

College Interview Tips!

Interviews either with alumni or with college admissions representatives are an excellent way to show demonstrated interest and to impress the college with your shining personality! Here are the most important things to remember and common questions that may come up during your interview. Note: not all schools require or even offer interviews (e.g. NYU)

Keep in mind...

Some schools will automatically contact you for an interview. For others, you will be required to request one. Check the policy of each school you have applied to on the admissions section of its website or, if you can't find it, by calling the admissions office. Many schools don't require or even offer interviews (NYU unless through HEOP).

The interview is an opportunity for you to learn about the school as much as it is for the school to learn about you. It is fine to consult your notebook to review your questions about the school. You can say, "I want to make sure I didn't forget any questions..." then pull out your notebook.

If you are interviewing with an alumni of the college, keep in mind that alumni interviews vary WILDLY and are generally not standardized The primary goal is to prove to them that you are a pleasant, curious, personable human, and that there are no red flags. Many alumni interviews end up seeming like a conversation, so the focus should be on having strong conversation, making a connection with the alum, and showing you are genuinely interested in the college.

Alumni interviews will not make or break your application. Come prepared, but be reassured the interview will not be all end all of his success as an applicant (if you are not a qualified applicant, a strong alumni interview won't get you in & vice versa). However, it is a great opportunity to connect with an alumni who can advocate for you.

Avoid saying the reason you want to go to a school is because of its reputation, name recognition or ranking. Talk about aspects of the schools that excite you that no other school offers or offers in the same way.

Include aspects of your identity that are important to you when possible

It is fine to amend or add to a response, or offer additional information either after you have answered a question or at the close of the interview if there are certain points you wanted to make that weren't addressed or upon which you would like to elaborate. You can say: "I'd just like to add...." or "I want to be sure to mention..."

College Interview Tips!

Getting Ready for the Interview

Preparing

- For some of the most common questions, write out your answers (paragraph or bullet points) practice answering them out loud (either in front of yourself or others).
- Have at least **3** things about yourself/activities that you know you want to talk about, that way you can apply these to a range of questions.
- Be sure to thoroughly review the school's website and description of the program in which you are interested.
- Have at least **3** things about the school you can tell the interviewer are reasons you want to attend. The more specific, the better. Review what you wrote for supplemental questions.
- Prepare at least **3** questions about the school. Write the questions down in your notebook (along with 3 things about yourself and about the school, if you like, so you can review frequently prior to your interview).
- Google the individual with whom you are meeting so you can identify common interests ahead of time and plan accordingly.

What to Bring. A notebook or something else that will allow you to take notes and your resume, which you should offer to the interviewer once you are settled. Schedule an appointment to review your resume with the college office if necessary.

Dress to Impress. “Business casual” is recommended. Avoid jeans, T-shirts and formal/party attire. Don’t wear anything that will distract from your responses.

Finding the Person. If you are meeting them at a coffee shop or somewhere where it may be hard to find them, you can tell them what you will be wearing when you email confirming the interview. You can google them to see if there are photos so you know what they look like, making it less awkward when you are trying to identify the person.

Arriving. Try to arrive at least 5-10 minutes early. If you are meeting at a coffee shop, you can pick up a coffee/tea and then find a spot near the door where you can easily look for the interviewer.

Starting the interview. Shake their hand and introduce yourself clearly

Once the interview has concluded, shake hands again, thank them, and then email them thanking them for the opportunity to interview and reiterating your interest in the school! Show the email to your counselor before sending if you want. Make sure to spell check your email (and all correspondence with schools) and use correct grammar!

College Interview Tips!

Sample Questions

Here's the link to the [UPenn website's alumni interview sample questions](#).

Below are sample questions:

Introduction:

-Tell me about yourself.

Academics:

-Tell me about your high school.

-What classes are you taking now?

-What is your favorite class you've taken in high school?

-What is your least favorite class or subject?

-What do you want to study in college? Why?

-Tell me about a project you completed for school that you enjoyed.

Personal:

-What are you involved in outside of school?

-What are you passionate about?

-Tell me about something you are proud of.

-If your friends had to describe you in three words, what would they be?

-Tell me about a time you experienced a challenge or set back.

-What makes you special?

-Tell me about your family.

Specific to the college:

-Why _____?

-How did you hear about _____?

-Why do you think you're a good fit for _____?

-Why do you want to study _____ at _____?

Random Questions:

-If you could be a kitchen appliance, which one would it be and why?

-If you had a totally free day, what would you do?