

COLLEGE INTERVIEWS

The college interview may take place on campus, or it may be in your area. Some admission officials do interviews; sometimes alumni do them. Big state schools are not likely to give individual interviews; smaller schools are more likely to give interviews.

Before the Interview

1. Research the college before you are interviewed. (Below “know” means that you have read about each.) The main purpose here is to familiarize yourself with the college and why it interests you.
 - a. Know what tests (ACT, SAT, SAT Subject Tests) and high school courses are required.
 - b. On the college’s webpages, review the college’s mission statement and general curriculum, especially for the first year in college. Take the virtual tour.
 - c. Familiarize yourself with the application process.
 - d. Know the admission statistics such as GPA and test scores of admitted students.
 - e. Know the majors, minors, and concentrations offered that interest you.
 - f. Know their financial aid and/or work-study programs.
 - g. Know about opportunities for student research.
 - h. Glance over online version of campus newspaper run by students.
2. Prepare for questions that you might be asked. (See below for some typical questions.)
3. Develop a set of questions to ask (see below for tips):
4. Print out a copy of your questions.
5. **Know why you are interested in the college!** Don’t do the interview if you don’t know this.

During the Interview

1. Be yourself.
2. Dress appropriately and act appropriately. *Don’t chew gum. Don’t wear your earphones. Cell phones off.*
3. Ask you questions (*See the notes below on developing questions*).
4. If the college is your first choice, tell them. *If you are asked if a college is your first choice and it is not (or if you are unsure), state that it is among those you are considering (See note below).*
5. If you do not already know the name and have contact information for the interviewer, get the information.
6. Decline offers of food; water is ok.
7. Above all else, be yourself.

After the Interview

1. Write a few notes for yourself as soon as you can. Include both how you feel about the interview/interviewee and what was discussed. Write down the questions that you were asked.
2. Send a thank-you/follow-up note after you return that includes specific details from the interview. Ask if you can contact the interviewer in the future if you have questions.
3. Share your thoughts and notes with us.

Students often ask if they should take a resume/transcript to an interview. Certainly you should feel free to take one. Typically interviewers already have information about you. If you have recently updated your resume/transcript, you can bring it to the interview and let the interviewer decide if he/she wants it. It is ok not to take one.

Preparing Questions for the College Interview

Before you are interviewed or talk to a college representative whether it is an alumni or admissions official, create a few questions to ask and prepare for questions that they are likely to ask you. You only need **three or four well-chosen** questions. Avoid questions that have an answer that any reasonably energetic applicant could have looked up.

Do not take this sheet into an interview. Write your questions on your own paper.

ACADEMIC QUESTIONS to ask:

1. What sets students here apart from those at similar schools (you could name a school that interests you)?
2. If a number of students from your high school have attended the college, ask how those students performed. What sort of reputation does your high school have in the admissions office?
3. If you are taking AP classes, review the college's policy with regard to AP credit. Tell the official your understanding and ask if yours is a correct interpretation.
4. What procedure is used to assign a faculty advisor when the student is undecided as to the major area of study? What can I do if I can't get along with mine?
5. If you will need specific support services, you can ask about those.
6. Ask about any policy or requirement that you read about and didn't fully understand.
7. You may want to ask a question about a major that interests you. If the interviewer is not familiar with the major and therefore cannot answer the question, ask if the interviewer can assist you in contacting someone in the department. Even if the interviewer answers the question, ask if the interviewer can assist you in learning more about that department by talking to someone in the department. If he/she cannot assist you, ask whom then you might contact with questions about specific majors or programs.
8. How does the college help students figure out what major to pursue?

SOCIAL QUESTIONS

1. Describe your social style and then ask what a typical weekend would be like for a student like yourself?
2. What procedure is used to select roommates?
3. What are the most serious social problems on campus?
4. What is distinctive about the social life at the college?

FINANCIAL QUESTIONS *Most interviewers cannot answer these questions. Most likely they will refer you to the financial aid office.*

1. What percent of a typical financial aid offer is the form of a loan?
2. How much did the cost of tuition, room, board, and fees increase from last year to the current year? What is the anticipated increase for next year?
3. **When can I expect to receive an official financial aid award letter? Will it arrive with the acceptance letter?**
4. What has been the schools experience with the online Net Price Calculator?

OTHER

Ask if the college will be sending a representative to recruit in your area. If so, where and when? Depending on what time of the year it is, this information may already be available online.

WHAT THEY MAY ASK YOU. *You need not develop long, practiced answers to these questions, but you should review how you would answer them before the interview. This is a collection from various sources. No one gets asked all of these.*

1. What books have you read lately? Or what are you reading outside of class? *It is probably better to name one that was not assigned and that you can discuss in some depth.*
2. **Why do you want to come here?** *You should know the answer. Your answer may include something that you know about a specific program or major.*
3. What are your most important activities and why are they valuable to you? If you say that you are really passionate about something, be able to talk in depth about that passion.
4. What would you add to life at this college?
5. What first drew you to this college?
6. What are your academic interests?
7. What do you do for fun?
8. What other colleges are you considering? *Don't list 10. Three to five will suffice. Practice saying them in alpha order. If you are unsure, say that you are still developing your list. They probably should not ask you this question.*
9. What would you want the Admissions Committee to know about you that may not come across on your application? Is there anything we haven't talked about, that you wanted to talk about?
10. If you got up, and your best friend sat down, how would he/she describe you?
11. How would your teachers describe you?
12. If you had a year to do anything you want, what would you do?
13. Why do you think that this college might be the right fit for you?
14. Describe your high school. *Don't talk negatively about teachers or your peers.*
15. What courses interest you beyond those that would be required in your possible major? What clubs or activities outside of class would you be active in?
16. You might be asked how you would deal with any problems with a roommate.
17. Be able to describe a time when you overcame a challenge, creatively solved a problem, or met a goal.
18. Who are you?
19. What famous person would you like to meet/talk to/have lunch with?
20. If you had the chance to teach a seminar, what would you teach? Why?