

INTERVIEW SKILLS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Although interviews are not a part of the admission process at some colleges, they may be preferred at some schools and required at others. Of those colleges that grant interviews, some use it as an informational session rather than as an evaluative tool. However, at a few colleges, the interview is still a critical factor in the admission decision.

There are many reasons why a student might want to take advantage of an optional interview:

-  Marginal applicants may benefit from the opportunity to personalize their application.
-  Other students might use the interview to explain something personal which affected high school performance or admissions test scores.
-  Finally, making an appointment to meet with an admission officer is a very good way to let the school know you are a serious applicant.

Just as students are expected to carefully prepare their applications and essays, they also need to prepare for the interview. The old adage that "you never get a second chance to make a first impression" is one that students should take to heart.

The following pages describe techniques that will help you make a great first impression. Whether it be in a college admission interview or a job interview, these tips will guide you. Remember, common courtesy and sincerity will go a long way in creating a lasting positive impression!

Dress comfortably but neatly.

Jackets and ties are not required, but neither are jeans and baseball caps acceptable attire.

Be prepared for the interview.

Remember that this is your chance to show them why you are a good fit for their institution. Read all material on the college beforehand. You do not have to memorize the catalog, but asking questions like "How many students are at your school?" or "Do you have an anthropology major?" will show that you have not done your homework. Ask questions that are important to you and not answered by the catalog or other printed materials. Give the impression that you are interested. Be curious. Schools are looking for students who are purposeful, interested and inquisitive. Show signs of this! Remember this is an opportunity to be something other than a statistic. Make good use of it. You are being judged as a person.

Shake hands coming in and going out of the interview.

Be sure to employ direct eye contact, listen attentively during the interview and answer questions honestly and to the best of your ability. Do not be afraid to say that you do not know the answer to a question. Be prepared to discuss your classes, test scores and class rank. Some interviews may be a bit less formal so don't be surprised if you are asked about books you have read or what your summer plans are. Ask thoughtful questions that you feel are important. Remember that although the interviewer wants to learn more about you as a person, you also want to learn as much as possible about the school. Watch for signs that the interview is ending.

Be on time or even early.

If you are running late, call the admission office and let them know. If you cannot attend the scheduled interview, call and cancel.

Say Please and Thank You!

Thank the interviewer for his or her time and ask for a business card. This will help you when writing your thank you letter. It is also a good idea to include something specific about your interview in the thank you letter. Jot down a few impressions after the interview. This will help when you reflect upon your visit.

Preparation:

Know everything there is about the school you are applying to. Get their catalogue. Review their academic schedule. for example, do they teach anatomy first or do they teach based on organ systems. Do all the students have similar classes at the same time? What is the tuition amount?

Find the name of the students who have been accepted to the program from your school. Ask them about the school. The strengths, the weaknesses, the social climate of the city, the weather, etc. The more you know about the school the more prepared you will be for certain questions:

Review all the preparatory material that you have noted on the school. Review the school's information; your list of questions to ask the school; answers to possible questions that you will be asked; reasons you would love to go to their school. Don't forget to take a pen and notepad so that you can take some notes.

Questions you may be asked in an interview:

1. What makes you think this is the right school for you?
2. Why are you interested in this particular institution?
3. What academic areas are you interested in exploring?
4. What do you expect to be doing ten years from now?
5. What have you liked and disliked about your high school?
6. What is the last book you read?
7. What part of yourself would you most like to improve over the next four years?
8. What magazines/newspapers do you read regularly?
9. What are your most important extra-curricular activities?
10. Describe your strengths; discuss your weaknesses.
11. How would your best friend describe you?
12. What do you hope to get out of your college experience?
13. What will you bring to our community?

Questions you may want to ask during the interview:

1. What is distinctive about the college?
 2. Can you elaborate on academic programs that fit my interests?
 3. Will I have easy access to computers?
 4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the college's advising system?
 5. Will I have access to special equipment as a first-year student?
 6. What type of campus employment is there if I don't qualify for work study?
 7. Are there new programs or facilities that will be available in the next couple of years?
 8. What are the college's most recent graduates doing now?
 9. Is the college "need blind" in its admission policies?
 10. How many students in the freshman class returned for their sophomore year?
 11. What types of academic support services are available at no additional cost (i.e. tutoring, counseling, etc.)?
 12. What do students do when they aren't studying?
 13. How would you describe a student who is a good fit for your institution?
 14. Do you have special interest residence halls?
- Describe your program of transition for freshmen?