

Sixteen colleges and halls in Oxford offer choral awards to undergraduate applicants:

Christ Church	(6)	The Queen's College	(21)
Exeter College	(12)	St Edmund Hall	(6)
Keble College	(6)	St John's College	(6)
Magdalen College	(12)	St Peter's College	(12)
Merton College	(16)	Somerville College	(6)
New College	(8)	Trinity College	(6)
Oriel College	(18)	University College	(9)
Pembroke College	(12)	Worcester College	(21)

The bracketed number in the above list indicates the total number of choral places available at each college. Those appointed to choral awards are required to sing in the college's chapel choir under the direction of the director of music or organ scholar. There is a small financial award, which is supplemented in some colleges by additional payments for services rendered and by fees for special events. Many colleges pay for or contribute to the cost of singing tuition.

The three choral foundations (Christ Church, Magdalen College and New College) sing daily services during Full Term (Christ Church sings longer terms including Christmas and Easter). These three choirs enjoy an international reputation. Their occasional work also includes concerts, tours, radio and television broadcasts, and recordings. All three choirs consist of boy trebles (educated at the respective choir schools) and adult male voices. At Christ Church and New College there are six lay clerks (i.e. professional singers) and six to eight choral scholars (or academical clerks). At Magdalen College all are choral scholars.

There are specific vacancies for altos (countertenors), tenors and basses (including baritones). The musical directors of the choral foundations are senior members of the University, as is the musical director of The Queen's College Choir, whose work also embraces concert tours and recordings. The Queen's College Choir, and those at most other colleges, sing two or three services a week during Full Term. At Worcester College there are boy trebles, in addition to sopranos. At all these colleges, choral awards are offered to sopranos, contraltos, altos, tenors and basses.

The entry procedure for choral candidates falls into two parts: the choral audition and the academic interview. The 2009 choral audition takes place on 24-25 September. Its purpose is to assess vocal and musical aptitude. The academic interview takes place in December, when choral candidates join all the other candidates competing for places at Oxford. In both September and December, candidates will be accommodated at their first choice college, which will communicate a detailed timetable to them.

The twofold entry procedure for choral candidates requires two separate application forms: a choral application form and the UCAS form. The choral application form is available from the Oxford Colleges Admissions Office, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JD. It includes detailed instructions on its completion, on the choice of college, and on the nature of the examination. It must be

submitted by **1 September**. Choral candidates should not at this stage submit a UCAS form.

Immediately after the September choral audition, candidates will be advised whether they have reached a standard meriting further consideration for a choral award. All candidates wishing to continue with their Oxford application should then submit their UCAS, remembering that the closing date is **15 October**.

At the choral audition, candidates are required to sing a prepared piece and to demonstrate musical ability through a few vocal exercises, ear tests and reading at sight. College organists and tutors may conduct interviews to obtain a fuller picture of a candidate's musical interests and activities. College chaplains may also arrange to interview choral candidates during the audition period. Candidates should remember to bring *two* copies of their prepared piece (one for the accompanist and another for the examiners) in addition to their own. The audition lasts approximately 10 minutes.

In preparing for the choral audition candidates should bear in mind that a quick ear and an aptitude for sight-reading are both important, especially in choirs that perform a large repertory. These are skills that need to be developed as much as vocal technique. For those to whom such skills do not come naturally it is important to stress that they can be improved with steady practice. Although the examiners are aware that a candidate may have been singing for a relatively short period

of time, s/he ought to have had some systematic singing tuition before the audition. In choosing an audition piece, it is important to bear in mind range and technique, selecting music that displays vocal and musical capabilities to the full, without going beyond what the technique can support. It is not essential to perform sacred music. Verse sections from a longer anthem are less suitable than a complete solo. Candidates should take advice from their school over the completion of the application form, as well as over the choice of music to perform.

Every candidate will be expected to establish his or her ability to read competently and seriously for an honours degree. At the three choral foundations (Christ Church, Magdalen College and New College) a candidate may be examined on his own merits academically. At the other colleges, a candidate has to gain a place in open competition with others applying for the same honours degree course. *A successful outcome to the academic admissions procedure in December does not automatically mean that a choral award will be offered; this will depend upon the strength of competition from other candidates.*

Candidates should feel free to consult the organist or music tutor of colleges offering choral awards for advice. Details of the 2009 Open Day on 2 May for prospective choral and organ scholars, and the 2009 Faculty Open Day on 8 July, can be found in the University undergraduate prospectus and on the Faculty's web site.

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Other leaflets of interest are:
Organ Awards;
Organ & Choral Open Day;
Faculty of Music Open Day



CHORAL AWARDS

INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES

