

College interview hints and tips

First impressions last - greet your interviewer with a smile, firm handshake and eye contact.

Be prepared

Take your Progress File with you to your interview. Extra information such as an art and design portfolio if relevant will also help your application process. Find out information from their website beforehand.

Be confident

Listen carefully to the questions and answer properly. Don't waffle – take your time to gather your thoughts. It's better to say you need a minute to think about your answer rather than speak instantly and regret it afterwards.

Why should you be on the course?

All interviewers look for the right person for the course. Be ready to talk about your knowledge, experience, abilities and skills in this subject area.

Be positive

Your interviewer will be thinking about what it would be like to have you on their course, so won't want to hear negative comments or see a lack of enthusiasm. Interviewers like to see someone who enjoys a challenge and is enthusiastic.

Body Language

It's not what you say but how you say it. During the interview don't slouch, lean back, fold your arms or look down. Sit upright, make eye contact, use your hands and lean forward when making a point.

Develop rapport

Show energy, a sense of humour and smile.

Clarify anything of which you are unsure

If you are not certain what is meant by a particular question, say so.

Remember your manners

Be polite at the interview - this will be noted and remembered.

Questions you may be asked at interview

What are your predicted grades?

Take your predicted grades, last school report, mock exam results and proof of achieved grades to your interview. The interviewer will wish to see if you meet the entry requirements for the course for which you are applying.

Why do you want to do this course?

Interviewers use this question to see if you have done your homework and thought about your future. Do you really want to do this course?

What are your strengths?

This is your chance to say what makes you stand out from the next person.

What work experience have you done?

You will have completed work experience in Year 10 and some of you may have a part-time job. You may discuss areas of this experience that you enjoyed and how much you learned. This will demonstrate to the interviewer that you have a good work ethic.

Describe a problem you have faced and how you solved it.

This is a tough question that is common in interviews. Interviewers are looking for your critical thinking skills and to see if you can find solutions to problems.

Tell me about yourself

The interviewer is trying to figure you out. Pick a couple of points about yourself, in relation to what you want to do in the future. The interviewer will not wish to know which games console you use and that you hang around with your mates!

Questions you may wish to ask at interview

Which enhancement courses are available?

(e.g. volunteering projects, first aid, Duke of Edinburgh)

This tells the interviewer that you are interested in extra courses within the college/sixth form and want to have the opportunity to explore different activities.

What is the dress code?

Different colleges and training providers will have different views on appropriate dress wear. Some courses may require overalls or uniforms, for example motor vehicle engineering, hair dressing, catering.

What can this course lead to?

It is important to know what options are available to you after the course so you may know your progression route to reach your career goals.

How will I be assessed?

Will there be exams? When will the exams take place? Is the course work assessed during the year or assessed at the end?

May I contact you if I have further questions?

It's always good to end an interview with this question. It keeps the door open for future communication.