

OVERSEAS EDUCATION

Top Five Tips for Preparing for Oxbridge Interviews

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NOVEMBER 23, 2015

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With 62 successful offers over just 4 years, we are happy to share some tips about Oxbridge interviews! These notoriously intimidating experiences are often not as rumors would have it. Oxbridge interviews are designed to simulate a supervision, in the case of Cambridge, and a tutorial, in the case of Oxford. They're intended to see whether a candidate would enjoy being challenged by like-minded professors and whether they would excel in answering tough, but intellectually stimulating, questions. Below are a few pointers that should help put any candidates who are going for an interview at more ease:

1. Show genuine intellectual passion for your subject

Make sure you are comfortable discussing books or articles that you may have read when deciding whether a particular subject is for you. This shows that you are interested in pursuing the subject on an academic level and reading around the subject shows you are a person who likes taking an initiative, which is a key quality to have for any prospective Oxbridge student.

2. Don't be afraid to take time out to think before answering the question

Presentation is very important when it comes to an interview. Do not feel like you have to rush into answering questions when asked in an interview. Show that you are in control of the interview by just asking if you could have a moment or two to think. Make sure you are able to explain and talk through your thought process. Many humanities students are flustered by open-ended questions that have an infinite array of responses and therefore find our help with thought structuring very helpful. On the other hand, we often challenge aspiring scientists and mathematicians to not just identify solutions but be able to elaborate on their rationale.

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3. Always have a question in mind for the end of your interview

When asked by the interviewer if you have any questions at the end, grasp the opportunity to demonstrate your personal academic interest and try to make an impression. If you don't, it could reflect a lack of enthusiasm or commitment.

4. Read up on your personal statement and if Cambridge, your SAQs/COPA

We help many of our students prepare a year in advance to build up their profile so they have lots to incorporate in their statements. However, we must remind all students they should review their statements before the interview to refresh your memory! The way to discredit yourself is to not recall what you have supposedly written!

5. Be yourself and remember the context of an interview!

Remember that these interviewers are people who you'll be communicating with on a weekly basis, so they need to like you on an intellectual and personal level. Be pleasant! For example, world debaters, remember an interview is supposed to be a discussion, not a debate competition! – you should have your stance but also be open-minded to embrace suggestions. That way, you will be more sensitive to the help extended by the interviewers. On a more practical note, make sure you dress comfortably, and don't feel obliged to show up in strict business attire.

Good luck with the rest of your university application process, hope you found these insights useful and fingers crossed!

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Jennifer Ma is Co-founder of ARCH Education. Jennifer is responsible for

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