

Preparing for your University Interview

Once you've completed and submitted your UCAS application you may be invited to attend an interview at your chosen university before potentially receiving an offer. For some courses, like Primary Teaching, Nursing or those taught at Art Schools, all applicants must attend an interview. Don't panic! Follow our advice below to prepare for your interview.

What are they looking for?

- Are you really interested in the course and passionate about the subject area?
- Can you think independently and are you willing to work with new ideas?
- Do you have the potential to do well?
- Are you a well-rounded student with a balance between your academic studies and outside interests?

Preparation Checklist

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| <p>Find out what form the interview will take</p> <p><i>Will you face an interview panel, be asked to undertake group work with other applicants or have to present a folio of work for example? Knowing what to expect allows you to prepare accordingly.</i></p> | |
| <p>Read the prospectus!</p> <p><i>The more you know about the university and the course you have applied for the better as this will show you're committed to studying that course at that university.</i></p> | |
| <p>Have a mock interview</p> <p><i>Ask a teacher, a Careers Adviser or a member of the ASPIRENorth team to go through some questions with you. This will help you plan answers to questions that you might get asked and make you feel more confident in an interview setting.</i></p> | |
| <p>Know your UCAS application inside out</p> <p><i>It is likely that the interviewer will use your UCAS application as a basis for questions. Remind yourself what you wrote in your Personal Statement about your school responsibilities, extra-curricular activities and why you want to go to university, as these are key areas for discussion.</i></p> | |
| <p>Read over your Higher/Advanced Higher subject notes</p> <p><i>You might be asked why you took a particular subject or what parts of the course you most enjoyed.</i></p> | |
| <p>Read the newspapers or watch the news</p> <p><i>You may be asked your opinion on current affairs or if you've kept up-to-date with recent developments in your area of study.</i></p> | |
| <p>Plan your journey</p> <p><i>Organise your travel arrangements in advance and ensure you will be arriving in plenty of time. If you need to navigate a new city, look into bus times and numbers and walking routes. Print off any interview details sent to you and take this with you, along with a campus map so you know which building you are heading for.</i></p> | |
| <p>Get a good night's sleep!</p> | |

On the day

- Dress smartly but comfortably. Don't feel like you have to go out and buy a suit, but smart trousers & shirt or blouse give a much better impression than casual clothes

TOP TIP - If you don't think you have anything suitable to wear then it is perfectly acceptable to attend in your school uniform.

- Arrive early and phone the institution if you have any problems.
- Be aware of your body language – sit upright, cross your ankles, look them in the eye and smile!
- Be enthusiastic about the course. Hopefully you are attending the interview because you have seen a course that really appeals to you; show that enthusiasm.
- Be yourself.
- Don't panic if you are faced with a difficult question. Be honest and let them know if you haven't covered a topic they ask you about.

TOP TIP - Don't be afraid to ask the interviewer to explain or clarify if you don't understand a question – remember they are not trying to make you look stupid!

- Be prepared to say something if they surprise you with a test or ask you to read something or explain a particular passage. Make use of what you do know – compare it to something you have heard or read about and explain this.
- Ask questions. It will help you to seem enthusiastic and it is your opportunity to find out about the things the prospectus doesn't tell you.

TOP TIP - Questions you might ask could include: do I have flexibility in my timetable to take other courses in the first couple of years? Are there links with industry? How much time will I spend on placement? How many tutorials and lectures make up a typical week on this course?

After the interview

- Consider your opinions of the university. Remember this is going to be a place where you study for three, four or even five years of your life so this is as much an opportunity for you to check it out and ensure it is for you as it is for them to interview you.
- Think about what went well and what you could have done better. This will come in handy for future interviews.

TOP TIP - Make a note of the questions you were asked and the answers you gave, if you can remember, as this will help you prepare for the next time you have an interview.

- Don't worry if you found it hard – some interviews are designed to stretch candidates.
- Make the most of being at the university – talk to students if you can, have a look round the campus and the city.