Linguistics Admissions Feedback Information for Applicants – 2025

Linguistics is available as part of two Joint Degree courses: (i) **Modern Languages & Linguistics (MLL)** and (ii) **Psychology, Philosophy & Linguistics (PPL)**. The information provided in this summary Admissions report is specific to the Linguistics part of these Joint Degree courses. For further Admissions feedback information on the respective Joint Schools, please consult the summary Admissions reports for Modern Languages and Experimental Psychology (EP)/PPL.

1. Admissions Statistics

This year, 92 candidates applied for Linguistics in combination with a Modern Language (French, (Beginners') German, Spanish, (Beginners') Italian, Beginners' Portuguese, Russian, or Beginners' Modern Greek), a decrease of 17% on the number of applicants in the 2024 Admissions round (111). French and Spanish were the most popular languages combined with Linguistics (French: 33; Spanish: 32; (Beginners') German: 20; (Beginners') Italian: 9).

Within PPL, 117 candidates applied for a combination with Linguistics (Psychology & Linguistics: 94; Philosophy & Linguistics: 23), a decrease of 10% on the overall number of Linguistics applicants in the 2024 Admissions round (Psychology & Linguistics: 104; Philosophy & Linguistics: 26).

1.1 Modern Languages & Linguistics:

Total number of applications: 92 (Home: 73; Overseas: 19)
Candidates who withdrew or were not invited for interview: 3
Candidates interviewed: 89 (Home: 72; Overseas: 17)
Places offered for 2026: 37 (Home: 32; Overseas: 5)
Places offered for 2027: 0
Ratio of applications to offers: 2.49 applications per offer

1.2 Psychology/Philosophy & Linguistics

Total number of applications: 117 (Home: 58; Overseas: 59)
Candidates who withdrew or were not invited for interview: 71
Candidates interviewed: 46 (Home: 22; Overseas: 24)
Places offered for 2026: 20 (Home: 11; Overseas: 9)
Places offered for 2027: 1 (Home)
Ratio of applications to offers: 5.57 applications per offer

2. Shortlisting Procedure

2.1 Selection Criteria

Successful candidates for admission to all undergraduate courses in linguistics will possess the following qualities:

Essential
- interest in the study of Linguistics;
- aptitude and potential for the study of Linguistics;

• intellectual curiosity and critical engagement;
• motivation, commitment and the capacity for sustained study;
• communication skills: willingness and ability to express ideas clearly and effectively both in writing and orally; ability to listen and to give considered responses.

Desirable
• knowledge of, or experience of using, a language other than English.

2.2 Procedure for Shortlisting

2.2.1 Modern Languages & Linguistics

Candidates for MLL will normally be invited to interview unless they display one or more of the following shortcomings:

• results attained in official examinations, especially GCSE, are not at a sufficiently high level;
• results predicted for A-level or other impending official examinations suggest that the candidate is unlikely to succeed in meeting the conditional offer;
• the UCAS reference contains clear negative aspects relevant to the general Admissions criteria;
• the candidate does not meet the criteria for shortlisting for the language applied for.

It is possible for candidates proposed for deselection to be 'rescued' and invited to interview, either at another college or for a different course at their first-choice college. Candidates can also be reallocated from their first-choice college. Reallocation takes place from colleges with a candidate-to-place ratio that is higher than the cross-college average to colleges that have a lower-than-average ratio. It has the purpose of giving all deserving candidates the chance of interview. In the 2025 Admissions cycle, 8 MLL candidates were reallocated.

For information about the use of contextual data in the Admissions process, please see the University's webpage.

2.2.2 Psychology/Philosophy & Linguistics

The Department of Experimental Psychology provides shortlisting recommendations for all EP and PPL candidates, aiming to shortlist approximately three applicants per place offered. Shortlisting decisions are based on results attained in official examinations, results predicted for A-level or equivalent qualifications, the UCAS reference, performance on the pre-interview Admissions test, and other relevant information (e.g., mitigating circumstances). The Departmental shortlisting recommendations are reviewed by the candidates' first-choice colleges, which can flag any special cases to the Department. All special cases are considered by a special cases panel, constituted by the Psychology, Philosophy, and Linguistics Admissions Coordinators. Once shortlisting decisions are made, a centralised reallocation process ensures that a consistent number of candidates per place are interviewed at each college.

For information about the use of contextual data in the Admissions process, please see the University's webpage.

2.3 Interview Process

The aim of the Linguistics Admissions interview is to evaluate the applicant's potential for future development and ability to cope with the demands of the chosen course. Interviewers assess whether a candidate is able to follow and construct arguments, can analyse and interpret empirical evidence, and has a capacity for logical and creative thinking. Qualities that suggest a candidate's aptitude for the study of Linguistics include clarity of communication, coherence of argument, and the ability to take into account and respond to ideas put forward in discussion. Interviews are scored on a scale of either 10 (MLL) or 5 (PPL), with the following mark descriptors being used:

10 / 5	outstanding
9 / 4.5	excellent
8 / 4	very good
7 / 3.5	good
6 / 3	promising
5 / 2.5	competent
4 / 2	adequate
3 / 1.5	poor
2 / 1	weak
1 / 0.5	very weak.

All Linguistics interviews in the 2025 Admissions cycle were conducted online.

2.3.1 Modern Languages & Linguistics

In addition to their Linguistics interview, shortlisted MLL candidates receive at least one language interview from their first-choice college. All interview scores are shared among Modern Languages and Joint Schools Admissions tutors via the University's Admissions database (ADSS). There are well-established procedures in place to enable Admissions tutors to arrange additional interviews for the week following the first interview round so that promising candidates at risk of missing out on a place at their first-choice college can be considered at other colleges. All decisions to offer a place for MLL are confirmed at the Modern Languages Admissions Final Decisions meeting, which is attended by representatives of all admitting colleges together with the Joint Schools Admissions Coordinators (including the Linguistics Admissions Coordinator).

2.3.2 Psychology/Philosophy & Linguistics

All PPL candidates are interviewed at both their first-choice college and a centrally allocated second college and thus receive two independent interview scores. Following the interviews, College Lead Admissions tutors rank all candidates that they interviewed. All offer decisions for PPL candidates are finalised at the EP/PPL Admissions meeting, which is attended by representatives of all admitting colleges, together with the Psychology, Linguistics, and Philosophy Admissions Coordinators.

2.4 Pre-Interview Admissions Test

Linguistics does not have a subject-specific pre-interview Admissions test. In the 2025 Admissions round, applicants for MLL were expected to sit the Modern Languages Admissions Test (MLAT) in the language for which they were applying (if required for that language), and applicants for PPL were expected to sit the Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA). Further information on the MLAT and TSA is available in the Modern Languages and EP/PPL summary Admissions reports.