

Text 7

A student has sent a rejection letter to the University of Oxford following her interview for a place there.

Elly Nowell parodied the institution's own rejection letters, stating Magdalen College "did not quite meet the standard" of other universities.

Ms Nowell, 19, from Winchester, Hampshire, told the BBC the interview left her feeling like "the only atheist in a gigantic monastery".

A university spokesman said it received only a few complaints from applicants.

He added: "Of the 10,000 interviews that we conduct over the course of the admissions period it is a very low number."

Ms Nowell's letter began: "I have now considered your establishment as a place to read Law (Jurisprudence).

"I very much regret to inform you that I will be withdrawing my application.

"I realise you may be disappointed by this decision, but you were in competition with many fantastic universities and following your interview I am afraid you do not quite meet the standard of the universities I will be considering."

Should the university wish to "reapply", her letter continued, "while you may believe your decision to hold interviews in grand formal settings is inspiring, it allows public school applicants to flourish... and intimidates state school applicants, distorting the academic potential of both".

She also criticised Magdalen College's "traditions and rituals", and the gap between "minorities and white middle class students".

However, the university said in a statement: "Of the seven UK students who received offers for law and joint school courses at Magdalen, only one was from an independent school."

Ms Nowell, who went to Brockenhurst College, said she applied to the university to keep her options open but now hopes to be accepted into University College London.

She said: "It was while I was at interview that I finally noticed that subjecting myself to the judgement of an institution which I fundamentally disagreed with was bizarre.

"I spent my entire time there laughing at how seriously everything was being taken."

But former Magdalen College student Gemma Pouncy said her state school background did not pose a problem when she applied at the university.

Ms Pouncy, who is 22 and from Somerset, added: "When I went to interview I felt that I was put at ease. I felt challenged but I expected to be challenged.

"Yes I felt in awe but it made me want to study there more.

Ms Nowell admitted that her email was not meant to be taken 100% seriously.