

CHECKLIST: COLLEGE INTERVIEW

What to Do Before Your College Interview

- Check the school's policy on college visits.**

Do they have them? During what time of year? Will you be interviewing with an admissions officer or an alumnus?

- Schedule an interview appointment by calling the college's admissions department.**

Try to get a convenient time and never schedule more than one interview in a day or too close to your arrival time.

- Plan a full campus visit.**

Be smart about your travel and finances. If you are already visiting a school for an interview, plan an entire campus visit and possibly an overnight stay.

- Research the college.**

Sure you've glanced at the website, but you should dig a little deeper before your interview. Look at news stories, college review sites or informative blogs. You want to have a full understanding of what the college has to offer.

- Create a list of questions in advance to ask your interviewer.**

Ask questions that you wouldn't find the answers to online or in any college literature. The questions will be a reflection of your personality and priorities, and they will make it clear that you took the time to prepare.

- Consider the questions your interviewer may ask and think about your answers now.**

Common questions include what's your favorite subject and why? What are your plans for the future? Why do you want to attend this college? What have you done to prepare for college? What's been your greatest experience in high school? What are your interests? What extracurricular activities are you involved in? What's your favorite book? Who's your favorite author? What was the last book you read that wasn't required reading? What would you like to change about yourself? Who do you admire most?

Do a mock interview with a friend or family member.

Doing a practice interview will help you practice your questions and answers aloud.

Prepare an accomplishment résumé to give to the interviewer.

This should include academic accomplishments, hobbies, skills, anything you're proud of that will help your interviewer learn more about you. Preparing an accomplishment résumé can also provide guidance on what to talk about during your interview.

Choose an appropriate outfit to wear.

This means no jeans. Dress neatly, as if for a job interview. You want to look your best. Business casual (button-down shirt, slacks, dress shoes) is always safe.

What to Do the Day of Your Interview

Arrive 10 minutes early.

You do NOT want to be late. Give yourself plenty of time to drive there.

Go to your interview alone.

Even if your parents are with you for a campus visit, you should show up for your interview alone. Colleges want to see you handle the interview on your own.

Practice good hygiene.

Don't chew gum or wear too much cologne or perfume. Girls should be conservative with their makeup and hair. Being overdone is distracting and will take away from your interview.

Be nice to everyone you meet.

You should strive to make a good impression on everyone in the admissions office: the receptionist, the staff and the interviewer.

☐ **Be confident and outgoing – but also be you.**

Remember, an interview is for the admissions officer to get to know you personally. Show your personality and let your interviewer know that you're up to the challenge of attending his or her school.

☐ **Discuss your academic background and high school.**

Share your current school standing and GPA; while he or she wants to get to know you personally, the interviewer also wants to know if you're a serious student.

☐ **Discuss any special circumstances.**

Is there a hiccup in your transcript? Do you have a personal issue that affected your studies? Interviews are a great time to address things you may have found too difficult to work into an application form but you feel warrant an explanation.

☐ **Stay calm.**

Try not to fidget or move around in your chair too much. While it's OK to be a little nervous, you don't want to do anything too distracting.

☐ **Make sure to ask questions.**

Ask the questions you prepared in advance as well as any questions that may have come up during the course of your meeting. If everything was already answered, ask a question for clarification on something the interviewer said; this will show him or her that you were listening and paying attention during the interview. If you were taking notes, you will easily find something to review with the interviewer.

☐ **Ask for a business card.**

You'll want your interviewer's contact information so you can send him or her a thank-you note. It's also good to start collecting business cards, so you can keep a record of people you meet as contacts for the future. You can put them in your notebook as well.

What to Do After the Interview

- ☐ **Make notes about important information you learned during the interview.**

You want to be able to remember and reference what you learned as well as keep track of any obligations you and your interviewer discussed.

- ☐ **Send a thank-you note to your interviewer.**

A card is best. It will show your appreciation formally, remind your interviewer of your visit and help you establish lasting contact.