



Getting into Top  
UK universities  
*How to gain a  
competitive edge*



# Our credentials

## The Times A-level league table 2018:

- **Number 1 in England for A\*/A**
  - 83.5% (UK average 26.4%)
- **Number 1 in UK for A\* grades**
  - 58.2% (UK average 8.0%)

### A levels only

	% A* grades	% A*, A grades
Cardiff Sixth Form Coll, Cardiff	54.2	88.4
Oxford International Coll, Oxfordshire	58.2	83.5
Guildford HS for G, Surrey	43.4	82.8
James Allen's G' Sch, London Area	40.8	82.4
Magdalen Coll Sch, Oxfordshire	42.4	82.2
Queen Ethelburga's Coll, Yorkshire Area North	33.3	82.2
Westminster Sch, London Area	47.2	82.2
Brighton Coll, Sussex (East)	39.1	82.1
The Perse Sch, Cambridgeshire	43	81.5
Concord Coll, Shropshire	35.9	80.8



# University offers 2018

- **100% success rate for Engineering at Cambridge**
- 100% success rate for all Medical and Dental applicants (including Hong Kong)
- **100% success rate for Imperial College London**
- **100%** success rate for all Economics applicants, including Cambridge and LSE
- **100% success rate for competitive courses, such as Global Business, at Universities in Hong Kong**
- **100%** success to Russell Group universities for all other courses.
- **50% success rate for Medicine at Cambridge**



# University offers for 2018 include:

- **University Of Cambridge:**
  - Medicine, Economics, Engineering
- **University College London:**
  - Medicine, Biomedical Sciences
- **Imperial College London:**
  - Medicine, Engineering, Biomedical Sciences
- **London School of Economics:**
  - Economics, Actuarial Science
- **University of Durham:**
  - Physics
- **Chinese University of Hong Kong:**
  - Global Business
- **Hong Kong University:**
  - Medicine (with scholarship), Dentistry



# Chief Education Officer

## *Ms Yasmin Sarwar*

- Founder of the UK's Number 1 ranked school for A-level results for 9 consecutive years (2010 –2018)
- Science Tutor of the Year 2011
- Welsh Woman of the year 2015
- Interview Panellist for 2 Top UK Medical Schools
- Claes Nobel Educator of Distinction 2015
- TEDx Speaker 2016
- Over 150 students to Oxbridge, LSE & Imperial
- Over 250 students to Medical School
- 100% of students received offers from Russel Group universities over 10 years





**Angela**

University of  
Cambridge –  
Medicine



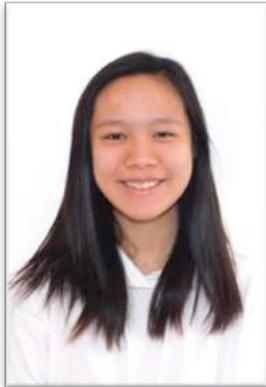
**Jimmy**

University of  
Cambridge –  
Engineering



**Avinash**

University of  
Cambridge -  
Economics



**Karen**

University of  
Cambridge –  
Engineering



**Shazril**

University of  
Cambridge –  
Engineering



**Kyra**

University  
College  
London –  
Medicine

# **Class of 2018**

## **University destinations highlights**

Y OF  
DGE



## Why aim for a top UK university?

- Environment of excellence (lecturers/researchers/fellow students)
- Build excellent global personal network
- Contribute to solving real-world problems
- Excellent teaching, academic rigour, student-led research, best equipment
- A degree from an ‘average’ university is of little value these days (“anyone can get a degree”)

**Reaching a top university will greatly contribute to your personal growth and professional prospects**

# Highest and lowest entry requirements

Grade	A-level points
A*	56
A	48
B	40
C	32
D	24
E	16

Rank	University Name	Entry Standards
1st	Cambridge	226
2nd	Oxford	217
3rd	London School of Economics	200
4th	Imperial College London	219
5th	St Andrews	206
6th	Durham	197

Equivalent to 4.04 A\*s

93rd	London South Bank	108
113th	Northampton	107
116th	Anglia Ruskin	105
131st	London Metropolitan	101
127th	Wrexham Glyndwr	101
108th	Leeds Trinity	100
118th	Bedfordshire	95
125th	Birkbeck, University of London	94

Equivalent to 1.68 A\*s

# Competition is high

## 2017 entry cycle

### Oxford:



19,144 applications\*  
3,261 accepted (17.0%)



### Cambridge:



16,750 applications\*  
3,457 accepted (20.6%)



\* Only A\*/A students are put forward by schools to apply

**Acceptance rates vary for different subjects**

Y OF  
DGE



# What you need to enter a top university

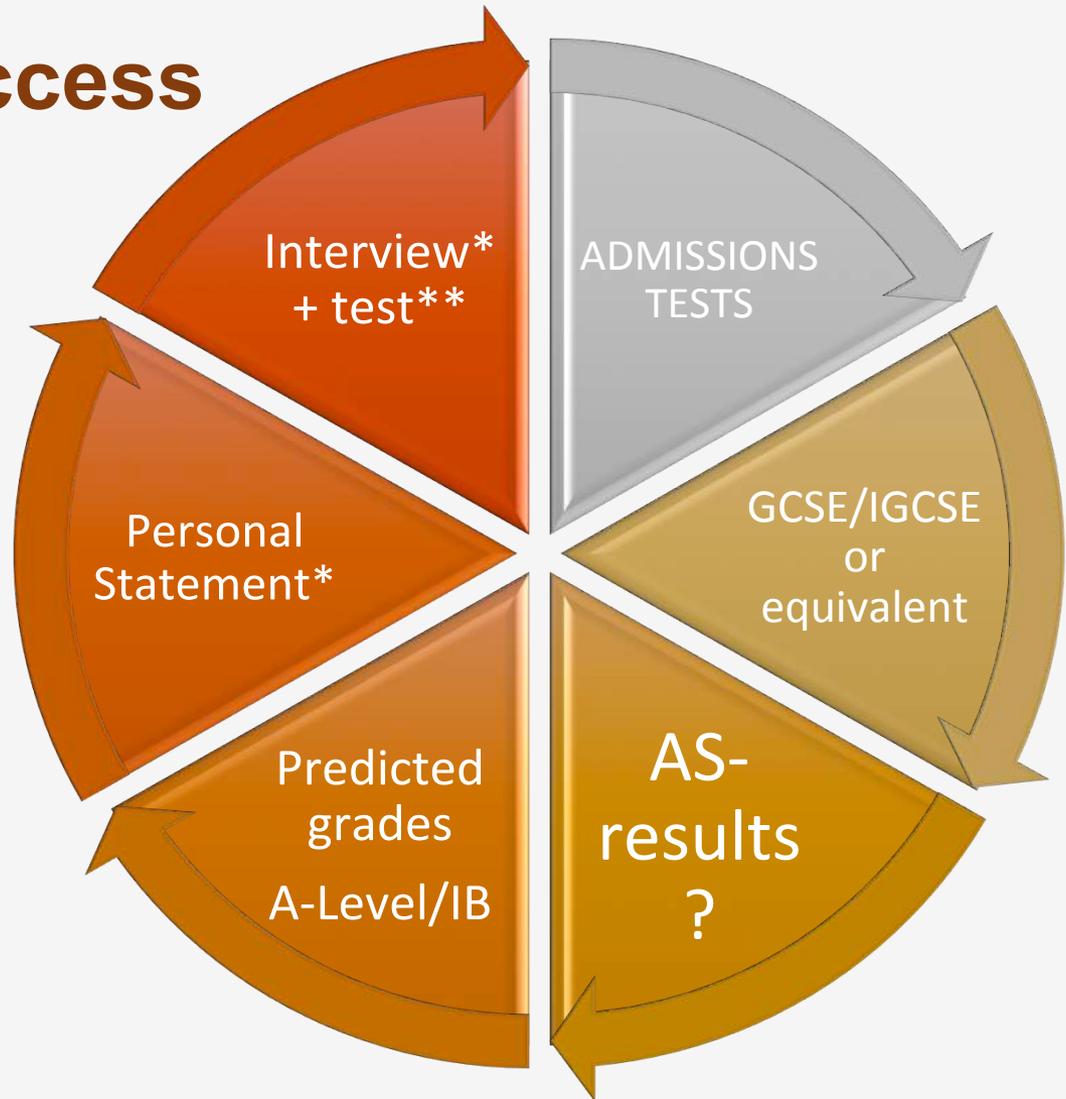
1. Excellent academic results in the right subjects - GCSE, AS (if taken), predicted A-Level grades
2. Admissions tests results (each year more and more universities are relying on admissions tests)
3. Interviews
4. Commitment to your subject, knowledge beyond your A-Level syllabus, right aptitude for your course

# Elements of success

\*Passion-based evidence /  
Personal qualities

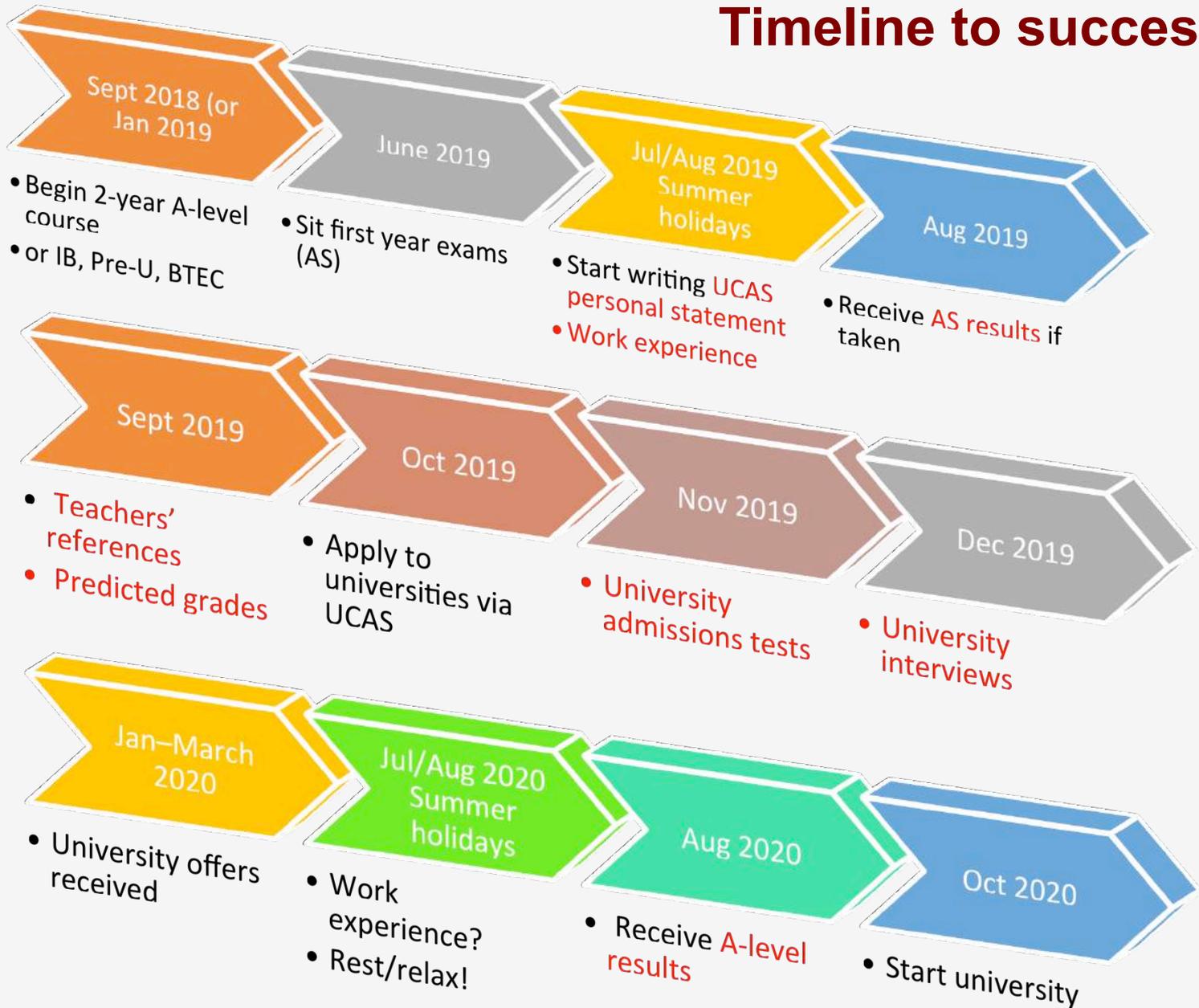
\*\* Academic / career-specific  
knowledge

Universities such as **Oxford and Cambridge**, and **all Healthcare courses** require you to attend an interview



**Different universities use this information in different ways – you must do your research carefully**

# Timeline to success



# Critical Path to Success

## 1. University Admissions Tests

November 2019

## 2. University Interviews

December 2019

## 3. Pre-offer metrics

- IGCSE/O-Level results
- AS results (if sat)
- Predicted A-level grades
- Teachers references

October 2019

## 4. A-level results

- A\*A\*A
- A\*AA
- AAA
- EPQ?

August 2020

# Why University Admissions Tests are becoming increasingly important

- They test more than just knowledge and memory (thinking skills)
- **Good GCSE results do not guarantee good A-Levels**
- Standalone AS (if sat) are less reliable (grade boundaries are calculated based mainly on results of the students wishing to drop the subject)
- **Predicted grades and teacher references are subjective**
- Personal statement is not always entirely students' own work and depends on level of support from school/parents

**Admissions tests are the only recent and unbiased indication of a student's academic potential. They are also used by many overseas universities**

# Admissions tests – Examples

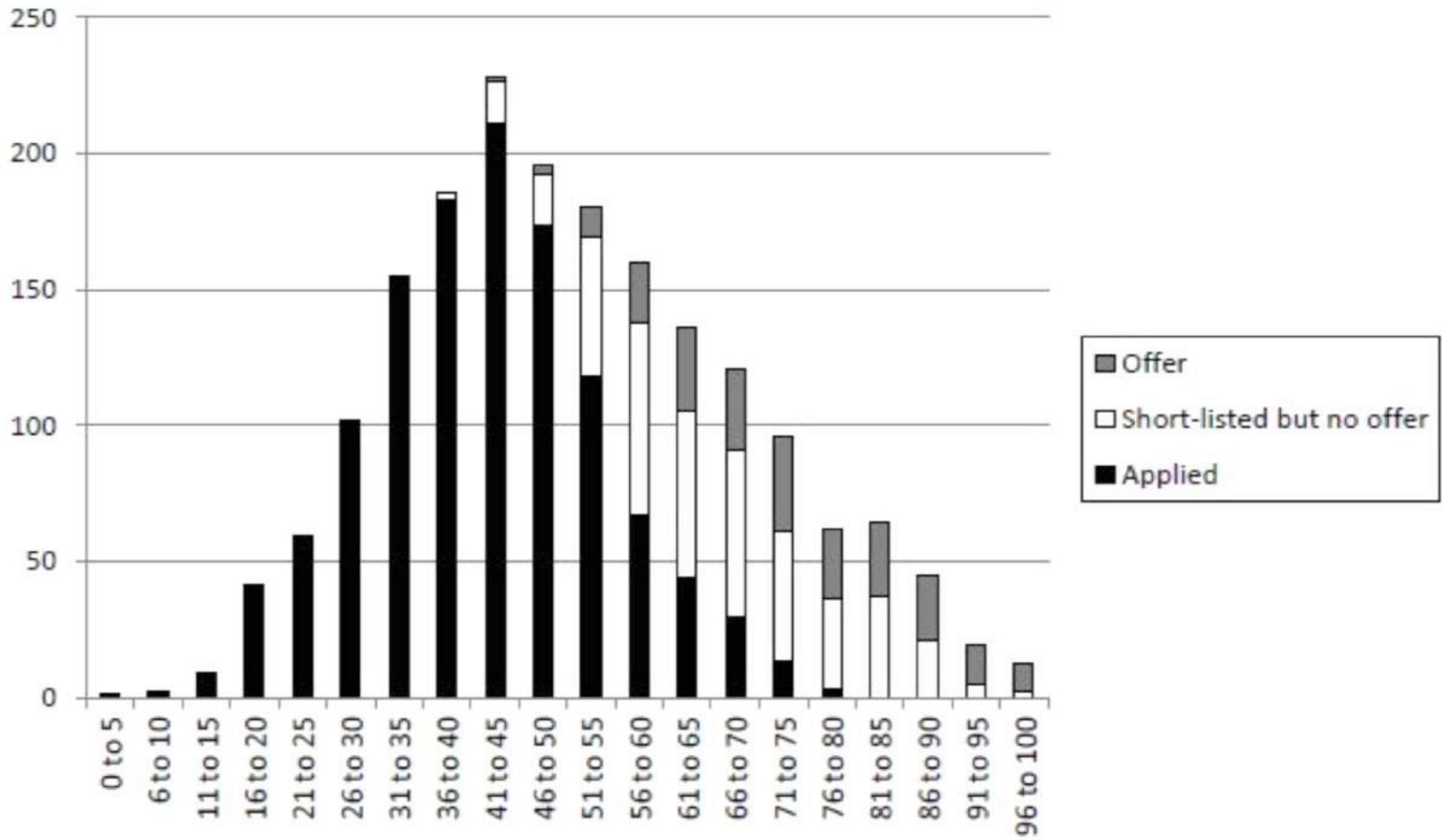
- TSA (Thinking Skills Assessment)
- LNAT (Law National Aptitude Test)
- NSAA (Natural Sciences Admissions Assessment)
- ENGAA (Engineering Admissions Assessment)
- ECAA (Economics Admissions Test)
- MAT (Maths Aptitude Test)
- STEP (Sixth Term Examination Paper)
- BMAT (Biomedical Admissions Test)
- UKCAT (UK Clinical Aptitude Test)
- CLT (Cambridge Law Test)



**The list is not exhaustive.**

**Many students will sit for more than one admissions test**

Outcome by MAT score (Mathematics, Mathematics & Philosophy, Mathematics & Statistics)



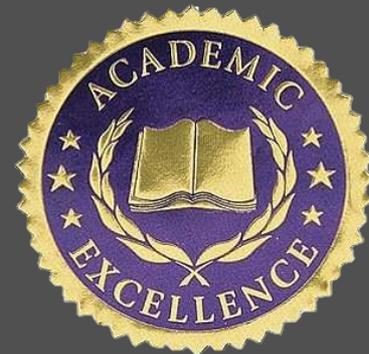
Medical School  
What you need  
to demonstrate

MEDICAL-SCHOOL



# Academic Record

- Demonstrate record of consistently high academic performance at GCSE, O–Level/AS-Level + predicted grades
- Choose the right A-Level subjects. Most students take Mathematics, Chemistry, Biology plus one other core academic subject (Physics, Economics, Psychology, English etc.)
- Further Mathematics and Native language will not be considered and can be taken only as a 5<sup>th</sup> subject
- Do not be fooled by “minimum academic requirements”. These are just eligibility criteria, not entry requirements



# The UKCAT test

- **Clinical Aptitude Test**
  - **5 part on-screen test taken at an external centre**
  - **TAKEN BEFORE APPLICATION (so evaluated by med school before making an offer)**
- 
- **Verbal reasoning** - assesses ability to critically evaluate information that is presented in a written form.
  - **Quantitative reasoning** - assesses ability to critically evaluate information presented in a numerical form.
  - **Abstract reasoning** - assesses the use of convergent and divergent thinking to infer relationships from information.
  - **Decision analysis** - assesses the ability to make sound decisions and judgements using complex information.
  - **Situational judgement** - measures capacity to understand real world situations and to identify critical factors and appropriate behaviour in dealing with them.



# The BMAT test



- **Biomedical Aptitude Test**
- **3 section, 2 Hour Pen and Paper test**
- **TAKEN BEFORE OR AFTER APPLICATION**
  
- **Aptitude and Skills:** Tests generic skills in problem-solving, understanding arguments, data analysis and inference; 35 questions, multiple choice or short answer; 60 minutes
- **Scientific Knowledge and Applications:** Tests the ability to apply scientific knowledge from school science and mathematics (up to and including the National Curriculum for England Key Stage 4); 27 questions, multiple choice or short answer; 30 mins
- **Writing Task:** Essay testing the ability to select, develop and organise ideas, and to communicate them in writing, concisely and effectively. Choice of one of 4 titles, 30 minutes.

Not all medical school look at the essay section – but this can vary

## Is it possible to revise/prepare/?

- Revise? No, as no additional knowledge required beyond A-level
- Prepare? YES!
- These test are more skills based than knowledge based.
- Like any skills, they can be improved with practice
- They have a critical thinking components, which can improve rapidly with practice
- Essay section requires you to demonstrate understanding and express yourself in a clear structured manner
- Do not expect to be able to 'cram' for these tests; you need time to develop these skills.
- Ideally start preparation at the start of A-levels



# Interviews

## Universities want to:

- Check the information on your UCAS form
- See if you have realistic expectations and a genuine interest in the subject
- Assess whether you can successfully complete the course
- Allow you to ask questions
- Assess which applicants are best matched to the course – which students will benefit and contribute most

## You are NOT expected to:

- Be able to talk about complex research in detail
- Know exactly what area of Medicine you want to specialise in



# Types of interview

- **Multiple Mini Interviews (MMI)**
  - e.g. Aberdeen, Dundee, St Andrews
  - Question Types
    - General “Interview” Questions
    - Interactive Stations
    - Roleplay Scenarios
    - Ethical Scenarios
  
- **Panel Interviews**
  - e.g. Glasgow
  - Question Types
    - General ‘Interview’ Questions
    - Ethical Scenarios



# How to approach different types of interview questions

- **'Standard' Interview Questions**

- Prepare for most of the 'standard' interview questions.
- Take some time to think about what *really* got you to apply to medicine.
- Preparation is crucial. Over-preparation is **not good** - you will sound rehearsed

- **Work Experience Questions**

- Quality over quantity.
- What you *learned*, not what you've done.

- **Medical Ethics questions**

Appreciate the complexities. Read some of the literature around. Selectors want to see your thinking process, not hear the right answer – so answer the question, and explain your opinions

- Euthanasia
- Abortion Law
- Contraceptive Pill
- Treating Minors
- Jehovah's Witnesses
- Patient Confidentiality

Beauchamp & Childress' (B&C) Four Principles

Non-Maleficence

Beneficence

Patient Autonomy

Justice

# How to approach role play scenarios

## Test of communication

- 'Counselling' / 'Breaking bad news' role play
- Interactive station

## Key communication skills

- Listening
- Empathetic
- Build rapport
- Deal with criticism well





- Get a taste of the 'Oxford Experience'
- Live for 2 or 4 weeks in an Oxford University College
- Explore new academic subjects or re-affirm your career goals
- Visit 10 top UK universities and meet admissions tutors
- Get a head start on your university application (interview preparation, personal statement, admissions tests)
- Make friends and have a great time in Oxford and UK!

Would you enjoy a month living as an Oxford University student?

Oxford Summer Academy

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

For students ages 15-19