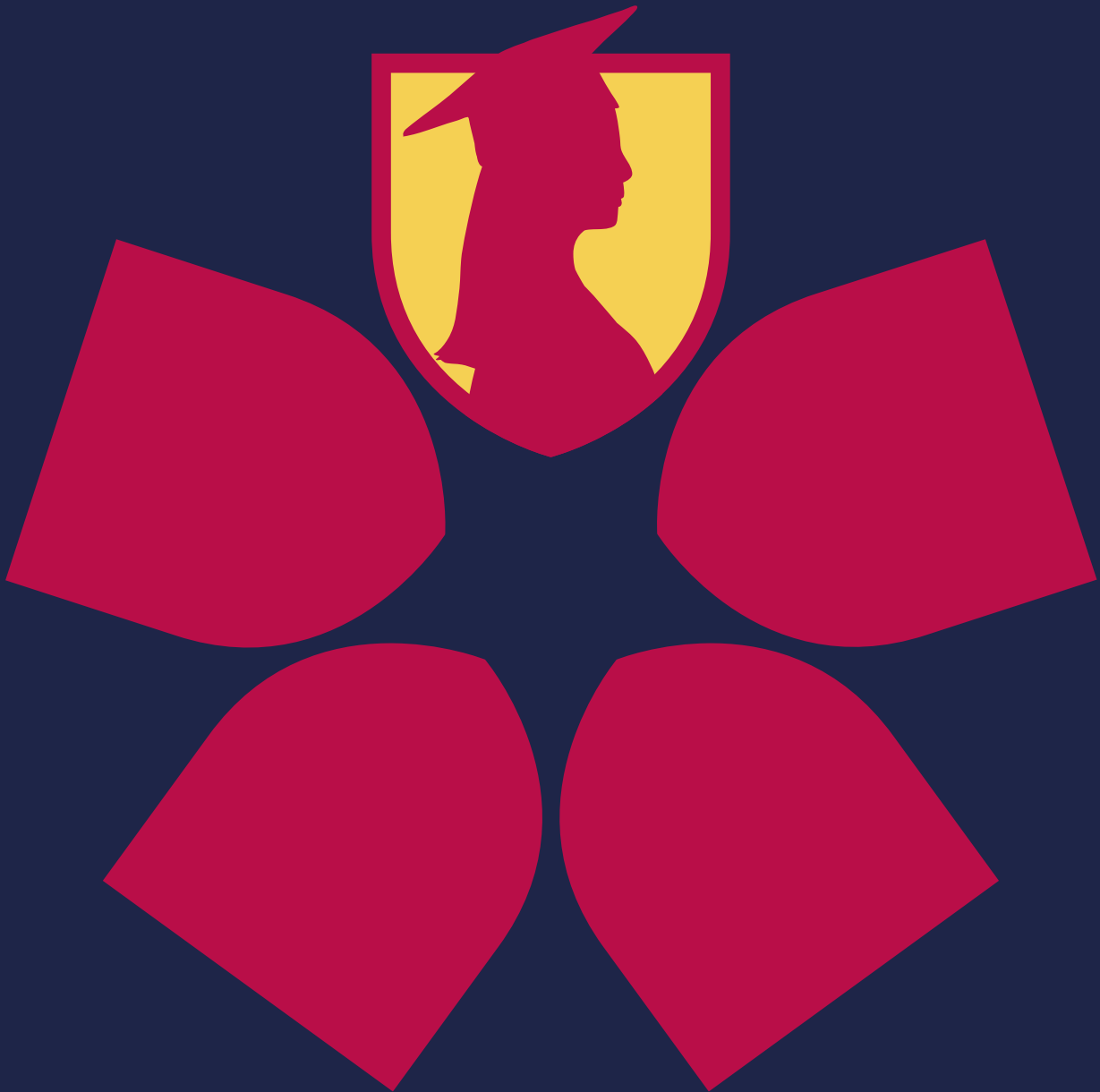


# OXBRIDGE

Boarding and Day · Girls



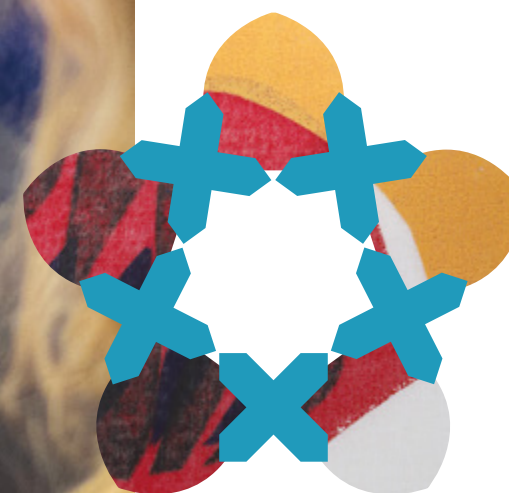
TUDOR  
HALL



At Tudor Hall, we seek to inspire and to aspire. We seek to challenge and support our students in equal measure. So, as our students approach university applications, we encourage and guide them to seek out the courses and universities where they will flourish. For some, this will be the world-leading institutions of Oxford and Cambridge, where the intellectual rigour and academic opportunities are unsurpassed.

*“At the University of Cambridge, we’re looking for students who have an ability to think critically and independently, to argue logically while keeping an open mind to new ideas, and who have genuine passion and enthusiasm for their subject.”*

**University of Cambridge**





## Todd-IVs (Years 7-10)

Whilst it is in the Sixth Form that the process of guidance and preparation for Oxbridge application becomes intensive, the foundation is laid through the experiences and challenges enjoyed in the younger years. Every subject area offers opportunities for pupils to enrich their learning, taking it beyond the classroom, to broaden and deepen their understanding through reading, problem-solving, discussion and practical learning activities. Our departments use specially curated lists of resources and activities, provided by Oxford and Cambridge, to extend and inspire younger pupils. The Aim Higher programme for academic scholars provides a dedicated, focused opportunity to explore new ideas, learning alongside the sharpest minds across all our year groups.

## The Vs

In the Vs, we lead a session for all those with a potential interest in Oxbridge in which we explore what is distinctive about these universities, how they teach, who that suits and how the universities select students for their courses. On average, Oxbridge courses attract 7-8 applicants for every place. Almost all of these applicants have top GCSE grades (at levels 8 and 9) and A\* predictions at A level. Oxbridge therefore use their own additional admissions processes to identify which student, out of each 7 or 8 applicants, displays the greatest academic potential. They are seeking those who love to think deeply and discuss ideas, who are constantly curious to learn, who love to explore independently the subject areas that intensely interest them, who are self-motivated, self-disciplined and resilient learners.

This introductory session is followed up with individual guidance for Vs on appropriate A level subject choices, on how to research and select a degree course subject, and on how they can continue to develop as learners and potential Oxbridge applicants. They are introduced to the concept of the “super-curriculum” — activities beyond their exam courses but still in the realm of academic study, exploring their area of subject interest more broadly and deeply. With careful guidance they begin to build and reflect upon their own personal programme of super-curricular learning. These joyously diverse activities encompass personal reading, thinking, discussion, listening to podcasts, watching documentaries, visiting exhibitions or places of interest, gaining work experience, practising problem-solving and more!

*“In the summer of the IVs I was encouraged to read a book by Richard Dawkins. That was the start of my journey.”*

**Amelie, offer from Corpus Christi College, Oxford, to study Biochemistry**

*“I had been fascinated by classical myths since I was little, but in the Spring of Vs I began to read the original texts and consider them more critically. By the Christmas of Lower Sixth, I knew that studying Classics at Oxford was for me.”*

**Tabitha, offer from Merton College, Oxford, to study Classics**



*“Through super-curricular activities, it’s likely that you’ll develop new ideas and opinions, critical thinking and analytical skills, and an ability to understand new information from different sources — this is all great preparation for succeeding at university.”*

**University of Cambridge**



## The Lower Sixth

In Lower Sixth, we work on a one-to-one basis with those who have excelled at GCSE and who express a genuine commitment to Oxbridge application and developing their super-curriculum. This is the particular benefit of a smaller school, where each and every student is known personally as a unique individual. Rather than generic Oxbridge preparation for larger groups, at Tudor we develop a bespoke programme of enrichment and preparation for each individual that will run from the first term of their Lower Sixth to Christmas of their Upper Sixth. With academic guidance from the Head of Sixth Form and the tutor team, students are supported and challenged to build upon their academic strengths.

Every week, Oxbridge applicants will devote dedicated time to focus on their personal super-curricular programme — time roughly equivalent to studying an additional A level. The activities they will pursue in this time vary immensely with the student's subject area of interest, but may comprise:

- **Personal reading**, using Oxbridge's own subject-specific reading lists whilst being led by their own individual interests; they will record the key ideas in a journal, with their reflections and the questions it has raised that they now wish to pursue.
- Following issues of **current interest and debate** in their subject area — for example through weekly reading of the 'New Scientist', 'The Economist' or foreign language journals — all available online through our Library intranet.
- Undertaking a **personal independent research project** to explore in depth a focused area of particular interest, before presenting in essay, visual or verbal format.
- Trying challenging **problem-solving** activities — such as those provided by the Cambridge University 'Isaac Physics' online resource for Mathematicians and Physicists.

- Listening to **podcasts**, watching **documentaries** and online **lectures**, or taking an online **MOOC**.
- Seeking out **masterclasses**, places to **visit** and **work experience opportunities** for which they wish to apply.
- Meeting regularly with a **subject mentor** to discuss their super-curricular learning, as well as to **prepare for admissions tests** and the **submission of written work** to Oxbridge

Ongoing support throughout this process is provided by our Oxbridge Co-ordinator who helps each student to build, develop and reflect on their own preparation programme. The school's Director of Professional Guidance offers further support in respect of career planning, with regular careers network events and dinners providing excellent opportunities for students to meet with OTs, parents and others who have pursued careers connected to a specific subject area.

*“Engaging with a subject because you're interested in it is great preparation for life at a top university like Oxford. In your university application it's a good idea to demonstrate that you're an enthusiastic, motivated and curious student who can work independently. We're not looking for people who can memorise lots of facts — instead, we want to see that you can think critically by finding connections, reflecting on and even challenging what you've read and watched.”*

**Hertford College, University of Oxford**

In the summer term of Lower Sixth, all applicants receive guidance on writing effective personal statements and begin the process of drafting. Further sessions on choosing an Oxbridge College and making the most of Open Day visits ensure that all applicants are ready for their visits to Oxford and Cambridge at the end of June (Oxford) or start of July (Cambridge).

The summer holiday after Lower Sixth is a crucial opportunity to deepen super-curricular enrichment further, undertake work experience where relevant, complete written work for submission to Oxbridge, practise admissions tests and make the final touches to the personal statement.

*“For me it was my work experience at the Handel Museum in London - where I spent the whole time discussing Handel - when I realised just how much I enjoyed being immersed in the study of Music”.*

**Hana, offer from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, for Music**





# The Upper Sixth

On returning to school in September of the Upper Sixth, applicants are guided through the UCAS admissions process, completing their Oxbridge applications in the first three weeks of term.

Throughout September and October, students undertake weekly mocks for Oxbridge admissions tests, meeting with their subject mentor to evaluate their progress. The real admissions tests take place in school in mid-October, under the supervision of the Tudor Hall examinations officer. Written work is submitted to the applicant's chosen Oxbridge college before half-term.

*“Doing practice tests in timed conditions worked really well for me and then going through them with my teacher afterwards was super-helpful!”*

**Tabitha, offer from Merton College, Oxford, to study Classics**

The foundations for success in the December Oxbridge interviews have been laid through the super-curricular

programme undertaken in the Lower Sixth and before. From October of the Upper Sixth, however, we focus on building students' confidence and sharpening their skills in formal academic interviews. This process begins in October with an off-timetable Oxbridge Interview Preparation Day. This includes the valuable insight of a former Cambridge Admissions Tutor on the nature of the Oxbridge interview and how applicants can maximise their impact at interview. A subject-specific interview skills session led by an Oxbridge graduate in their subject of application is followed by two mock interviews with Oxbridge subject specialists, who then provide personal feedback to the applicants.

*“The right preparation can make your interview an enjoyable yet challenging academic discussion; an opportunity to share your knowledge and enthusiasm for your subject with experts in the field.”*

**University of Cambridge**

Throughout November, each applicant pursues a personalised Tudor Hall Interview Programme. Beginning with our own departmental subject experts, applicants are encouraged to relax and enjoy the interview process, experiencing it as a learning dialogue. Thirty-minute mock interviews are followed by constructive feedback that both builds confidence and identifies key areas for improvement. The interview programme progresses over a four-week period through mock interviews with the Tudor Senior Leadership Team, to Old Tudorians with subject-specific expertise, many of whom have themselves studied at Oxford or Cambridge.

*“The mock interview feedback consistently directed me to develop my answers with more examples. By the real interview I was able to do this and thankfully all the practice paid off!”*

**Hana, offer from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, for Music**

In between each mock interview, applicants de-brief with our Oxbridge Coordinator to identify their growing strengths and remaining action points. The process concludes with challenging mock interviews with Oxbridge subject experts from our high-attaining partner schools.

*“Through the practice interviews I learned to interact with my interviewer, enjoying the experience as if it was my favourite lesson”*

**Amelie, offer from Corpus Christi College, Oxford, to study Biochemistry**

All Oxford interviews, and most Cambridge interviews, are now online and so almost all of this programme of practice is undertaken online, with specific thought given to maximising applicants' impact through this medium. The real interviews take place in early

December and quiet, relaxed spaces are organised for our applicants to have the very best experience possible. Our pastoral teams work closely with our Oxbridge Coordinator to ensure that each individual is well supported — physically, mentally and emotionally — throughout the process.

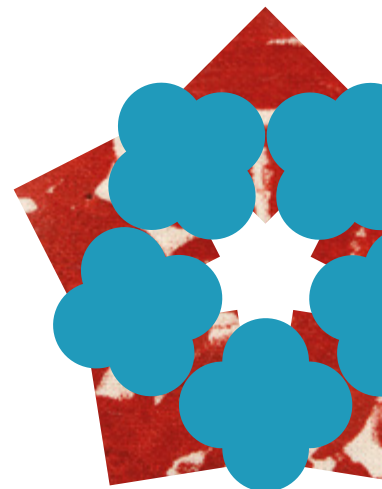
*“I kept trying. I didn't give up. I came up with new solutions to tackle the problems they gave me”*

**Tabitha, offer from Merton College, Oxford, to study Classics**

The outcomes of the Oxbridge selection process are known in January and the support for our applicants continues throughout this period. We love to celebrate their successes with them, but we also ensure they know that not receiving an Oxbridge offer is in no sense a failure. They will study at a different, but still highly prestigious, university after Tudor. And what they have learnt through the Oxbridge process — about their subject and themselves — will have shaped them into more sophisticated, more thoughtful and ultimately more successful learners.

*“Success is not final; failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.”*

**Winston Churchill**



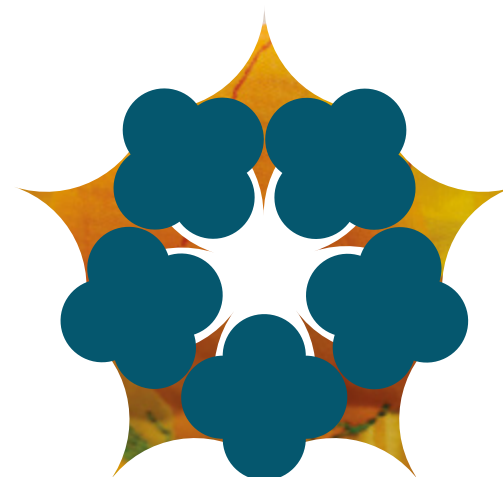


*Having been at Tudor since Todds, I graduated in 2018 and went on to read Biochemistry at the University of Oxford. My time during my undergraduate study was highly enjoyable and rewarding. Of course, there are the tremendous career growth opportunities and networking advantages to studying in Oxford. But even aside from that, the place is filled with wonderful academic stimulation which will excite anyone passionate about their subject. The aesthetic and historic backdrop helps also. Moreover, I have met many like-minded individuals with whom I shared a great time. The Biochemistry course was challenging due to both its breadth and depth; however, it enables the committed student to truly appreciate the complexity of the underlying machinery of life.*

*The seven years I was at Tudor helped me build my confidence in a safe, encouraging environment. Highly personalised attention I received from my teachers, especially in Chemistry, played a significant role in my success. I am very grateful for the teachers and pastoral support I had. Ultimately, Tudor let me explore my passions freely and while being supportive, I value a lot the fact that my teachers did not put huge pressure on me and my performance. I have also maintained my close friendships from my time at school, which made the transition to the world of university a bit easier.*

*I have since graduated from MBiochem with a First and placed 5th in my year group. I have decided to stay at the University of Oxford to pursue a DPhil in Clinical Medicine. I am enjoying my postgraduate experience in Oxford as much as my undergraduate, although they are quite different. My project involves development of the herbicide discovery pipeline. In the future I plan to stay in STEM, whether through academic or industrial affiliations. And of course, to stay connected to Tudor and its community.*

**Kate Kot, OT 2018**





# TUDOR HALL

Head of Sixth Form  
Vikki Marsh | [vmarsh@tudorhallschool.com](mailto:vmarsh@tudorhallschool.com)

Registrar  
Elspeth Dyer | [edyer@tudorhallschool.com](mailto:edyer@tudorhallschool.com)

Tudor Hall School | Wykham Park | Banbury | OX16 9UR  
01295 263434 | [admissions@tudorhallschool.com](mailto:admissions@tudorhallschool.com)

[www.tudorhallschool.com](http://www.tudorhallschool.com)