

# Oxbridge Pathways



Croydon High School

*for girls aged 3-18yrs*

[www.croydonhigh.gdst.net](http://www.croydonhigh.gdst.net)

**GDST**  
GIRLS' DAY SCHOOL TRUST



## WHY OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE?

Oxford and Cambridge are world-class institutions associated with pioneering research by the greatest names in many fields, outstanding academic achievements and a distinctive college-based environment in which to live and study. Ranked consistently in the top 10 of world university leagues tables, they are institutions that inspire applications from students from all over the world, seeking to benefit from being taught in small groups (often by leading academics engaged in cutting-edge discoveries through their on-going research).

The pace of learning is brisk, and learning (with university-provided lectures supported by small, regular face-to-face discussions organised by Colleges) is both challenging and stimulating. An emphasis is placed on the opinions and ideas of undergraduates, conducted in a supportive environment, in contrast to other top UK universities who may teach primarily via group seminars and lectures. Career prospects are bright for Oxbridge graduates, with earnings to match.

***While Oxbridge may not suit everyone, it is more accessible than many students imagine. Although the admissions process is competitive, often the hardest step on the journey is visualising being part of these communities – and believing that entry is possible.***

While by no means the pinnacle of academic ambition, given the excellent range of other UK and global institutions, we will encourage and support our top students in facing the challenge of testing themselves against the best in attempting to gain entry to one of these wonderful universities.

## NURTURING AMBITION

During Years 7-11, students will be exposed to visiting guest speakers, including academic staff from Oxford and Cambridge and members of our Ivy Link network of former pupils, to inform and inspire on the distinctive features and merits of study at Oxford and Cambridge.

We also organise annual school visits for Year 10 students to Oxford or Cambridge, to sample the atmosphere, tour facilities and meet up with former Croydon High students, currently studying as undergraduates.

Academic enrichment is offered via the Consilium Scholars Programme offered specifically to girls in Year 11 and the Sixth Form.

Consilium follows on from the Sapientia Programme. It is designed for girls in Years 7-10 and ensures that the older girls receive the very best practical preparation and inspiration for the next stage of their educational journey.

It is not an Oxbridge programme per se, but all of our likely Oxbridge applicants will be involved in this programme which stimulates and develops their intellectual curiosity and ambition.

Students are also involved in debating and MUN events, to help them to form and express opinions, and to develop confidence and mental dexterity.

***Finally, careful advice is offered to Y11 students on A-level subject choices and combinations taking into consideration Oxbridge or other top university ambitions.***

## THE OXBRIDGE PATHWAY

The first term is spent exploring interest and ambitions, in terms of possible courses and requirements, and includes organised visits to Oxford or Cambridge to meet senior academic staff to firm resolve and demystify the reality of Oxbridge academic life.

***Our specific Oxbridge programme runs on a calendar-year cycle from January onwards for Lower Sixth students, and is overseen by a dedicated Oxbridge Co-ordinator.***

The summer term is spent narrowing the focus in terms of course, institution and potential Colleges. Once a clear focus has been identified, a subject-specific mentor will be appointed to support drafting of personal statements, and guide candidates on summer reading and study.

Aspiring applicants are encouraged strongly to attend the Open Days offered by both Oxford and Cambridge in early July, and will have an opportunity to enrol in the weekend-long GDST Oxbridge Conference held shortly afterwards. This offers a range of talks and subject-specific activities designed to focus and guide students, and to put them in touch with their GDST subject peers.

The autumn term campaign begins with an overview of the process ahead, then moves on to the completion of personal statement drafts and submission of applications. Over the term, candidates will receive specific subject preparation sessions, run by their subject mentor, support to familiarise them with any required pre-admission tests and assessments (long in place for Oxford but increasingly common also now for Cambridge applicants) and finally interview preparation.

Any required pre-assessment tests are usually held in school, as we are a test centre, at the end of October during half-term. Over the second half of term, candidates will go through several rounds of mock interviews, both in school (from staff, alumnae and invited experts from specific fields) and at local partner schools, to help them to sharpen their focus and confidence.

***Students will normally hear in late November if they have been called for interview, and will go up in the first two weeks of December (on pre-determined schedules according to subject).***

***The application process concludes with results announcements in early January, after which the holders of offers will need to deliver on their required grades (with confirmation of acceptance only coming in August along with A level results).***





In parallel to our own programme, the GDST runs a complementary process of information and support to Oxbridge students.

The On Track newsletter provides insights, updates and perspectives that help students with their application and pre-test preparation and advertises a timetable for live dial-in events and subject-specific presentations.



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