

Interview Guidance Tips

Why do we ask you to interview?

Universities ask applicants to come for interview for different reasons. Firstly, interviews enable university admissions tutors to get more information about applicants in order to make a good decision on an application. For example, an interviewer may check information on the UCAS form, see whether the programme is a good match for an applicant's expectations and abilities, assess whether the applicant can successfully complete the course, and assess which applicants could contribute most to the university learning environment as a whole. Secondly, interviews are a good way for universities to make a good impression on applicants, by giving them information about the programme, facilities and environment the university can provide, and providing applicants with an opportunity to ask questions.

Who will interview you?

Usually, interviews will be conducted by one or more people who are also teaching staff (lecturers or tutors) on the programme that the applicant has applied for. These people are known as admissions tutors or admissions officers. They will have fulfilled the professional standards that apply in their discipline, and may also be active practitioners or researchers in their area of expertise. They will be familiar with the requirements of the programme. are well placed to understand what is required to complete a programme successfully. Admissions tutors can be any age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, and background.

What are interviewers looking for?

Interviewers will ask questions in order to gain information about specific selection criteria. Selection criteria are required qualifications, skills, characteristics, abilities or knowledge, which are relevant to successful completion of the programme.

Selection criteria will vary between different subjects and universities. Information on the criteria that apply to specific courses can be found in prospectuses and entry profiles (www.ucas.ac.uk).

However, some criteria are very common. These include:

- a Evidence of prior study in appropriate subjects, at certain levels and grades (e.g. maths at A2, grade B)
- b Interest, motivation and commitment to the subject
- c The ability to study independently.
- d The ability to work with others.
- e The ability to manage time effectively.
- f An interest in the University

Interviewers may not ask exactly the same questions to every applicant, but they will ask questions that relate to the same criteria. When preparing for an interview, it can be very useful to think about the criteria which apply to a programme and then think of different questions which could be asked to get information about these criteria. Then, think about ways in which you could answer the question, which best demonstrate how you meet the criteria.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW

1. Practicalities - preparation

- Review your UCAS form, the entry profile, the prospectus etc.
- Practice presenting yourself in a good light
- Practice speaking clearly and concisely
- Read relevant news articles
- Think about what questions might be asked
- Think about the questions that you would like to ask your interviewer

2. Practicalities – the day before

- Get everything that you will need ready: clothes, travel tickets, notes- don't forget your invitation letter and copy of your UCAS form!
- Check your travel route. Set a time when you have to leave by, and let relevant people know.
- Make sure you read through your invitation letter – check the details (time, location, contact numbers)
- Go to bed early and get a good night's sleep!

3. Practicalities – on the day

- Get there in plenty of time.
- Take a contact number so you can let the university know if you are delayed
- Take a bottle of water and a snack if it will be long day
- Ask for attention from staff if you need it
- Don't be shy about requesting to use the toilet etc.
- Don't feel you have to talk with other candidates, or be put off if they won't talk to you

4. In the interview

DO

- Greet your interviewer
- Listen carefully to what is said. Show you've understood.
- Ask for clarification if you don't understand anything.
- Speak clearly – as you would to a favourite teacher
- Smile, look at the interviewer, sit comfortably
- Ask questions and make notes of the answers
- Refer to your preparation notes if you need to
- Take the opportunity to give any other relevant information
- Thank your interviewer for their time

DO NOT

- Swear or use inappropriate language
- Make claims that you can't back up
- Act as if the outcome is already decided
- Pretend you are more expert than you really are
- Forget to switch off your mobile

- Employ casual or unfriendly body language

5. Tips on answering questions

- Listen really carefully to the question – answer the one you’ve been asked, not the one you wish you had!
- Take time to think about your answer.
- If you get tangled up, say so and start again.
- Be concise – don’t use big words or waffle just for the sake of it.
- Be specific
- If you don’t know what to say, brainstorm aloud.
- Be honest –don’t try to anticipate what answer you ought to give.

6. After the interview

- Make some notes shortly after the interview so you can remember what happened
- Reflect on what went well, and what could have gone better. Learn for the next one!
- Don’t feel pressured to share what happened with other people. The interview is between you and your interviewers.
- Relax – have something to eat and drink.
- Forget about this one – it’s over!

GOOD LUCK IN YOUR INTERVIEWS