

College and Sixth Form Interview Guide

Having an interview for a place at college or sixth form may be your first opportunity to be interviewed. This may be a daunting prospect, but it doesn't need to be ! The key is to know who you are, do your research and prepare and know what you want to say.

This guide combines interview advice, common questions and useful tips to help you feel confident and prepared for your college or sixth form interview.

What might the interview look like ?

Interviews are usually friendly and designed to help staff get to know you. They can take different forms such as:

- One to one interview – the most common where you will sit and talk to someone about what you want to study, career ideas, interests and hobbies and any support you might need.
- Group Interview – You may get invited to a group interview where you discuss a topic, do an activity or solve a problem together.
- Course specific interview – you may be asked to bring a portfolio, perform a short piece, try out for a team or talk about projects you have completed.
- Some may also include assessments in maths/English or other areas if needed, but the college/sixth form will let you know if this is part of the process.

Interviewers are not trying to catch you out. They want to check that the course is right for you and that you are ready to succeed on the programme. They don't expect you have to your entire future planned out, but knowing why you would apply for those courses, that you are willing to learn and prepared to make the most of the opportunities they offer will go a long way.

Before the interview

Research the college, read your application, think about your career goals, practice your answers and plan your journey in advance.

First Impressions Matter

Arrive early, dress neatly, make eye contact, listen carefully, be polite and thank the interviewer at the end. Turn your phone off before the interview.

Interviews want to see you, so most importantly be yourself!

If your interview is on the phone or on teams think about, where you are taking the call/video call, make sure its quiet, if you have your video on think about the background make it simple, if you are at home ask family not to interrupt you. You can use this type of interview to your advantage and have notes you can refer to if it helps you feel prepared.

Questions You Might Be Asked

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why do you want to study this course?
- Why have you chosen this college?
- What do you know about this college?
- How does this course link to your career goals?
- What are your skills and strengths?
- What do you find challenging?
- Who has influenced you the most?
- What do you do in your free time?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- How does this course/s link to your future plans?
- Do your grades reflect your effort and ability?
- Why should we offer you a place?
- Is there anything you might need support with?

How to Answer Well

Give specific examples from school, hobbies, clubs, sports, volunteering, work experience or family responsibilities. Show enthusiasm, willingness to learn and a positive attitude. Talk about any research you have done about the college, the courses and additional enrichment opportunities and why they might work well for you.

The STAR Technique

Consider using the STAR technique to answer questions, this is a simple way of telling a short story about something you have done/achieved in answer to a question.

- **Situation:** Explain the situation. What was happening?
- **Task:** Describe what needed to be done.
- **Action:** Explain what you did.
- **Result:** Say what happened and what you learned.

Questions you could consider asking the interviewer

It is a good idea to think about what you want to know and try to prepare one or two questions to ask the interviewer. Asking questions shows that you are interested, prepared, and thinking seriously about your future.

- What support is available if I struggle with my studies?
- What careers guidance is available?
- What enrichment activities, clubs or sports can I join?
- What facilities will I have access to?
- What work experience opportunities are available?
- What percentage of students progress to university, apprenticeships or employment?
- Can students change courses if they discover another subject is more suitable?
- What equipment or resources will I need?
- Is financial support available?
- What type of student is most successful here?

Interview Checklist

- ☐ Research the college
- ☐ Review your application form
- ☐ Practice answers aloud
- ☐ Prepare questions to ask
- ☐ Plan your journey
- ☐ Charge phone and set alarms
- ☐ Dress appropriately
- ☐ Bring any requested documents or portfolio

Useful Interview Resources

- How to prepare for an interview: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zfjf92p>
- College interview questions: <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/college-interview-questions>
- Tips for an interview: [Interview tips | Prospects.ac.uk](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/interview-tips)
- How to prepare for a university interview: [Preparing for a university interview | Prospects.ac.uk](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/university-interview)