview preparation.

Top Tip

Do not wait for Year 13 to discover whether Oxford is genuinely right for your child. Always check current course requirements directly with Oxford.

3. What should parents do, and not do?

Parents can have an enormous positive influence without taking control of the application.

DO

Ask questions. "What did you learn?" is often more valuable than "How many hours did you study?"

Create opportunities. Help access books, lectures, experiences and conversations.

Protect their time. Depth matters more than twenty extracurriculars.

Encourage independence. Your child will sit the test, attend the interview and study the degree.

Keep perspective. Oxford is one outstanding university among many.

The strongest parental role is often to provide support, perspective and opportunity while allowing the student to own the intellectual journey.

DONT

• Build the application for them

• Choose activities purely because they "look good"

• Compare their application constantly with other students

• Assume more tutoring automatically means better preparation

• Treat an Oxford offer as the only successful outcome

Want personalised feedback?

Altheone supports ambitious UAE students applying to Oxford through one-to-one mentoring with current Oxford students.

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