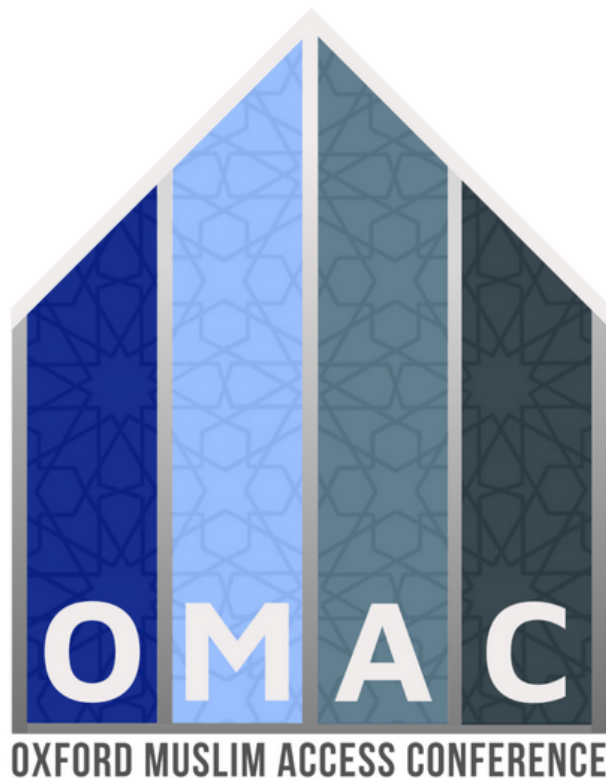


# OXFORD MUSLIM ACCESS CONFERENCE

— INFORM - INFLUENCE - INSPIRE



**2022 Impact Report**

# CONTENTS

<b>BACKGROUND AND APPLICANTS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>ATTENDEE DEMOGRAPHICS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>PROMOTION</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>CONFERENCE ITINERARY</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>STUDENT FEEDBACK</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>FUTURE PLANS</b>	<b>19</b>

# BACKGROUND

The annual Oxford Muslim Access Conference (OMAC) was launched in 2018 by the Oxford University Islamic Society (OUISoc) to support year 11 and 12 students thinking of applying to Oxford and other competitive universities. OMAC aims to demystify the Oxbridge application process, shed light on Muslim experiences at Oxford, and address the unique cultural and faith barriers often faced by students from Muslim backgrounds. This year, OMAC was kindly hosted by **Clifford Chance** in Canary Wharf, London, and was also supported by **Oxford University Admissions & Outreach, Aziz Foundation, and COSARAF.**

# APPLICATIONS

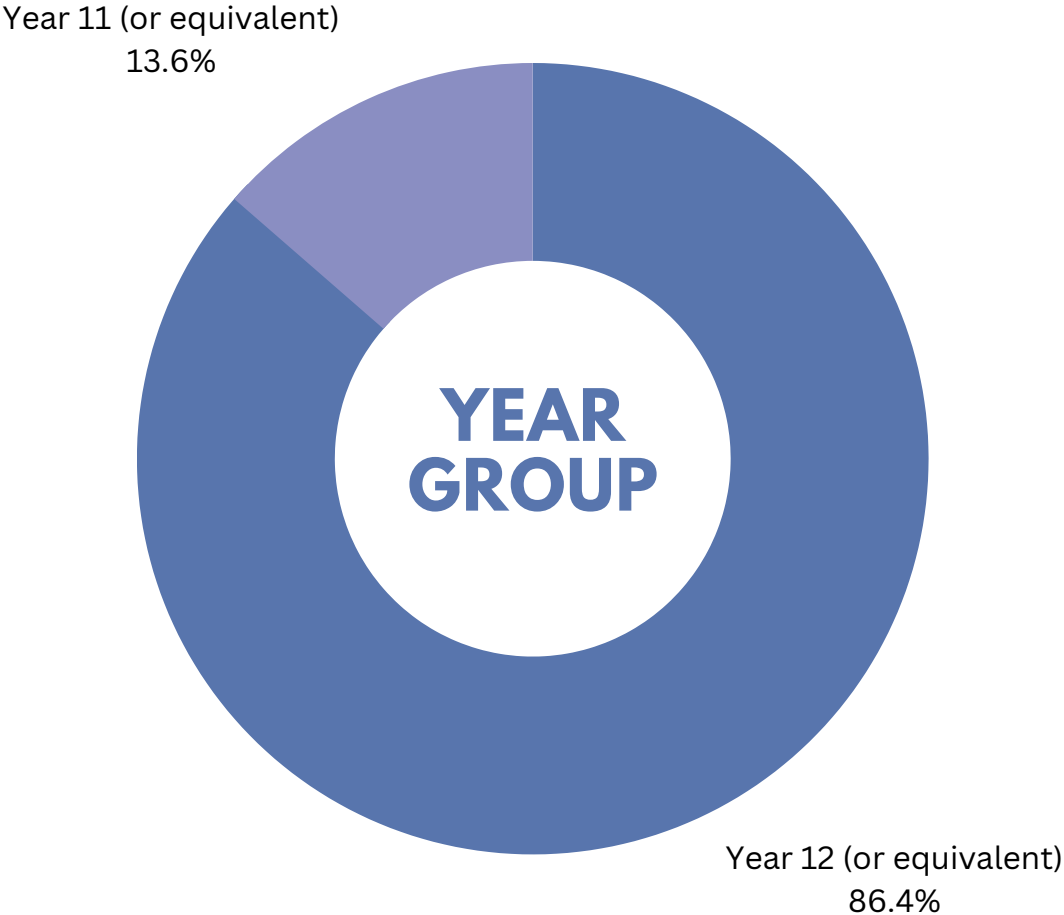
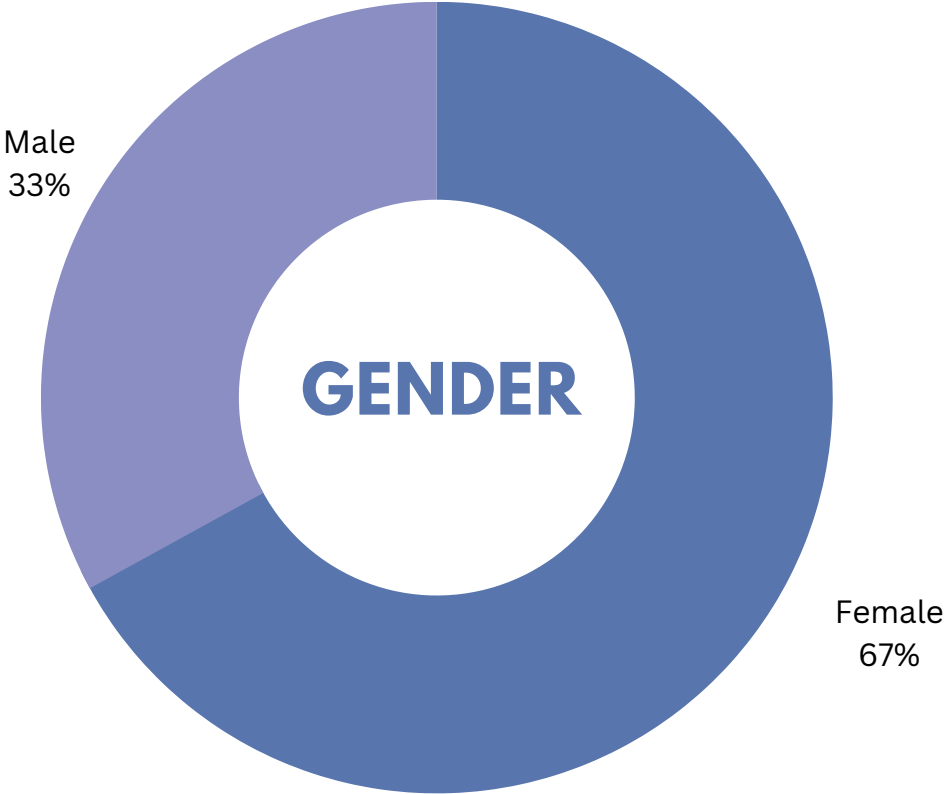
All year 11 and 12 students studying at a state or faith school in the UK were eligible to apply for the conference. Students from state comprehensive and first generation backgrounds were prioritised in the selection process. A total of **221** students applied for OMAC 2022.



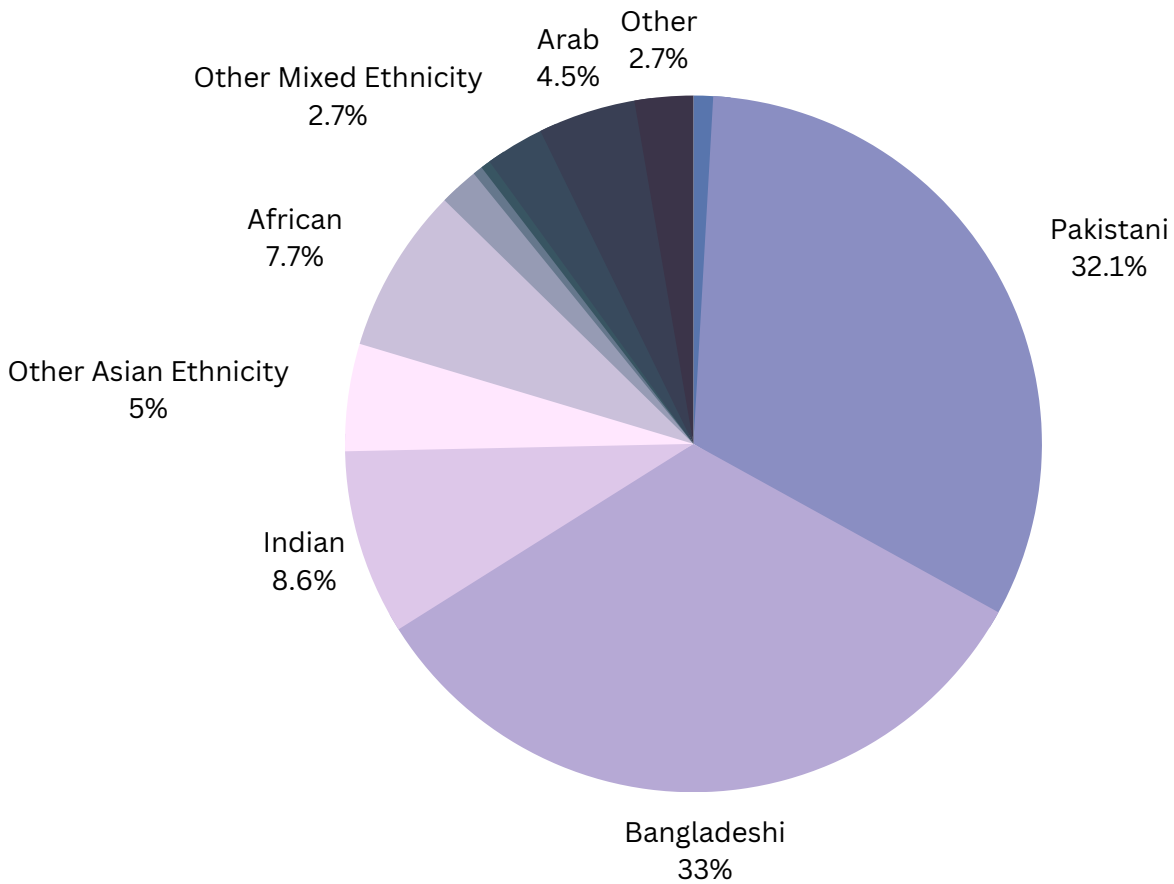
**2022 Applicant Map**

Each Oxford College works with schools in specific regions across the UK. This system of outreach was employed to connect with schools and ensure a more geographically diverse demographic was targeted.

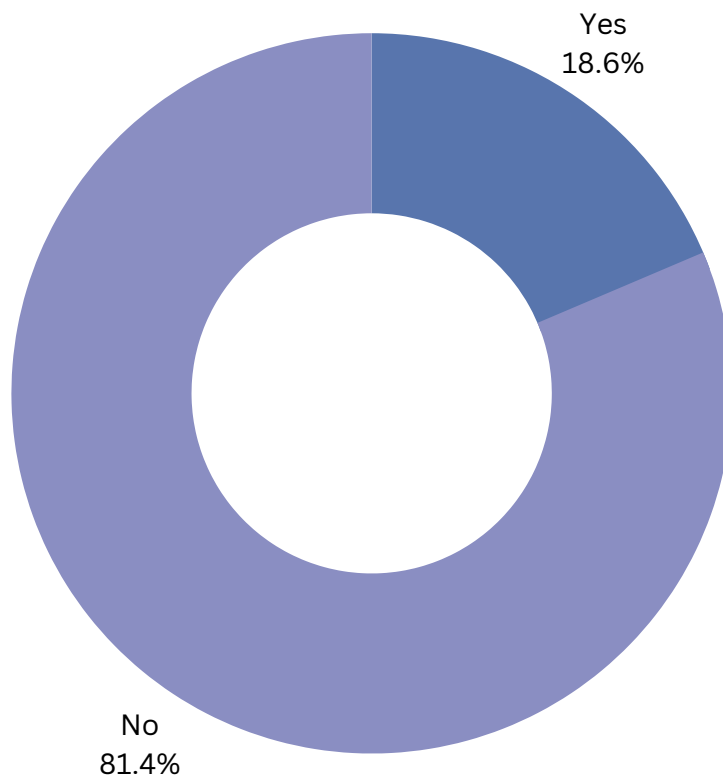
# ATTENDEE DEMOGRAPHICS



# ETHNICITY



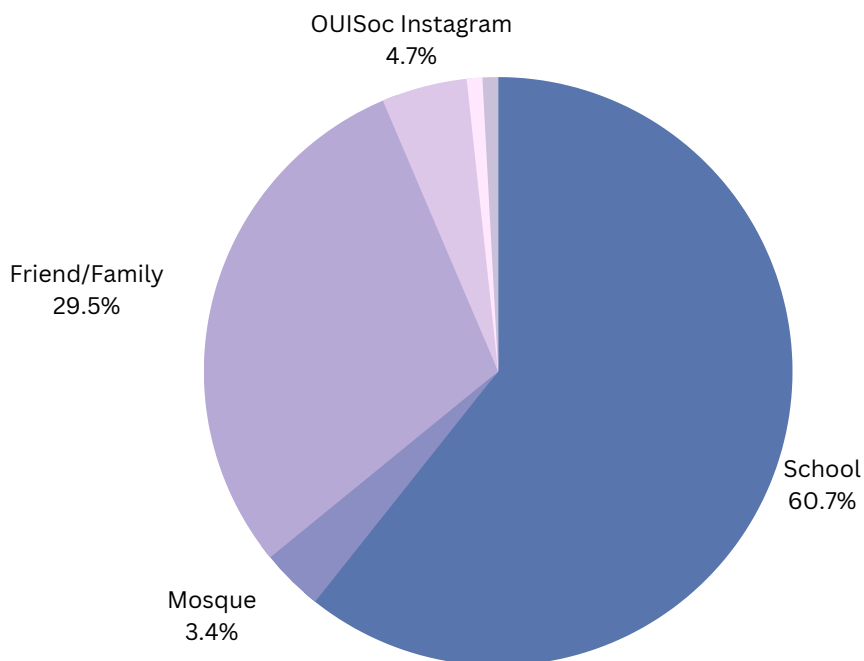
# PREVIOUS INTERACTION\* WITH OXFORD OR CAMBRIDGE



*\*such as school visits, open days, summer schools, and other outreach events.*

# PROMOTION

The conference was promoted using a number of methods. We posted on our social media (Instagram, Facebook and Twitter) to promote the event as well as using the 'story' feature to remind people of the deadline and to apply. We also promoted it through Whatsapp to local mosques, community centres, youth groups and schools known to OUISoc Members. Finally, we emailed a large number of schools and sixth forms in the country to try and get our event out to as many schools as possible. The graph to the right highlights the proportion of applicants who discovered OMAC through each promotion strategy as collected through our application form.



**OXFORD MUSLIM ACCESS CONFERENCE**  
 INFORM - INFLUENCE - INSPIRE

**WHO?:** Open to all Year 11 & 12 Muslim Students

**WHERE?:** Clifford Chance, Canary Wharf, London

**WHEN?:** Saturday 10th December 2022  
 8:45am - 5:30pm

**PERSONAL STATEMENTS, INTERVIEWS & ENTRANCE EXAMS**

**DEBUNKING COMMON MYTHS**

**HEAR FROM: CURRENT STUDENTS, STAFF, AND ALUMNI**

**VISIT [WWW.OUISOC.ORG/OMAC](http://WWW.OUISOC.ORG/OMAC) FOR MORE DETAILS AND TO REGISTER**  
**DEADLINE: 23rd October 2022**

*Description: "Promotion post uploaded onto our Facebook and Instagram accounts in the run up to the conference application deadline"*



# OXFORD MUSLIM ACCESS CONFERENCE



INFORM - INFLUENCE - INSPIRE



## WHO?

Open to year 11 &  
12 Muslim students

## WHERE?

Clifford Chance,  
Canary Wharf London

## WHEN?

8.45am - 5.30pm  
Saturday 10th December  
2022

PERSONAL  
STATEMENTS,  
INTERVIEWS  
& ENTRANCE  
EXAMS

DEBUNKING  
COMMON  
MYTHS

HEAR FROM:  
CURRENT  
STUDENTS,  
STAFF, AND  
ALUMNI

VISIT [WWW.OUISOC.ORG/OUTREACH](http://WWW.OUISOC.ORG/OUTREACH)  
FOR MORE DETAILS AND TO REGISTER  
DEADLINE TO APPLY: 23rd October 2022

[ouisoc.org](http://ouisoc.org)



[/ouisoc](https://www.facebook.com/ouisoc)



[@oxforduni\\_isoc](https://www.instagram.com/oxforduni_isoc)



[@oxforduni\\_isoc](https://twitter.com/oxforduni_isoc)

Promotion poster sent to schools and mosques in the run up to the conference application deadline

# CONFERENCE ITINERARY

OXFORD UNIVERSITY  
ISLAMIC SOCIETY



## OXFORD MUSLIM ACCESS CONFERENCE

10th December 2022

### Conference Itinerary

#### 8.45 - 9.30 Registration and Networking

*Light refreshments will be available.*

#### 9.30 - 9.40 Welcome and Introduction

*A welcome and introduction to the day from the ISoc, and a brief overview of the aims and objectives of the conference.*

#### 9.40 - 10.30 Oxford Explained - Q&A

*Marrimum Khan, Senior Access Officer at Lady Margaret Hall, will deliver a presentation explaining the application process and life at the university.*

#### 10.30 - 11.15 Addressing Faith and Cultural Barriers - Q&A

*Sheikh Ibrahim Amin, Imam at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies and Muslim Chaplain, will address faith and cultural barriers to Higher Education faced by students from Muslim backgrounds, before an open Q&A session.*

#### 11.20 - 12.15 First Subject Workshops

*An interactive course introduction by current Oxford students.*

#### 12.25 - 13.15 Lunch (Including Zuhr prayer break)

*Time and space for prayer is also available.*

#### 13.25 - 14.20 Second Subject Workshops

*An interactive course introduction by current Oxford students.*

#### 14.25 - 16.15 Break & Brothers and Sisters Breakout Sessions

*Asr and Maghrib prayer break with light refreshments available. Small group discussions with current students of Oxford, to address welfare- and faith-oriented questions and concerns.*

#### 16.30 - 17.15 Alumni Panel

*A panel discussion with Oxford alumni now working in a range of fields.*

#### 17.15 - 17.30 Closing Remarks

*Our hosts will provide more details about post-conference support.*

### OMAC: Aims & Objectives

#### INSPIRE

To raise the aspirations of Muslim students so that they believe university is a tangible goal. Both current students and the university's admissions team will deliver expert advice on the application process to instil confidence.

#### INFORM

To dispel common misconceptions about life at Oxford and depict the multiplicity of Muslim experiences within Oxford. At the same time, we will display how Oxford and its environment is a place where Muslim students belong and can thrive. We hope students then leave with a realistic appreciation of what life at Oxford is like, Muslim experiences there and the application process so as to make an informed decision.

#### INFLUENCE

Through presenting a group of role models for students from Muslim backgrounds, the end goal is that they too will be able to influence the people and the society around them in the future and make positive change.



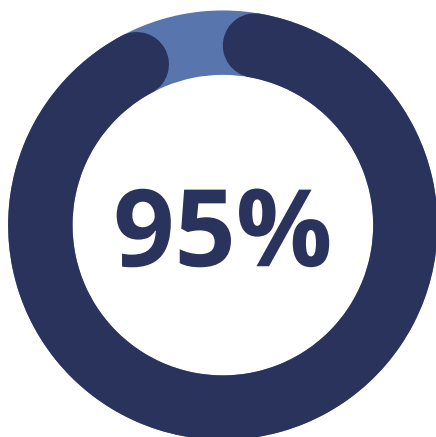
# WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

OMAC started off with a few words from Fahim Miah, a current Oxford student, who hosted the event, and a brief address from Rafiah Niha, the Access Director. They then gave an outline of the conference and moved onto the first session.



## OXFORD EXPLAINED MARRIUM KHAN, SENIOR OUTREACH OFFICER AT LADY MARGARET HALL COLLEGE

Senior Outreach Officer, Marrison Khan delivered the first session, **'Oxford Explained'**. Marrison provided an introduction to the University of Oxford, including its college structure, facilities, faculties and student bodies. She gave an outline of the application process, drawing upon her own experience as an Oxford alumna, Muslim and coming from an ethnic and low-income background. To make this talk interactive, Marrison used the presentation software 'Mentimeter' to directly tackle common misconceptions about Oxford. This session concluded with Marrison taking questions from students, ranging from application tips to living away from home.

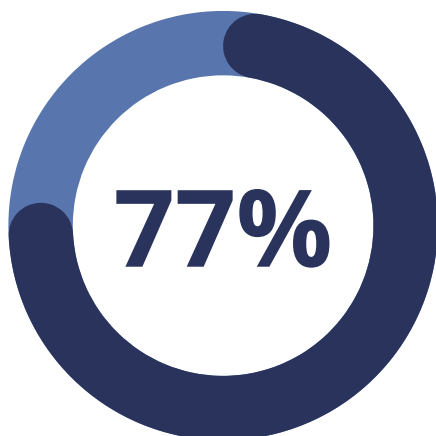


**of attendees found this talk either 'very helpful' or 'extremely helpful'.**

# ADDRESSING CULTURAL AND FAITH BARRIERS SHEIKH IBRAHIM AMIN, OXFORD UNIVERSITY MUSLIM CHAPLAIN



The **'Addressing Faith and Cultural Barriers'** talk was delivered by Oxford University's Muslim Chaplain, Sheikh Ibrahim Amin. This session covered numerous important topics including facilities available to Muslim students (such as prayer spaces); welfare services provided by the University, colleges, the Islamic Society and by the Chaplain himself; and provisions available during the month of Ramadan. Ibrahim also shared what his role entailed and the facilities available at the Oxford Centre of Islamic Studies. This talk was then followed by a short Q&A session.

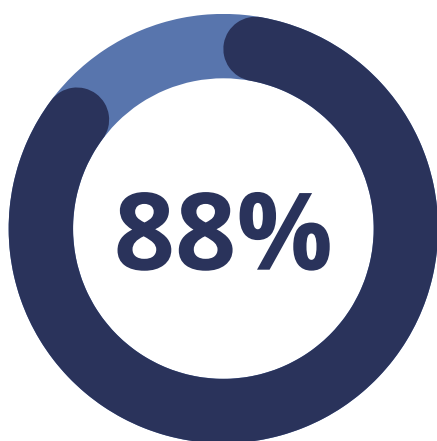


**of attendees found this talk  
'helpful', 'very helpful' or  
'extremely helpful'.**

# SUBJECT WORKSHOPS

Applicants were offered the opportunity to participate in **two subject workshops** that they selected from an extensive list of some of the popular courses offered at Oxford. Each session was delivered by undergraduate students and aimed to provide insight into the unique tutorial system that Oxford has to offer as well as guiding students through unfamiliar concepts while providing a platform for the students to engage with the content, utilising their established knowledge base. The workshops also aimed to show students an overview of their chosen course as well as providing time for a Q&A, where individual concerns could be more directly addressed.

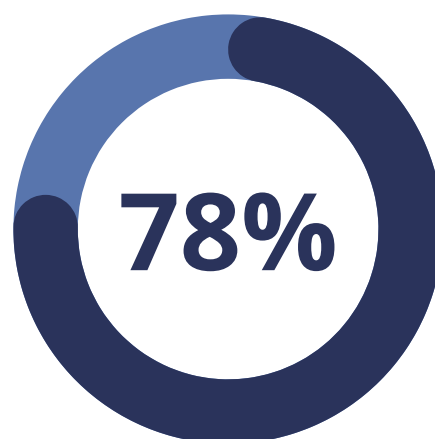
Additionally, tailored subject handouts (an example of which can be seen on the next page) were provided to ensure that the students left with a concise summary of the key information pertaining to each subject as well as providing advice for applying.



**88%** of attendees found the first subject workshop either 'very helpful' or 'extremely helpful'.



**78%** of attendees found the second subject workshop either 'very helpful' or 'extremely helpful'.



# SAMPLE SUBJECT HANDOUT

## PART OF A DOUBLE- SIDED DOCUMENT

# Engineering



### A-LEVELS REQUIRED

Mathematics and Physics. Further Mathematics is recommended but not compulsory.

### MINIMUM A-LEVEL GRADE REQUIREMENTS

A\*A\*A including Mathematics and Physics

### ADMISSIONS TEST

#### Physics Aptitude Test (PAT)

A 2 hour paper with questions on Mathematics and Physics. The syllabus can be found on the Oxford Physics Department Website [www.physics.ox.ac.uk](http://www.physics.ox.ac.uk).

**Main topics for Maths:** Elementary Mathematics, Calculus and Elementary Physics

**Main topics for Physics:** Mechanics, Waves, Optics, Electricity and Magnetism, the Natural World, the use of mathematics in a physical context and problem solving.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

A four-year course, leading to the degree of Master of Engineering. The first two years are devoted to general topics which are useful for all disciplines of Engineering. In the third and fourth years there is scope for specialisation into one of six branches of engineering: Biomedical, Chemical, Civil, Electrical, Information and Mechanical.

### STRUCTURE OF MODULES

#### 1st year

- 4 Core Engineering Papers in Mathematics, Electronic and Information Engineering, Structure & Mechanics and Energy
- Engineering Practicals

#### 2nd year

- 4 Core Engineering Papers in the same 1st Year modules
- Engineering Practicals

### APPROXIMATE NO. OF CONTACT HOURS PER WEEK

#### 3rd year

- Engineering Computation
- Engineering in Society
- Engineering Intermediate Options
- Engineering Design Project

#### 4th year

- Engineering Specialist Options
- Major Project

**Tutorials:** 2 - 4 hours

**Lectures:** 8 x 1 hour lectures

**Labs:** 1 x 5 hour session

### TUTORIAL TESTIMONIAL

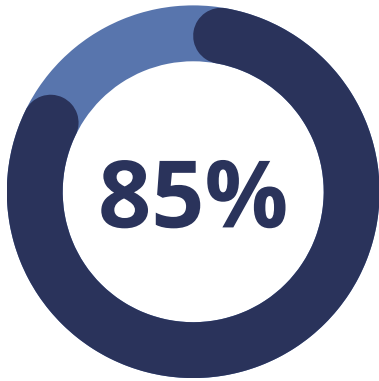
Tutorials are 1-2 hour lessons with a college tutor where you go over the content of a lecture course and work through the associated problem sheets (8-10 questions) that you have prepared before the tutorial. The purpose of the tutorial is to go through the sheet and discuss any questions you have about the topic. These can be either be one-on-one sessions with the tutor or with classes of up to 3 pupils. As a result, you can get more tailored advice and support from the tutor and have engaged group discussions about the work.

### LABS TESTIMONIAL

1st year Engineering students have a 5 hour lab session every week specialising in different fields such as electrical engineering, computer aided design, mechanical engineering and computing. In each lab course, you learn how to use equipment and software so that you can create your own project by the end of the year. For example in Electrical Engineering, first year students build a radio using the skills developed in the lab sessions and science taught in lectures. In 2nd year, the labs are also 5 hours long but less frequent.

# BREAKOUT SESSIONS

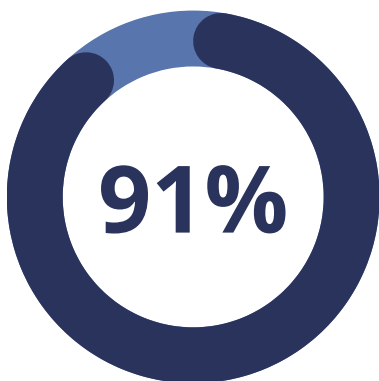
Addressing welfare concerns was a key priority of ours and, consequently, **breakout sessions** occurred in small groups of 5-10 students with 3-5 undergraduate volunteers. Our lead volunteers in the small group environment could create a safe space for students to vocalise their personal concerns, allowing volunteers the opportunity to draw upon their own experiences to address the concerns that were raised, demystifying Oxford to the students.



**of attendees said this session was either 'very helpful' or 'extremely helpful'.**

# ALUMNI PANEL

The **'Alumni Panel'** was an opportunity for students to think about possible careers after their time at university. This year, panellists were Djamsid Damry, optical scientist at Microsoft; Haseem Shah, assistant portfolio manager at Mondrian Investment Partners; junior doctor, Lamid Hamdi; and Ikra Hussain, associate at Quadrant Strategies. The session started off with a brief overview of the panellists' career journey, and then a Q&A session with the student audience. A range of topics were discussed including advice for exploring careers; how university experiences helped with job applications; and managing faith, work and social life.



**of attendees said this session was either 'helpful', 'very helpful' or 'extremely helpful'.**

# CLOSING ADDRESSES

The conference concluded with a few words from Rafiah thanking our guest speakers, alumni, student volunteers and Clifford Chance. Students were then presented with the QR code to fill in the post-conference survey.

# STUDENT FEEDBACK IMPACT

Students were also asked to rate how far they agreed with a set of statements at the start and end of the day via pre and post conference surveys. The ratings were as follows:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Somewhat Disagree
- 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 4 = Somewhat Agree
- 5 = Strongly Agree

Below are the percentage of students who indicated 'Somewhat Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' for each statement.

## **'I want to apply to Oxford'**

- Pre-conference: **76%**
- Post-conference: **88%**

## **'I think I will fit in at Oxford'**

- Pre-conference: **44%**
- Post-conference: **82%**

## **'I understand the Oxford application process'**

- Pre-conference: **22%**
- Post-conference: **86%**

## **'I feel confident about taking an Oxford entrance exam'**

- Pre-conference: **16%**
- Post-conference: **49%**

**'I feel confident about the Oxford interviews'**

- Pre-conference: **19%**
- Post-conference: **60%**

**'I have a good idea of what courses I would like to apply for'**

- Pre-conference: **76%**
- Post-conference: **83%**

**'I feel confident about living out at university'**

- Pre-conference: **57%**
- Post-conference: **63%**

**'I have a good understanding of the financial support available to Oxford students and how to apply for it (e.g. bursaries and scholarships)'**

- Pre-conference: **18%**
- Post-conference: **85%**

**'I understand the Oxford college system'**

- Pre-conference: **17%**
- Post-conference: **91%**

**'I have a good idea of the societies and extra-curricular activities available at Oxford'**

- Pre-conference: **22%**
- Post-conference: **86%**

Students were also asked to indicate how far they agreed with a set of statements relating to common misconceptions about Oxford and university life. The same rating system was used and the percentage of students who indicated 'Somewhat Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' are as follows:

**'It is impossible for me to get accepted by Oxford'**

- Pre-Conference: **29%**
- Post-Conference: **5%**

**'You have to be rich to go to Oxford'**

- Pre-conference: **28%**
- Post-conference: **3%**

**'The workload is very difficult to manage'**

- Pre-conference: **62%**
- Post-conference: **32%**

**'Oxford Interviewers ask impossibly hard questions and only accept applicants who know all the answers to those questions.'**

- Pre-conference: **23%**
- Post-conference: **3%**

**'Oxford is white.'**

- Pre-conference: **43%**
- Post-conference: **12%**

**'Students at Oxford all come from private schools.'**

- Pre-conference: **28%**
- Post-conference: **4%**



Despite the sample size being much smaller for the post-conference survey, the big shift in answers by the end of the conference suggests the conference achieved its targets, especially in demystifying the Oxbridge application process and addressing the unique cultural and faith barriers often faced by students from Muslim backgrounds.

Throughout the conference we saw a lot of engagement from participants as they asked questions to our panelists and volunteers, many of whom related to misconceptions that they had beforehand. These primarily focused on the application process, including entrance exams and interviews as well as fitting in as a minority. We are glad that there was a positive shift in answers post-conference, and believe future conferences will continue to provide more opportunities to achieve this target with the next generation of students.



# QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK

We gave the attendees an opportunity to express their thoughts on the conference:

"It was **really entertaining! Myth-busted a lot.** I did enjoy hearing both students talk about the subject. It was a very cool idea."

"It really helped me **understand what the interview/tutorials could be like** and how to engage with prompts."

"All the volunteers were **very helpful, informative and friendly.**"

"It gave a **good insight** into how taking the subject would be like in university and was **helpful** in introducing it to you."

"Really **inspiring.**"

# **FUTURE PLANS: OMAC 2023 & WIDER ACCESS SCHEMES**

Plans for **OMAC 2023** are already underway and following a series of meetings with the OMAC team and student volunteers, alongside a detailed analysis of our student feedback, we are planning the following for next year:

## **Speakers:**

We plan to invite Marrium Khan and Sheikh Ibrahim Amin to speak again at OMAC 2023, as they were well received by participants. We hope to have Sheikh Ibrahim in person at OMAC next year as there were some audio difficulties this year.

## **Alumni Panel:**

The alumni panel was well balanced and reflected a range of experiences and backgrounds. We captured a diverse array of careers in our panel, including some STEM representation and Humanities representation. We hope to have a similar range of subjects and careers next year.

## **Subject Workshops:**

The subject workshops started off by a brief description of the course and what it looks like as well as its entry requirements. It then moved onto a tutorial-like workshop where students went through a problem or task. All students were also given a printed copy of their chosen subject guide. We are currently in the process of creating entrance exam guides which we hope to incorporate in next years subject workshops as well.

## **Breakout Sessions:**

Due to last years positive feedback, the breakout session time was extended. Whilst it also received a lot of positive feedback this year, we found that in-person, it could have been shortened slightly.

## **Beyond OMAC:**

Following the success of OMAC, our aims include targeting access efforts towards often underserved regions in the North of England, working with schools to educate students on the Oxford application process while addressing misconceptions surrounding the university and its application process. In addition to school visits, we hope to hold an Offer-Holders Day for the incoming student cohort to allow students to familiarise themselves with the Muslim community at Oxford whilst simultaneously providing the opportunity for hesitant students to have their doubts addressed.

**WITH THANKS TO**

**AZIZ FOUNDATION**

BUILDING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

**cosaraf**

CHARITABLE FOUNDATION



**CONTACT US**

If you have any questions about OMAC, OUISoc's wider outreach work, or would like to support us, please email [ouisoc.outreach@gmail.com](mailto:ouisoc.outreach@gmail.com).

