

Interviews

How to prepare for interviews

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I've sent my application. What happens next?

While you're waiting for an answer, university admissions staff are reviewing your application. While you're waiting, check the admissions selection process for each university you've applied to in their prospectus or website – remember that it might depend on the course you've applied for, so make sure you're reading the bit that applies to you! Not all universities and departments interview applicants. You might be invited to a visit day or informal interview instead.

Where universities don't interview applicants, their assessment will be based on your grades or predicted grades and your personal statement, and then they will make unconditional or conditional offers. If you receive an **unconditional offer**, this means that you have already met or exceeded the entry requirements for your course and the university is happy to accept you. **Conditional offers** are much more common. This is where your offer of a university place depends on you meeting conditions such as achieving specific grades, they might also name specific subjects.

Some universities use interviews before making offers as part of their selection process. It's a fantastic achievement to get to the interview stage and means that the admissions staff are seriously considering making you an offer.

Many people find interviews to be a nerve-wracking and daunting experience. However, with some careful preparation this doesn't need to be the case. It's easier said than done, but please don't worry.

To help you feel calm on the day, we've put together this factsheet, which gives you an insight into the interview process and will hopefully answer all those questions you might have but don't want to ask.

Why interview?

Universities use interviews to find out if you are suitable for the course you have applied to, but interviews are also a good opportunity for you to find out whether your chosen course is the right one for you.

Interviews are always carried out for courses such as Dentistry, Medicine, Veterinary Science and Veterinary Nursing which require strong 'people skills'. Universities might also interview you if the admissions staff want to find out a bit more about you, for example if you have non-traditional qualifications.

Your interview might form part of a departmental visit day where you will have the opportunity to look around the department and meet staff and students. This will give you the chance to see where you would be studying and get a feel for the place.

When and where will my interview take place?

Interviews are generally held between November and April, and usually take place at the university you have applied to. If you're invited to an interview, you will be sent details of the location, date and time of your interview. If you have a long way to travel, you may wish to stay somewhere

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nearby overnight. Most university websites will have a list of hotels situated close to their campus. You could also be entitled to a travel bursary to help with the cost of attending an interview.

Do I need to bring anything with me?

Read the letter or email inviting you to interview carefully to see if there is anything you need to bring with you. For the majority of subject interviews, you are not usually expected to bring anything – just you!

What should I wear?

Find out if there is a dress code for your interview. If not, wear something reasonably smart that you feel comfortable in.

How can I prepare for the interview?

- Try to think of the obvious questions you might be asked, such as why you have applied to this particular university or course. Make sure you know what the course itself involves.
- Practise a few responses for those obvious questions. For example, why did you apply for this course? Say them out loud as well as writing things down, and do 'mock interviews' with your careers adviser, teachers or your parents/carers. It might feel weird at first, but this is a great way to build confidence in talking about yourself and your studies.
- Make sure you can demonstrate an up-to-date knowledge of your subject. Look at recent news articles and website and read as widely as you can.

- Re-read your personal statement.
- Arrive at the interview early so you don't feel rushed.
- Be yourself.

Interviewers aren't there to catch you out with awkward questions, so don't panic! They are genuinely interested in you and your application, and they expect people to be a bit nervous. Their interview questions will help them assess your ability to communicate, analyse a problem and manage stressful situations. They'll probably ask why you want to study this particular course, and find out what you know about the course content and future career options.

Don't worry if you need to take time to think before giving an answer. Interviewers are interested in what you have to say, not the speed of your response.

When will I find out if I've been successful?

In most cases, you should expect to hear the outcome of your interview in two to three weeks. Your UCAS Track will be updated when universities have sent their decisions to UCAS. Also keep checking your emails, as most universities will contact you this way too.

Useful resources

For more information on interviews, please visit:

- bristol.ac.uk/applicants/interviews
- university.which.co.uk/advice/university-interviews-how-to-prepare
- studential.com/interviews

