



# The Global Classroom



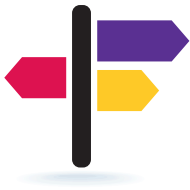
## Thinking Futures

# Impress at Interview



This resource is designed to support your research, and you should always check specific information with individual universities.

Discover. Develop. Succeed.



## Impress at Interview: UK Higher Education

As part of the recruitment process, many universities will invite you to interview, audition, or provide examples of your work (e.g. a portfolio or an essay). Most institutions will make you aware of this before you apply.

If you are invited to interview, most universities will do this via UCAS Track, where you can accept, decline, or ask for an alternative time. For international students, the interview may take place over the phone, or via an online platform such as Skype. It is often difficult for universities to change the time and date of your interview, so try to confirm the proposed time if you can. After you have been interviewed, the standard way for the university to communicate their decision is via UCAS; they will let you know in a part of their application system called Track.

An interview is a great opportunity for a university to get to know you, and for you to explore the university and the course in more detail. Preparing effectively for an interview, whether it's face-to-face or remote, will help you to perform your best and to feel more relaxed throughout the process.

### **Get the easy things right**

There are some practical things you can do to ensure you feel relaxed and prepared on the day. Check where and when the interview is taking place and make travel and accommodation plans early. You should refer to the university's website for maps and directions and, if you are driving, don't forget to allow time for traffic. If you are being interviewed remotely, do not forget to account for time differences. And, try to sleep well the night before the interview, so you feel awake and ready the following day!

Prior to your interview, re-read your application, since this will likely be the focus for the start of the interview. Be prepared to talk in more detail about the content of your application, and to expand on the points you have made.

An interview is a great opportunity to show that you know the latest areas of interest and enquiry in your subject area. Keep up to date with the news, and think about your personal response; you are likely to be asked in your interview.

Interviewers will typically invite you to ask questions as part of the interview, and this is an area you can prepare ahead of time. Think about questions that will demonstrate your interest in the subject; try to avoid questions that can easily be answered by looking on the website, and questions that you think will be very common.

Take up opportunities to practise, by experiencing mock interviews with staff in school. It is good to rehearse presenting yourself, and talking about your experiences, opinions and knowledge, in an engaging and honest way.



### **At interview**

You should dress smartly for your interview, to give a good impression. You might not feel comfortable in a suit, but smart trousers and a shirt/blouse will let the interviewer know that you are taking it seriously. Arrive early, and have the phone number of the department/college to hand so that you can get in touch easily if you are having problems getting there on time.

Good body language is important, and can say as much about you as your answers in interview. Try to stay calm, alert (for example, do not slouch or fold your arms), and make eye contact.

Some universities provide examples of interview questions online, to give you a sense of their approaches. The University of Oxford, for example, offers sample questions across a range of subjects [here](#). Remember – in your personal statement you had to evidence your statements, and provide examples to demonstrate your skills and capabilities. You should take exactly the same approach when you are being interviewed, make sure you can back up statements with evidence, and be prepared to expand on the examples in your personal statement.

During the interview, stay composed if there is something that you do not understand. It is fine to ask for some time to think carefully about a question (take a sip of water to help you feel relaxed and to buy some time), or to ask the interviewer to repeat, or rephrase a question. If you are still unsure, make an intelligent guess, or relate the question to something you know better.

Listen carefully to what the interviewer is saying – they are often interested in how good you are at picking up on direction and additional pieces of information, as much as they are assessing your existing knowledge.

Approach the interview with an open mind. Some interviewers might ask you to complete a short test, or respond to an extract of writing, in order to understand how you react under pressure.

### **After the interview**

Very few people leave interviews feeling that everything went fantastically! Make notes afterwards, including the questions that you were asked, and some of the answers you gave – especially if you have more interviews coming up. Think carefully about what worked well, and the areas that you could improve, and make an action plan for how you can prepare for performing even better in future interviews.