

Internal Interview Policy

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Introduction

1. This Policy is intended to give guidance to staff on the University's procedures for interviewing borderline candidates applying to both undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes as well as where required, under UKVI guidance, students who are applying for a study visa.

Scope

2. This Policy is consistent with good admissions practice in higher education, as defined by:
 - 2.1. UK Quality Code: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access.
 - 2.2. The Schwartz Recommendations for Good Practice - Admissions to Higher Education Steering Group (2004) Fair admissions to higher education: Recommendations for good practice.
3. It also complies with the following current legislation affecting the admissions of students:
 - 3.1. Equality Act 2010
 - 3.2. Freedom of Information Act 2000
 - 3.3. General Data Protection Regulation 2018
 - 3.4. Human Rights Act 1998
 - 3.5. Race Relations Act 1976
 - 3.6. Race Relations (Amendments) Act 2000
 - 3.7. Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
 - 3.8. Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
4. This Policy is monitored by the Head of Admissions, and is reviewed and updated as appropriate by the Academic Board in the light of experience, research and good practice.

Why Interview

5. The purpose of the interview is to gain a better understanding of the intellectual capability of the candidate and their enthusiasm for the chosen programme subject. The interview itself allows the candidate to express their views and understanding of the subject, based upon either prior

study and discussions prompted by an interview task or discussion point. It also provides the candidate with an opportunity to decide whether the University and programme is right for them.

6. The Admissions Team and University academic staff, when determining whether or not to invite a candidate for interview, should base their decision on the following:
 - 6.1. Application form
 - 6.2. Attained and predicted grades
 - 6.3. Academic reference/s
 - 6.4. Personal statement (evidence of candidate's ability, skills, interests, motivation and potential)
7. A decision is not made solely on the basis of attained or predicted grades. After the request to review an application has been sent by the Admissions Team, University academic staff are asked to reply with a decision whether or not to interview within seven calendar days.

Interview Format

8. Candidates should be informed that there will be an opportunity for them to ask questions, as interviews are a two-way process.
9. It is important that the University creates a positive environment in which the candidates are given the opportunity to perform well. A good environment will help to ensure the most appropriate candidates are admitted, that all candidates are given the opportunity for equal consideration by interviewers, and no candidate is discriminated against.
10. Interviews will be conducted via video conference (Zoom) and will be recorded.

Conduct of the Interview

11. Interviews normally will be conducted by one trained interviewer. The interviewers used should reflect a balance of ethnicity, gender and academic interest wherever possible. Interviewers should be aware of the differences in educational experience that candidates may have and should not assume that a candidate has progressed via a particular educational route or pathway.
12. Interviews should last around 25-30 minutes. For quality assurance purposes, all interviews are to be recorded. Interviewers are asked to

verbally notify the candidate of this and to state their name, the candidate's name and the date and time of the interview.

13. The following considerations should be taken into account for the interview environment:
 - 13.1. Use a brightly lit room, in a quiet area.
 - 13.2. Audio and camera should be tested in advance of the interview.
 - 13.3. Admissions staff should be informed of the interview arrangements.
 - 13.4. All efforts should be made to ensure the interview can be conducted without interruption.
 - 13.5. Interviewers should ensure they switch to silent or turn off their mobile phones, pagers or other similar electronic equipment and ask the candidate to do the same before the interview begins.
14. The interviewee is given the name and role of the interviewer prior to the day of the interview.

The Role of the Interviewer

15. Interviews should start with a basic question or questions designed to put interviewees at ease, e.g. a subject about which the candidate expressed an interest in their application. Interviewers should ensure they are interested in interviewees and do not appear bored or rude. Interviewers should ensure that all questions cannot be construed as discriminatory and any humorous remarks should be appropriate. Examples of inappropriate interview questions/subjects are included as Appendix A.
16. Interviewers should be courteous, respectful, and culturally aware and should avoid stereotyping interviewees or making assumptions or presumptions. Interviewers should make good eye contact, smile and encourage interviewees to be themselves.
17. If an interviewer thinks an interviewee has had a poor interview, this should not be communicated, either verbally or otherwise. Interview questions may be scripted and prepared in advance; they should not be closed, but open-ended questions which are relevant to the interview purpose. Different types of questions may be used such as probing, reflective and/or hypothetical questions, but questions should be consistent between interviews to ensure fairness.
18. While supplementary questions may be asked to draw out the interviewee if necessary; the interview should not lose its focus. Questions should flow

well, be well-organised, logical, thorough and probing, and should reflect the overall purpose of the interview. If an interviewee is in obvious difficulties, the interviewer should move on.

Candidates Requiring Additional Support

19. Candidates will be given the opportunity to notify the University beforehand of any additional support they may require such as extra time, larger text fonts, etc.
20. Candidates requiring additional support should be assessed on their academic suitability to their chosen programme, support requirements should remain a separate issue.

Interviewing Minors

21. All staff involved in the interview process should be aware of the potential sensitivities of interviewing a candidate under the age of 18.

After the Interview

22. Interviewers should be clear about what they should do with all interview materials and in particular, any information that has been recorded about candidates, following the interview. Those conducting the interviews are asked to return the interview recordings and results to the Head of Admissions within a maximum of seven calendar days after the date of the interview.
23. An audit trail from the start to the end of the process should be kept for all interviews, documenting clearly all steps that were taken. All paperwork and other material, including Zoom recordings of interviews and interview report forms and scoring sheets, should be securely stored for the appropriate length of time. All those involved in interviewing candidates should be aware of the University's [Admissions Feedback, Complaints and Appeals Procedure](#) in order to direct candidates appropriately, if necessary.

Interviewing Offer Holders as Part of the CAS Process

24. As part of the CAS process, offer holders may be asked to have an interview over Zoom in order to identify whether they are genuine students and meet the English language requirements.

25. The factors that are taken into consideration when determining credibility can be found in the [Student route of the Points Based System-Policy Guidance](#)

Version History

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| 2.1 | December 2017 | December 2017 | Head of Admissions | August 2019 |
| | | | | |
| Referenced documents | Admissions Feedback, Complaints Policy & Procedure | | | |
| External Reference Point(s) | UK Quality Code: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access; The Schwartz Recommendations for Good Practice - Admissions to Higher Education Steering Group (2004) Fair admissions to higher education: Recommendations for good practice; Children Act 2004; Equality Act 2010; Freedom of Information Act 2000; General Data Protection Regulation 2018; Human Rights Act 1998; Race Relations Act 1976; Race Relations (Amendments) Act 2000; Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006; Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001; Student Route Casework Guidance v 3.0 | | | |

Appendix A: Examples of Inappropriate Interview Questions/Subjects

Institutions must ensure they meet the requirements of legislation with regard to equality of opportunity and provide environments within which unfair discrimination does not occur. Interview questions should fit within this environment and interviewers must ensure that no question asked at an interview could be construed as being discriminatory on grounds of gender, race, nationality, ethnic identity, social or economic background, religious or political beliefs, disability, age, family circumstances or sexual orientation.

In addition, no question should be contrary to the principles and requirements of the admissions process itself and institutions should ensure that all questions reflect a high level of knowledge and skill on the part of interviewers.

The following examples are of questions which are generally viewed as being unacceptable or inappropriate to ask at interview:

1. Questions about other institutions or subject choices at other institutions the candidate has applied to

This information may be volunteered by the candidate, but it is inappropriate for us to ask the candidate.

2. Questions or discussion about the equivalence of qualifications

Unfamiliar qualifications should be researched by interviewers or by the Admissions Team. Good practice recommends this is done in advance of the interview; the candidate should not be asked about this.

3. Disabled candidates or those with support needs should not be asked questions about the nature of their disability or support required in an interview for a place on a programme.

Interviewers should be aware of any special needs the candidate has which may affect their interview performance.

4. Questions that are, or could be, interpreted by the candidate as having a sexual, racial, social, political, gender, age or religious bias, for example, questions about marital, financial and/or parental status, ethnic origin, domicile, social status including parental occupation, childcare or other caring arrangements for candidates who have dependents.

5. Questions about family connections with particular professions

6. Closed questions where there is only one obvious answer

If closed questions with a yes or no answer are asked, they may be used to confirm a specific fact such as 'Did you take a gap year after your

A-levels?’ However, interviewers may need to seek further information by probing, open questions.

7. **Un-focused questions where the meaning could be unclear to the candidate**
8. **Lengthy, multi-part questions which could lead to the candidate becoming confused**
9. **Interviewers should avoid careless comments which may give false expectations**, for example, “We look forward to seeing you in September”.
10. **Interviewers should not refer to the personal appearance of candidates.**
11. **Candidates should not be given any indication at the end of the interview about what the outcome is likely to be.** The interview should be ended in a formal but pleasant manner, whatever the performance of the candidate.