

Private school pupils turn to Ivy League instead of Oxbridge as up to a FIFTH head for top US colleges, figures show

More than 50 pupils from Eton went to leading US academic institutions last year

Public school pupils claim it is increasingly difficult to get a place at Oxbridge

Britain's top universities want to increase the number of state pupils attending

Up to one in five private school pupils are turning their backs on Oxbridge and heading to Ivy League universities, it has been revealed.

They are focusing on the US for degree study as top UK institutions come under increasing pressure to admit more state school students.

Eton College is sending around a fifth of its leavers – more than 50 pupils in total – to leading American institutions this year.

And other private schools are also focusing on the US amid fears their pupils may be overlooked as Oxford, Cambridge and other Russell Group universities broaden intakes.



Schools such as Eton, pictured, are sending greater numbers of their pupils to the United States for college after Oxbridge announced they want to increase the percentage of students from state school backgrounds



A large number of British graduates from top public schools are avoiding applying to Oxbridge and are instead sending applications into Ivy League colleges in the US such as Harvard, pictured

An Eton source told The Times: 'We are seeing increasing numbers looking seriously at the States, around 75 a year, and ultimately going, around 50 a year. (The) top destinations are Harvard, Stanford, Princeton, Yale, Columbia.'

'Some of our very top academics are looking to the States ahead of Oxbridge, some apply to both and an increasing number apply only to the US. Those who go to the US are typically attracted by the breadth of the study programmes and the international perspective, their top quality sports programmes and some of the boys on free places at Eton win fully funded places to the US.'

Lucy Elphinstone, headmistress of the independent Francis Holland School, north-west London, highlighted the 'increasing difficulty' of gaining places at Oxbridge, particularly from private schools.

She said: 'We have found US universities extremely welcoming to our students, and our success in recent years has led to increased numbers of applications.' She added that the 'reluctance' of some British universities to return to fully face-to-face lectures and seminars following Covid has 'deterred' many students from making UK applications.

Figures from the Sutton Trust social mobility charity, revealed by The Times, show it has helped more than 500 school-leavers from modest backgrounds to study in the US over the last ten years. Many have received generous scholarships. The charity runs a US programme in partnership with the Fulbright Commission, a London-based non-profit organisation.