



Admissions interview policy

The University is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity and aims to provide a working, learning and social environment that is free from unfair discrimination. It aims to ensure that applicants, students, staff and all others associated with the University are treated with dignity, respect and equity, regardless of inappropriate distinctions, such as gender, race, nationality, ethnic identity or national origin, socio-economic status, or role within the University, religious or political beliefs, disability, age, marital status, family circumstance or sexual orientation.

For the majority of programmes, the University does not require candidates to be interviewed as part of its recruitment process. However, where applicants are to be interviewed, then the processes and reasons for doing so must be transparent to all such applicants including the selection criteria used for assessment purposes or where appropriate the purpose of attending for academic counselling. (This may be available through entry profiles, web-based information or the printed prospectus). Guidance should be provided to applicants on the procedures for the interview. Any selection criteria or tests required should relate to the requirements of the programme and must be clearly published and related to the applicant BEFORE the interview. Applicants should be invited to provide details prior to the interview of any medical, special or cultural needs that should be taken into consideration. If a candidate is under 18 years of age, contact emergency details may be provided.

Admissions tutors and staff should follow the selection procedures for interviewing prospective students which are consistent for subject-specific programmes (where appropriate) and should follow University-approved procedures as below.

Prior to the interview

1. Interviewers employed by the University should undergo training in interviewing skills and equal opportunities awareness e.g. a recruitment and selection training course by the Learning and Development Unit. It is essential that one member of the 'interview panel' has received such training.
2. All interviews intended to select applicants must (*except under exceptional circumstances*) be conducted by at least two interviewers, and *where possible* have appropriate gender balance. Both interviewers should try to ensure that they are not alone with the candidate at any time, and should avoid contact with applicants that might be considered inappropriate.
3. Criteria for selection should relate where appropriate to the subject knowledge, programme compatibility and suitability for the chosen programme.
4. Interviewers should know the emergency procedures for the location at which the interviews will be held and should inform the candidate of these procedures on arrival.

During the interview

5. Questions at interview should not
 - a. Be discriminatory in nature
 - b. Refer to choices made at other Higher Education Institutions, if the applicant is a potential Undergraduate student
6. Interviewers should avoid over-aggressive questioning or joking familiarity at interviews, and should avoid behaviour that might frighten, embarrass or demoralise the applicant.
7. Interviewers should not enter into discussion about the equivalence of qualifications with applicants (queries about the equivalence of such qualifications should be noted and then discussed with the Central Admissions Office).

Equal opportunities considerations

8. Interviewers have a responsibility to ensure that the University's Equal Opportunities Policy is observed at every stage of the selection process.
9. Interviewers must be aware that it is unlawful to discriminate against a disabled person in respect of selection and admission. Further advice must be sought from the Disability Resource Centre on the needs of disabled applicants. (Questions about disability can only be those, related to the Disability Procedures, which seek to establish the level of support which might be required). It should be noted that the University has a duty to make reasonable adjustments and to provide where necessary appropriate facilities so that disabled students are not placed at a disadvantage compared to non-disabled students. Interviewers should be aware of any special needs of the candidate that may affect their performance in the interview. Where disabled candidates are to be interviewed, the interviews should be conducted in a location with adequate access arrangements.
10. When interviewing candidates from overseas, interviewers must be aware of the recommendations of the Commission for Racial Equality in particular where possible misunderstandings can occur in interviews between persons of different cultural backgrounds. Interviewers should be aware of any cultural needs of the applicant that may influence the interview.

Interviewing applicants aged under 18

11. Any accidents or unusual incidents, including those which could be regarded as inappropriate, should be reported by completion of an Incident Report Form, available in the University of Exeter Policy, Codes of Practice and Guidance Notes on Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults on Campus. Written records of such incidents help to protect interviewers should any allegations arise.

12. If an applicant under the age of 18 discloses information of abuse that has occurred prior to the interview, you have a legal obligation to report it. Please refer to the University of Exeter Policy, Codes of Practice and Guidance Notes on Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults on Campus for advice on how to manage any such disclosure.

After the interview

13. A formal note of the interview (as agreed according to the selection criteria) should be taken and available to Central Admissions so that appropriate feedback can be given if requested.
14. Feedback on any interview is available to all candidates and any interview records compiled are subject to the Data Protection Act. Any written notes of the interview can be requested by applicants following an interview. It is important that care is taken in the wording of such notes.

The University may be required to amend any of the above recommendations in line with new legislation and good practice.

This policy was produced by the Admissions Office, and approved by the Taught Programmes Admissions Policy Working Group, 30 July 2007.