



St Mary's spotlight: university interviews

Some of the courses students will apply for may require an interview, audition or assessment event as part of the application process. This is something that can be researched and considered prior to selecting university choices through UCAS.

How it works

These interviews and auditions are designed to find out more about students' potential, abilities and personalities, and will be considered along with the application information and personal statement. Students are commonly requested to provide examples of their work at interviews (e.g. a portfolio or an essay).

Students will be sent invitations for interviews or auditions directly or through UCAS Track, where they can accept or decline the invitations, or ask for alternative dates or times. It is worth noting that it can be difficult for universities to change the times and dates of interviews and auditions due to the volume of applications being processed. If students are unable to go with the suggested date/time, contact should be made with the university concerned as soon as possible.

Telephone or Skype interviews can often be arranged and some universities may have representatives conducting regional or country-specific visits. There can sometimes be a degree of flexibility and it is always worth checking.

Once interviews or auditions have taken place, the university will inform UCAS when they've made a decision and will let your students know the outcome through UCAS Track.

Quick questions to prepare your students for university interviews:

1. Have they visited the university where they are being interviewed?
2. Have they been asked to present examples of their work and are they prepared for how they will present these (laptop, WiFi, website uploads, physical portfolio)
3. Are they clear about what the format of the interview will be – will there be a practical assessment/audition piece?
4. Why do they want to do the course?
5. Have they thought about evidence they can present or that illustrates experience/skills?
6. Have they prepared any questions to ask?
7. Have they practiced any interview questions?
8. What will they wear?
9. Are they certain of all interview details (e.g. date, time, location) and definitely confirmed attendance?
10. Do they know where they are going?

Interview tips

Interviews are not everyone's strength but, with a bit of preparation, students can leave feeling positive about their performance. Universities will be looking for enthusiastic students who can work independently and who will thrive through their academic life alongside outside interests.

Plan ahead

- They'll need to check where and when their interview is, sort out any travel and accommodation, and check the university's website for maps and directions. Additionally, they will need to be sure they have confirmed they will be attending the interview with the university.
- They need to be ready for questions about their application and aware that they should have a chance to ask about the course and the university.
- They will need to show they know the latest information about developments in the subject area as they may be asked their views.
- Practice makes perfect, so encourage them to have mock interviews with a teacher, adviser, or someone at home. They will need to emphasise and cover why they chose that course and what they enjoy most about their current studies too. Writing out answers to potential questions can also be very helpful.
- Help them plan their preparation and remind them to sleep well!