

## **Understanding University Interviews and How to Prepare**

As part of the application process, some universities will invite you to an interview or audition, or ask you to submit examples of your work – such as a portfolio, recording, or written piece. This is simply their way of getting to know you better and seeing whether you're a good fit for the course.

If you're invited, the notification may come directly from the university or via UCAS. Make sure you know where to expect updates and check regularly. Universities often struggle to rearrange interview slots, so it's best to attend at the time you're given. If you genuinely can't make it, let them know as soon as possible. If the invitation came through UCAS, you'll usually see an option to request a new time; otherwise, you'll need to contact the institution directly.

Once you've attended, the university will update UCAS with their decision – and you'll be able to respond to your offers when all decisions are in.

### **Which Courses Typically Have Interviews?**

Some subjects almost always include an interview as part of the selection process. These usually include:

- **Medicine, Dentistry & Nursing**
- **Education/Teaching**
- **Music, Art & Design** (where portfolios are common)

STEM and Social Science subjects are less likely to interview, although highly competitive courses sometimes do.

Remember: **Oxbridge interview every applicant**, regardless of subject. UCL and Imperial also interview for many of their courses.

### **Interview Tips: Preparing to Shine**

Interviews aren't everyone's favourite experience – but with preparation, you'll feel far more confident and in control. Universities want to see enthusiastic, curious students who can think independently and contribute to the wider academic community.

#### **1. Before the Interview**

- **Plan the logistics**

Check whether the interview is in person or online. Sort travel, accommodation, or tech access well in advance.

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- **Know your subject**

Keep up with current developments and refresh your understanding of the topics you enjoy most.

- **Re-read your personal statement**

Interviewers may ask about anything you've written, so make sure it's fresh in your mind.

- **Practise answering common questions**

Especially:

“*Why this subject?*”

“*Why this university?*”

Practise sounding confident but natural – not over-rehearsed.

- **Mock interviews help**

Ask a teacher, tutor, or adviser to run through some potential questions with you.

You may find sample questions on the university website.

- **Sleep well the night before**

Small, sensible habits make a big difference.

## 2. During the Interview

- **Dress smartly but comfortably**

You don't need to be in a full suit, but looking neat and professional sets a positive tone.

- **Arrive early / log on in good time**

Aim for around 20 minutes early if attending in person. For online interviews, test your Wi-Fi and microphone beforehand.

- **Watch your body language**

Sit up, make eye contact, and show that you're engaged.

- **If you don't understand something – ask**

It's absolutely fine to request clarification or take a moment to think.

- **Expect curveball questions**

These are often designed to see how you think, not whether you know the answer.

- **Have your own questions ready**

This shows genuine interest. You might ask:

- What topics are covered in a particular module?
- How will I be assessed across the course?
- What roles do graduates typically move into?

### 3. After the Interview

- **Make notes**

If you have more interviews coming up, jot down what you were asked and how you responded.

- **Reflect**

Think about what went well and what you'd like to improve next time.

- **Be patient**

Once the university has updated their decision in UCAS, you'll be notified. Until then, try to relax – you've done your part.

### Types of University Interviews

- **Conventional discussion-based interviews**

A conversation with tutors where you'll discuss your application, interests, and sometimes complete a small task.

- **Oxbridge interviews**

Known for challenging questions that test your ability to think in unfamiliar situations. They're not trying to catch you out – they're looking at how you approach problems.

- **Multiple Mini Interviews (MMIs)**

Common for Medicine and related courses. You rotate through timed stations designed to test different skills, from ethical reasoning to communication.