

University Interviews

Use our top tips to help you plan for your interview, and get an idea of some of the questions you may be asked.

Interviews are how course and training providers find out if you'd be a good fit. It's also a chance for you to find out more about the course, the people, and the place, as well as getting to show a bit more about yourself and your aspirations for the future.

Our top tips

1. **Arrive early** – plan your journey and aim to get there 30 minutes before your interview time. This will give you time to re-read your application, notes, and questions you've prepared.
 2. **Don't forget important documents** – make sure you bring certificates, ID, or a portfolio if you're asked to.
 3. **Bring a copy of your application and some notes** – no-one expects you to remember everything. Bringing your application allows you to go over it before the interview, and having notes shows you've done your research. A list of questions about the course and school/college will remind you what you wanted to ask and shows you've done some preparation.
 4. **Strike a balance between formal and casual** – you need to look like you're taking it seriously, without looking too uncomfortable if you're not used to wearing smart clothes, such as a suit. Keep it simple and clean.
 5. **Don't let shyness or nerves get in the way** – easy to say and harder to do, but try to focus on helping the interviewer see you love the subject(s) or think this really is the course, programme, or place for you. Slouching, fidgeting, and avoiding eye contact all give the wrong signals, as will chewing gum and failing to put your phone on silent.
 6. **Be enthusiastic** – if applicable, refer to a club or facility other schools/colleges don't have. Show genuine interest and remember some good manners. Shake hands with the interviewer, speak clearly, and don't be afraid to ask them to repeat themselves if you didn't hear them properly the first time. Remember to thank them at the end.
 7. **Don't lie or get caught up in a half-truth because you want to impress** – if you're not really into sports, don't pretend to be. The same applies to other things too, like exam results or special achievements.
 8. **Most importantly, be yourself!** Tell them what you're good at, what you like, what your plans are, and ask your questions. It's just as important you interview them to make sure it's the right next step for you.
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Questions to expect at an interview

We can't tell you exactly what they will ask, but here are some of the most common questions to help you prepare:

Why have you decided to apply to us?

Show you've thought through why you've applied, and that you've researched your choices. Is it their reputation, or the course or programme they offer? How impressed were you at the open day, or with the leisure facilities? Whatever it is, be specific.

What are you hoping to gain from the course?

They want to know that you see this course as a way to get you where you want to go – whether it's a job or career, something you just want to continue to study, or that you're aiming for university.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

If you know, that's great – but very few people do, and that's fine! There's no trick here, just be honest. If you haven't got a plan, it's perfectly okay to say 'I'm not sure at the moment. I see this course as a great next step and think it will help me decide where to go and what I want to do'.

What do you think your strengths and weaknesses are?

This one can be tricky. Your strengths may be easy – trustworthy, hard worker, reliable. If you were a school prefect, be sure to mention it. But what do you say when it comes to weaknesses? No-one wants to promote their flaws but at the same time, no one is perfect, so you need to say something. Can you get too enthusiastic about a project and go off the point? Has your time management been a bit weak but now you know how to plan better and stick to it?

Do you have any questions for me?

This is a big one and usually finishes off the interview. It's your chance to get the information you need to be sure this is what you want to do, and to show you've thought it through and done your research.

Aim to have at least two or three questions prepared. They could be about the course or tutors, or maybe you want to follow up on something mentioned at the open day. Write questions down before you go to the interview so you can refer to them. If by chance they have answered all your questions during the course of the interview, tell them that.