

College interviews

The word 'interview' can strike fear into the most experienced of people, but do not be afraid! An interview is not an interrogation, nor is it designed to trip you up on your quest to attend college.

Think of it as a chance to show yourself in the best light and to ask more detailed questions about the college and the course. In turn, the interviewer uses it as an opportunity to find out more about you, why you want to do the course and how suitable you are.

Preparing yourself

Making sure that you're prepared will help to overcome any nerves you have and can help to make you feel more confident. Also, it won't go unnoticed by the interviewer and they will appreciate the effort.

- Double check the date and time of your interview and plan a route to get you there in plenty of time.
- Check what documents you need to take with you, for example identification, exam certificates or a portfolio of work.
- Read through your application form and personal statement so that the information is fresh in your mind.
- Have a look at the college prospectus and website.
- Think about what questions you may be asked (see below) and prepare some answers.
- Think about any questions that you want to ask and make a note of them.
- Decide what you are going to wear - smart, clean and tidy is the way to go.
- If you are unsure of anything, phone the college beforehand.

What happens in the interview?

Some colleges invite a number of applicants at one time so that they can provide information to everyone as a group, before having individual interviews. During the interview you might be asked questions like:

- why would you like to do this course?
- what do you know about the subject area?
- why did you choose this college?
- what qualifications do you have or expect to achieve?
- what are your plans after successfully completing the course?
- what are your hobbies and interests?
- what makes you suitable for this course?
- how will you deal with any challenges during your studies?

You may also be asked questions that relate specifically to the course you have applied for, or have to undergo an audition if you wish to study subjects like performing arts or dance.

How can you do your best in the interview?

- Make sure that you have all the required documents with you.
- Be courteous, polite and make eye contact.

- Be attentive and listen carefully to the questions.
- If you don't understand something, ask the interviewer to repeat the question or to explain in more detail
- Give as much information as you can.
- Remember that everyone has weaknesses as well as strengths, so talk about how you try to overcome or improve yours.
- Be honest and don't exaggerate.
- Ask some questions to show that you have thought about the course and the college (see below).
- And finally, be enthusiastic and smile!

What questions could you ask?

Don't be shy about asking questions at your interview. Remember that it is a two-way process and it's important for you to get all the information you can. You might want to ask:

- how many places are available on the course?
- can I go to university after completing this course?
- are there any specific subjects or extracurricular activities that would be helpful for entry to, and preparation for, the course?
- what are last year's graduates doing now?

You might think of some more specific questions about the course or the college.

Remember

It's ok to be nervous. The interviewer will be expecting it and will do their best to put you at ease.

Good luck!