

Aim High: Interviews and mock interviews.

All courses at Oxford and Cambridge, as well as many other courses and universities will want to interview you before offering you a place. As such getting some practice is a good idea.

Alcester Grammar School offers a range of opportunities for mock interviews but it is up to you to make it clear that you want one and what for. Here are some actions you should take to make sure you are availing yourself of all the support on offer.

1. **Make sure Mr Gill and your teachers know what you are applying for and where.** This is best achieved by attending the early applicant meeting the first week back after year 12 exams. If the school doesn't know we can't help you.
2. **Speak to your departments.** The experts you need to help you with interview preparation are best found through the relevant department. Some have a nominated teacher, some use a retired member of staff, some have access to external experts. Ask.
3. **Attend society meetings.** Many admissions tutors and industry professionals attend society meetings. You can make good contacts and get highly specialised help, especially in fields like Medicine, Law and Engineering by taking an active part in these groups.
4. **Alumni Mentoring.** This is a new initiative using our former students who went on to study at Oxford or Cambridge and who went into medicine or law. If we know what you are applying for and where you're applying to we will hopefully be able to pair you up with a suitable mentor.
5. **Mock interviews.** We will be bringing in a range of external expert interviewers as well as interview candidates from other schools to try to recreate as realistic an interview experience as possible. If you are making an application to an institution that requires an interview we would expect to see you there.

General Advice.

From various conversations with interviewers from both Oxford and Cambridge as well as medical admissions tutors and students who have been through the process:

- Interviewers are looking for students they can teach at a high level who are **capable of making mental leaps and synthesising information**. They are not interested in how much you've memorized or what you may or may not already know.
- Given the above, interviewers are **actively working against evidence of training**, they want to find out about you and your ability. They will guide you, they will take tangents based on what you know. They are not trying to trick you but they are trying to test you.
- The best preparation is to **know your personal statement**. They will more often than not use things you've said as a springboard to ask deeper questions. If you have talked about lab work experience make sure you truly understand what you did and why. If you claim to have read some dense French philosophy or to be an expert on a particular precedent setting legal case make sure you can talk about it confidently.
- **Don't be flustered** by being asked things you haven't thought of before, that is their specific aim. It's not like your A-Levels, there is **no script or syllabus**.

- There is ***no dress code for Oxbridge interviews***. Many choose to go smart which is great. Professional courses (Law, Medicine, degree apprenticeships etc) may require smarter dress.
- For Law and medicine you may get put into a ***group interview*** situation or moved around a ***series of stations with mini tasks***. The majority of Med/Vet/Dent courses interview like this. There are many examples of feedback from students who have been through these interviews via the student society documents and their meetings.

People who can help:

Within the school we have a number of people with knowledge of Oxbridge and/or interviews for various subjects and courses. A selection are listed below:

- Dr Proud - Mathematics
- Mr Gill - Biology/Medicine
- Ms Atkinson - English/Linguistics
- Ms McLean - English/Writing
- Mrs Mackey - Geography
- Mrs Preston - Biology/Botany
- Ms Dolphin - Economics