

## Interview Tips

Interviews provide a chance to express interest, obtain information, supplement your application and demonstrate your maturity. Interviews rarely count against you. So, both prepare and relax—this is an opportunity to improve your chances.

### Interviews by type

- On campus one-on-one evaluative interview: Usually conducted by an admissions officer or student intern, this interview is the most likely to result in information of importance to an admissions decision.
- On campus group interview: Primarily informational, the group interview offers an opportunity to distinguish yourself by thoughtful, informed questions. At a minimum, attendance is an expression of interest in a college.
- Local alumni interview: These are increasingly popular and generally scheduled only after your application is complete. Their importance varies depending upon the college. Bring a transcript and resume to an alumni interview.

### Before the interview: Prepare

- **Review guidebooks, websites and materials** you have received. If you are interested in playing a sport, participating in an extracurricular or pursuing a particular major, do extra research on the offerings in this area.
- **Practice giving answers** to the sample questions listed below. This is most important if you plan to use the interview to explain some difficulty in your transcript. Make sure that your explanation shows maturity and responsibility, perhaps that a lesson was learned.
- **Develop some questions** for the interviewer. Use the examples listed below to brainstorm questions of relevance to the particular college.
- **Plan your day.** Get accurate directions, including specifics on parking. There is nothing worse than arriving tired, hassled and late. If you will be late, call.
- **Do a “damp run.”** Schedule your first interview with a college which isn’t among your top choices. Many local colleges are convenient.

### During the interview: Relax

- **Be yourself.** You will be most appealing as yourself.
- **Engage in conversation.** Avoid “yes” and “no” responses. Offer ideas and insights; build upon what is asked.
- **Ask questions** which show knowledge of the college programs. Questions about the interviewer’s experience can warm a conversation, too.
- **Keep good eye contact.**
- **Provide complete, honest answers.**
- **Get the interviewer’s card** or complete name and contact information.
- **MOST IMPORTANT RULE:** While it is preferable to have your interview without parents, sometimes that isn’t possible. Do not roll your eyes, talk back to

or otherwise disrespect your parents in front of the admissions officer. However your parents behave, it is your behavior which will count against you, not theirs.

**After the interview: Write a thank you note.** Reference some topic discussed during the interview. Continue to direct all further questions or correspondence to your interviewer.

### **Sample Interview Questions**

No one can predict the questions you will be asked, but questions often focus on courses, grades, activities and interests. Be prepared to answer questions like:

- Which of your activities have given you the most satisfaction?
- Which subject do you enjoy most? Why?
- Why are you interested in our college?
- If you could make a single change at your school, what would it be?
- What other colleges are you considering?
- How did you spend your summer?
- Do your grades reflect your abilities?
- What is your favorite book/TV show/movie? Why?

### **Topics You Might Introduce**

The best questions will be specific to the institution and will not ask for information readily available on the website. That having been said, there are some general questions or topics which can often help start the interview:

- What attracts students to your college?
- Are you a graduate? What did you like best about your experience?
- What advice would you give a student planning on majoring in \_\_\_\_?
- What are the common misperceptions about this school?
- How has the student body changed in the past five years? How?

One purpose of the interview can be to explain a problem or defect in your performance. Be optimistic; take responsibility. Make an explanation which shows that you have gone on.

For additional topics, review [On Your College Visit](#), which has a comprehensive list of topics to ask on a college tour.