

Preparing for Higher Education Interviews at a University or College

Congratulations on your uni/college interview, that's great news!

Replying to Interview Invites

- Once you receive an invite to a uni interview you need to respond to let them know if you're able to attend on the proposed date and time. If you're not able to attend on the day because something crops up – illness, a funeral, family emergency etc then contact the uni to explain and request a new date and time.
- Please don't decline invites on the assumption that you 'will get' your first choice or withdraw your application as they may not give you an offer.
- If you don't attend and haven't notified the uni they will update the application status to 'unsuccessful'.

Transport

- Allow lots of time to get there, take into account traffic and snow etc.
- Double check details for which campus and building you need to report to, allow time for getting lost on the site trying to find the right building. Download/print a campus map beforehand or be able to access it from your phone.

Preparation before the day

- Clothing – we would usually advise something smart such as trousers and blouse/shirt or smart jumper/skirt/dress etc.
- Take any necessary documents with you – ID, exam certificates, photocopies, passport photos, pro forma paperwork for criminal convictions etc.
- Read your personal statement through a few times so you are familiar with the content.
- Read the Degree profile so you know what you would be studying each year.
- Consider what skills, knowledge and experience that you can bring to the Degree. If you are changing career why is this the right time for you to change.
- Think about why you wish to study at that particular uni – research things like graduate employability, facilities, reputation, it's a new course etc.
- Prepare a few questions to ask that you would like to know about the course or uni, about placements etc.
- Do a quick google search for any topical issues on social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn), the news, the professional body for the career i.e. Royal College of Nurses and Midwives, Ambulance Service Trust websites etc.

Maths and English assessments

- If you need to take any Literacy and Numeracy assessments you may wish to brush up on some topics through GCSE bitesize etc.

On the day

- Any nerves or anxiety on the day – take deep breaths, take a moment, remind yourself you have already impressed them to get the interview. You want to come out thinking you have done your best.

Group interviews

- It is usually about teamwork and communication, interacting with others, co-operation, reaching agreements and consensus and managing the task within the time given.
- It's about speaking and listening, bouncing off what other students are saying, making sure the group stay on task. They may also look for leadership and decision-making skills.
- The group will be observed with someone making notes on individual performance.

Individual Interviews

- They are looking for people who know why they want to be a Paramedic, a Primary School teacher, a Social Worker etc, think what skills and experience make you suitable, why Sunderland etc.
- Aim to come across as professional, interested and enthusiastic.
- If you are unsure what they are asking for, ask for clarification or for them to repeat the question.
- Positive body language, good eye contact with the interviewer, keep hands still.
- Some universities such as Teesside conduct several 'mini interviews' with different people – i.e. 3 interviews at 10 mins each. Their website has some good interview advice on the course profile page -
[https://www.tees.ac.uk/undergraduate_courses/Nursing_Midwifery_&_Health_Professions/BSc_\(Hons\)_Nursing_Studies_\(Adult\).cfm](https://www.tees.ac.uk/undergraduate_courses/Nursing_Midwifery_&_Health_Professions/BSc_(Hons)_Nursing_Studies_(Adult).cfm)

Post Interview

- Monitor your e-mails, add the university to your 'safe list' so nothing important goes into the Junk or Spam folder.
- It may take a while for you to hear back about the interview as the universities will be seeing a lot of potential students and will need to review each student to see if they want to make a conditional offer.
- Conditional offers – this means that the offer is subject to meeting the UCAS points and grades stated, achieving English and Maths if you're studying it this year and other things necessary for the course such as a DBS, medical check, proof of previous qualifications, maths and English assessment, a second reference etc.
- Continue to monitor your UCAS Track account at <https://track.ucas.com/>

Replying to Offers

- Once you have heard back from all of your choices you can then consider where you would like to be your 1st (firm) choice and 2nd (insurance) choice. It's usually about the start of May when you need to reply by. This would involve some comparison work to look at the university courses, modules and course structure, to consider your transport routes, accommodation (if applicable) and the financial support the uni can offer you – bursaries etc.

Keep in Touch

The Careers Service Contact Details

Hope this helps, good luck and if you would like any further interview support please get in touch.

There is an Access to HE drop in 5-6pm in the LRC on Thursday evenings (not half terms) with Gillian Hales Careers Co-ordinator, Tel: 0191 518 82 82, gillian.hales@eastdurham.ac.uk

There is also a drop in 5-6pm in the LRC on Tuesday evenings (not half terms) with Chris Rickard, NECOP Careers Adviser, chris.rickard@eastdurham.ac.uk