

University interviews

What's involved?

Many universities arrange interviews as part of their selection process. You'll receive an invitation for interview either in UCAS Track or by letter from the university. The key to a successful interview is to prepare well. If you receive an invite for an interview, it is because an admissions tutor is impressed with your application and you have made a good start to securing a place. Remember, they want you to do your best so try to keep this in mind and don't let it overwhelm you.

Interviews can last from 15 minutes to an hour and very often, but not always, carried out by one interviewer. They can vary from subject to subject for example, for Maths or a science subject you may be asked to solve a problem or demonstrate your understanding of a topic. For other courses, your portfolio will play a part and will be reviewed and discussed.

You may be asked about something unexpected and for which you can't prepare. This is to see how you react and to assess how good you are at thinking on your feet.

You may have to complete an essay, test, presentation or take part in a group discussion as part of the selection for the course. Find out beforehand what is involved, so that you can prepare. Ask if there are sample tests available. Always take paper copies of your presentation as backup in case of any technical problems on the day. Whatever the situation, try to be yourself and keep an open mind.

What do I need to prepare?

Research the course – read about it on the university website or their prospectus. The more you know about the course and the university the more enthusiastic and well informed you'll appear. If an interview is part of the entrance requirements further details will be available on their website.

Think about your reasons for applying for that course, at that university. List your skills, personal qualities, previous employment and relevant experience and future career aims. Think how you want to present them at the interview and try to link them to the skills and experience required for the course.

Read your UCAS application, particularly the personal statement. The content of your statement will form part of the interview and be ready to say more about what you've said in it. Be aware of any issues related to your subject and in general read up on current affairs. Interviewers may ask your views about topics of the day.

Arrange a mock interview with a teacher or careers adviser to practise your answers.

Interview tips

- Dress appropriately – your school uniform or smart clothes which show you are treating the interview seriously.
- Speak clearly, sit up and be alert. Make eye contact with the interviewer, look and sound interested. It's all about making a positive impression on the interviewer.
- Prepare some questions to ask, not covered by the prospectus or website. This demonstrates your

interest in the course and university.

- Check out the location of the interview in advance – check maps and directions from their website.

What will I be asked?

- Why you want to take a degree?
- Why this particular course and what aspects of it interest you most?
- Why do you want to study at this university?
- Why you would be a good student on the course?
- How you will manage your time, fitting in study around everything else in your life?
- What are your short-term and long-term goals?
- How you think you will adapt to the difference between school and university?

If your interview is for a vocational course such as medicine, vet medicine, nursing, architecture, law, teacher training or social work you'll likely need:

- evidence of relevant work experience, or to take part in visits or work shadowing to find out about the career in-depth. These help you decide if a career is this really for you
- knowledge of the subject to show you're aware of issues of the day, such as government policy, current developments and news, skill shortages and new legislation.

Be prepared to talk about yourself – your interests, the courses or work you are doing now. For example, what you enjoy most about the subjects/course you're currently studying.

Should I take anything to the interview?

For some courses such as art and design, the university will usually ask for a portfolio of your work. They will give you detailed advice on the required content of the portfolio. If you have interesting and relevant evidence such as reports from your work experience or previous coursework take it with you to the interview.

After the interview

Shortly after the interview make some notes of the questions you were asked and your answers. Reflect on what you answered well and what could be improved. Carry out further research on questions you found difficult to answer. This will help if you have other interviews to attend.

UCAS Track will inform you of the outcome of the interview. This may result in a conditional offer, which is dependent on your exam results.

Further help

Use the UCAS website for further help about attending a university interview.

UCAS – [Attending Interviews/Auditions](#)

