

Contents

About the author	ix
Acknowledgements	xi
Foreword	xiii
Introduction: so you are thinking of applying to Oxford or Cambridge	1
Why apply to Oxbridge?	3
1 Equal opportunities: am I eligible to apply?	7
Mature and young students	7
Students with disabilities and special educational needs (SEN)	7
Students with children	8
Students from ethnic minorities	9
International students	10
Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual (LGBT) students	11
Educationally disadvantaged students or students who have had a disrupted education (and the Cambridge Special Access Scheme)	11
2 Fees, financial support, and bursaries	13
The cost of studying at Oxbridge: changing tuition fees	13
Financial support and bursaries	15
Music awards and scholarships	16
Case study	17
3 The early stages of preparation	19
Choosing your A level subjects	19
Entry requirements	20
4 Choosing your course: the importance of reading	25
Why reading around your subject is essential preparation for a good application	25
Recommended reading by subject	27
5 Experience to support your application	43
Gap years	43
Work experience	44
Case study	45

Events in your area	45
Case study	46
6 Choosing your university and college	49
Choosing the university by subject	49
Differences in course structure at Oxford and Cambridge	50
Choosing the right college	51
Open applications	55
7 UCAS and the Personal Statement	57
What qualities are the admissions tutors looking for?	57
A model Personal Statement	58
Extra-curricular experiences in the Personal Statement: keeping everything relevant	60
Additional form for Cambridge: the Supplementary Application Questionnaire (SAQ)	63
Submitting written work	65
8 Written tests	67
BMAT (BioMedical Admissions Test), Oxford and Cambridge	68
ELAT (English Literature Aptitude Test), Oxford only	70
HAT (History Aptitude Test), Oxford only	71
LNAT (The National Admissions Test for Law), Oxford only	74
Aptitude test for maths, Oxford only	75
Physics Aptitude Test, Oxford only	76
TSA (Thinking Skills Assessment), Oxford and Cambridge	78
STEP (Sixth Term Examination Papers), Cambridge only	79
Tests for modern languages, Oxford and Cambridge	82
Non-standardised tests at Cambridge (during interview)	83
General preparation for logic-based tests	83
Further reading	84
9 The interview	85
Why are Oxford and Cambridge interviews important?	85
So what exactly are the interviewers looking for?	86
Interview styles	89
General preparation	92
Presentation skills: making an impression without words	104
The pooling system	105
Interview stories from previous applicants	106
10 Getting the letter: offer or rejection and how to cope	113
A word on stress	114
Appendix 1: timetables	117
The year before you apply	117
The year in which you apply	117

Appendix 2: glossary	121
Appendix 3: the UCAS form	123
Appendix 4: maps	125
Oxford map	125
Cambridge map	126
Postscript	127