

Undergraduate Interview Questions



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I. Preview

1. Purpose of university admission interview

Universities like to ask questions about you as an individual - they are a great conversation starter, and tells the interviewer(s) a little more about your character, likes/dislikes, etc.

Some of these might be fairly open-ended, so it's a good idea to write down a summary of your main strengths and weaknesses, so you can give concise answers (rather than rambling on too much!). Try to keep your answers to no more than a few sentences if possible, however tempting it is to keep talking.

If they ask you about weaknesses, pick out one and tell them what you are doing to improve it, e.g., you are not very good at public speaking but have joined a local Toastmasters to build your confidence.

Make sure you also have examples of your strengths, and if they ask what you do in your spare time, try to tell them something interesting, rather than "I watch TV" or "listen to music." Even better, talk about something you do relevant to the subject/course you are applying for.

Interviewers want to find out exactly what you have to offer, that you're taking your career decisions seriously, and that you are prepared for university life and study. By showing passion for your subject and outside interests, while having a genuine interest in and knowledge of the course and university, you'll come across as a well-rounded individual with the potential to thrive in this environment.

2. Types of admission interview questions

Different colleges and universities vary in their interview procedures. Regardless of the interview purpose, whether this is evaluative or informational, the goal of the interviewer is to get to know you and see if the university is the right match for you. They want to find out why you're interested in the university and what you can bring to the campus.

Even though admission committees are not always transparent about exactly how they make their decisions, a great interview could give you a competitive advantage over other applicants with similar credentials.

The starting point of the conversation with the interviewer is your application and support documents, such as your letter motivation. Also, the academic interests you mentioned in those documents are going to be discussed.

Evaluative admission interviews

Admission officers usually offer this type of interviews.

Evaluative interviews can be expected to gain admission to particularly prestigious universities. In this instance, your performance in the interview will be considered when the university admissions officers decide whether to offer you a place.

Informational admission interviews

Informational admission interviews, also known as non-evaluative interviews, are used for prospective students to get to learn about a college or university better. Also, it allows the student to provide information that may not be easily conveyed in the application process through written documentation.

In an informative interview, you have the opportunity to find out more about the university, while the university also finds out more about you. In this case, the university admissions officers may be just as keen to impress you as you are to impress them because they want you to choose their institution.

Alumni interviews

There are selective colleges and universities (especially in the US) that may offer alumni interviews after prospective students have submitted their applications.

3. Tips for admission interviews

Your admissions interview will most likely directly impact your chances of acceptance. It's therefore important to dedicate enough time and effort to this vital part of your application process.

There are a couple of things you should focus on when you are preparing for an admissions interview.

- Start your preparation early. Preparation is critical to make a great impression during your admissions interview.
- Bring specific questions. The interviewer expects you to ask questions yourself, for instance, about the university. Put some effort into coming up with creative questions that require answers that are not easy to find online or on the university's website.
- Practice, practice, and practice. Make sure you can answer the frequently asked admission questions without any doubt.
- Be yourself, but be your best self, that is. Be honest and thoughtful during the interview. You want to come across as someone who is conversational and well-prepared.
- Positivity. Convey a positive attitude during the admissions interview and focus on positive body language.

Research to do when preparing your answers:

- Focus on researching why the university is a good match for you, your goals, and your interests. Hopefully, you already did some solid research before deciding to apply, so this should not take too much time.
- The research you do before your admissions interview should focus on the specifics about how the particular university fits your needs as a student. For instance, this could be a specific major, program, or track — Research the course requirements, the campus and facilities, and the professors.
- Furthermore, the question ‘why do you want to attend this college/university?’ will come up during the interview.

This means that you need to provide a clear and well-substantiated answer on what the university can offer you and what you can offer the university.

The interviewer is interested in which specific major you want to pursue and why. The research you do before the interview will help you provide a detailed response. Look up the university’s website, alumni you might know, and any other online information you can find to help you learn more about the university.

- Prepare questions to ask the interviewer based on your research.

4. How to answer?

1) Think about how you can stand out

University admissions interviewers are likely to be meeting a large number of candidates, so you need to think about how you can stand out and leave a good impression. When interviewers ask you to tell them about yourself (a question that is likely to come up in some form), try to respond with something memorable.

This is your chance to convey your passion for your chosen subject, your future ambitions, and the qualities you possess that will ensure your academic success.

However, the best way to answer your interview questions is by answering as truthfully and honestly as you possibly can. Be sincere in what you're saying and consider the answer before answering. Focus on **Authenticity** and **Story-telling**.

The interviewer is interested in the following things during the admission interview:

- Your motivation why you're interested in this particular university.
- More information on your academic interests and motivation for your study.
- What you can bring to the university.
- What makes you different from the other candidates.
- If you have any questions, admission interviews are two-way streets, and by asking the right questions, you show that you prepared well and that you're genuinely interested in the university and the study.

2) Re-read your personal statement

The interviewers are also likely to refer to things you've mentioned in your personal statement or application essay, whether it's about a certain hobby or a claim about one of your achievements. (This is one reason why it's very important, to be honest!)

Have another look at what you wrote and consider any related questions that might come up in the interview, such as questions about particular books you've referred to, or areas of academic interest.

3) Plan some answers to common university interview questions

As well as 'tell me about yourself', it's highly likely that you'll be asked why you want to study this particular course at this particular university.

If you're studying abroad, your interviewer may also be interested in asking why you want to study in the particular country, and what attracted you to studying abroad. It would help if you showed your interviewer that you're enthusiastic about your subject and very keen on their university; be as specific as you can.

However, while some planning is recommended, try not to overdo it! Allow your answers to flow naturally, rather than sounding too rehearsed. This is certainly easier said than done, but try to relax during the interview and be yourself.

4) Know your subject

It would be best if you were well-prepared to explain to your interviewer why you're interested in your chosen subject, and outline your motivations for enrolling in your chosen course.

In addition, you can demonstrate your interest by reading up on the latest news, research, and developments in the field. You may be asked specifically about some of these issues, or you may simply be able to draw on them as examples.