

# How to Ace Your College Interview

Interviews are a chance for you to show the people teaching your course who you are, and how you're suited to the course. They can be daunting, but knowing what to expect and preparing accordingly will give you the best chance of being awarded a place.

## What to expect

Compared to many job interviews, college and sixth form interviews tend to be fairly relaxed. The college's main aim is to find out whether you're well-suited to college life. Rather than a series of formal questions, they tend to be more of a discussion.

Depending on the level of the course, some interviews may also feature a set of online tests. These often test key skills in Literacy and Numeracy, which are designed to determine what level of the course you should be enrolled on, and whether or not you will require any extra support.

On the day, some colleges invite applicants in groups and have a large discussion or presentation about the course. They then talk to each person individually for around 10 or 15 minutes. The interview itself will more than likely be conducted by someone who teaches on the course, and they will often ask questions related to the field

## How to prepare

- **Research the college and course:** Try to find out what the college's strengths and specialisms are, and whether it offers anything that you find particularly appealing (e.g. equipment, resources, or networking opportunities). If you have any friends or relatives who already go there, ask them about their experiences.
- **Find out what to expect:** Find out whether or not the interview will feature a set of online literacy and/or numeracy tests. If it will, try to brush up on those skills (your English and Maths teachers will be able to recommend suitable resources).
- **Plan your journey:** Find out directions to and from the college or, if possible, arrange a lift off a friend or family member - not having to risk a late bus or train may give you some peace of mind on the day.

## Plan your answers to important questions

Think about your answers to these questions. There's no need to memorise your answers because this risks you sounding insincere, but it's important that you have at least thought about each question in depth.

1. What do you know about the course you're applying to study?
2. What particular aspects of the course interest you and why?
3. What skills have you been developing that will prepare you to study on this course?
4. Why do you want to attend this college in particular?
5. What are your long-term goals? Is there a certain career you wish to pursue? How do you think your chosen course will help you to reach those goals?
6. What do you like to do in your spare time? Have you participated in any extracurricular activities? Have these activities provided you with any useful skills?
7. Are you happy with your GCSE results? Do you feel you could have achieved a higher grade with any of them?
8. What book are you reading at the moment? Has anything in the news interested you?
9. What makes you more suitable for the course than another applicant with the same grades?
10. What do you think will be your biggest challenge whilst at college?

## On the day

- **Make sure you're well rested:** Try to get to sleep at a reasonable hour the night before and remember to eat something before you set off.
- **Dress appropriately:** A suit is rarely required (you can check this with the college), but it's important to look clean and smart.
- **Take a notebook and pen** (to make notes with if required), preparation notes or a book to read in case there's a wait, and a copy of your predicted grades/report if needed.
- **Plan your journey:** Set off in plenty of time and aim to arrive ten minutes early.
- **Be yourself:** During the interview itself, sit comfortably, maintain eye contact, look engaged and take your time with answers. Most importantly, don't panic, and be yourself!

*Information collated from Unifrog, August 2025*