

Further Education Interviews

Interviews are often used as part of the admission process for further education programs including graduate and professional school programs. If a program uses interviews as part of the admissions process, they will usually provide detailed information when inviting you to an interview.

Interview types based on program

Research-based Programs

- Faculty meetings: Depending on the program you may need to meet with member(s) of the faculty. Research for each meeting and be ready to discuss their research and your
- Panel interviews: Most common interview type. Candidate is interviewed by a group of interviewers using traditional

Professional programs

- Multiple Mini Interview (MMI): Numerous short 8-10 minute interviews beginning with a prompt. Questions may involve role-play situations, ethical questions and hypothetical questions.
- Modified Personal Interview (MPI): Consists of four brief one-on-one interviews. Each lasts around 15 min long. Semi-structured and conversational.

Before the interview

Research the school and program

- Understand what the school/program is looking for. Know the values of the school and what type of candidates they are looking for.

Research the profession

- Understand what skills and experiences are valued. Talk to alumni, attend information sessions, conduct informational interviews and use LinkedIn to see what people who graduated from that program are doing now. If it's a professional program, look at core competencies listed for the profession.



Review and reflect on your past experiences (academic, work, volunteer, personal)

- Consider what you want the admissions committee to know about you by the end of the interview.
- Identify relevant experiences from your accomplishments, paid and volunteer work, extracurricular, leadership roles, education and research to demonstrate your suitability for program:
 - What strengths and skills do you bring?
 - Why do you want to pursue this program and/or career path?
 - What are your relevant interests (research, personal)?
- Reflect upon how your past experiences demonstrate the characteristics and skills required of the profession and the program.
- This step will help to increase your self-awareness and prepares you to talk about yourself.

Prepare and practice your answers

- Identify question themes by researching the program. Develop a “qualifications chart” – in one column list the skills/characteristics expected/required and in another column list your corresponding “stories”, experiences, examples of when you have illustrated those skills/characteristics.
- Thinking about your “stories” with a **STAR** (Situation, Task, Action, Result) approach can help you to organize your story for the interviewers.
 - **Situation:** Briefly outline the circumstances
 - **Task:** Indicate any obstacles you faced
 - **Action:** Describe the steps you took to solve this issue
 - **Result:** Share the results of your actions and what you learned from the experience (often forgotten but the most important part)
- Practice your answers to gain more confidence and to sound more natural when talking about your experiences.

Get feedback from others

- Getting honest and constructive feedback from others on our strengths, weakness, communication style and “first impressions” is helpful for developing greater self-awareness.
- The more you know about how you “come across” or how your perspective or approach to situations differs, the more you can consciously respond to interview questions.



During the interview

- Understand the question before answering, ask for clarification if needed.
- Take your time to answer and don't rush your response.
- If applicable, recognize the ethical principles in the scenario.
- Show your decision making process in your response.
- Be ready with 3-4 thoughtful and relevant questions, they should be phrased to encourage dialogue and guided by your research.

The waiting period

- Continue conducting informational interviews with people working in the field.
- Think of alternative plans and solutions in case the program does not work out.

Additional resources for interview preparation

- [Develop your interview skills with Big Interview | Student Success Centre | McMaster University](#)
- [Multiple-mini interviews \(MMI\) | Student Success Centre | McMaster University](#)
- [Guide to grad school | Student Success Centre | McMaster University](#)
- [Kira Talent | The world's only holistic admissions solution for higher education](#)

Student Success Centre Additional Supports

The [SSC offers professional services](#) for further education interview preparation and you can book an appointment for a one-on-one mock interview using [OSCARplus](#) and selecting the appointment type "Graduate and Professional School Application Support"

