



UK/EU ADMISSIONS INTERVIEW POLICY

At Keele University we are committed to the provision of high quality, fair and transparent admissions policies and procedures for **all**¹ our applicants. For the majority² of programmes, the university does not require candidates to be interviewed as part of the recruitment process. Where programmes interview as part of their decision-making process, this is made clear to applicants in the Entry Profile for their chosen course.

Where applicants are to be interviewed, the following policy aims to ensure that the process is fair and transparent for all involved.

Interviews can provide applicants with an opportunity to demonstrate their relevant knowledge, skills, motivation to study at the institution and interest in the subject and/or specific course or programme.

Guidance should be provided to shortlisted applicants on the interview process. Any selection criteria or tests should relate to the requirements of the programme and the applicant must be informed prior to the interview of any selection criteria or tests. Applicants should be invited to provide details prior to the interview of any special needs that should be taken into consideration³.

Admissions tutors and staff should follow the selection process for interviewing prospective students and ensure that consistency is maintained across programmes. All applicants for interview should be assessed individually, without partiality or bias. All interviews should follow the procedures below:

1. Prior to the interview:

- 1.1 Interviewers employed by the University should undergo online training in Equality and Diversity provided by Human Resources. It is essential that at least one member of the interview panel has completed this training⁴.
- 1.2 It is best practice for all formal interviews intended to select applicants to be conducted by at least two⁵ interviewers, and *where possible* have appropriate gender and ethnic balance. In the case of multiple mini-interviews, where candidates undertake several one to one interviews, the School/Research

¹ This policy covers both Undergraduate, Postgraduate (Taught and Research), full and part time UK/EU applications

² Applicants may be invited for interview at the discretion of the Admissions tutor if a candidate presents atypical qualifications/experience.

³ Advice from Student Support and Development Services should be sought if an applicant requests an adaptation of the interview process due to their special needs.

⁴ This could include external interviewers (e.g. staff who are not employed by the university or students) who have completed either the University's Equality and Diversity training, or similar equivalent training in their substantive role.

⁵ There may be special circumstances where this is not appropriate but should be agreed with the relevant Head of School/PGR Director prior to the interviews taking place.

- Institute must take responsibility for routine observation and monitoring of interviewers to ensure fairness and consistency.
- 1.3 Criteria for selection should relate to the subject knowledge (where appropriate), programme compatibility and suitability for the chosen programme.
 - 1.4 Invitations to interview should ask applicants if they have any accessibility requirements for the interview and liaison with Student Support and Development Services should take place as appropriate.
 - 1.5 It is good practice for applicants to be given a specific date by which they must respond to confirm their attendance, and details of what will happen if they fail to confirm or decline the invitation to interview. (E.g. they may not be offered an alternative interview date if they fail to attend without good reason or sufficient notice).
 - 1.6 Clear information should be sent to each applicant in sufficient time to enable travel arrangements to be made, any pre-interview material to be prepared and to ensure that applicants know what to expect on the day of the interview.
 - 1.7 Applicants should be given details in advance of any documentation they should bring with them on the day. The interview may be used as an opportunity to check qualification certificates and/or carry out essential requirements for processing Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks, previously Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). These processes should be kept separate from the interview process and administered accordingly.
 - 1.8 Consideration should be given to the amount of travel time for interviewees and Academic Schools/Research Institutes are encouraged to consider alternative arrangements e.g. videoconferencing, especially for International and EU applicants. Where alternative arrangements are made, appropriate procedures must be in place to obtain independent verification of the candidate's identity.
 - 1.9 Interviewees on arrival should be briefed on emergency procedures and the location of fire exits etc.

2. During the interview:

- 2.1 The School/Research Institute should ensure that the identity of the applicant has been verified.
- 2.2 At the start of the interview, applicants should be given information about the structure of the interview e.g. the number and format of the questions, when applicants will have the opportunity to ask questions. In the case of multiple mini-interviews, applicants should be given a clear indication of the format and focus of each station, immediately before that station, e.g. by written instruction.
- 2.3 Questions at interview should not be (a) discriminatory in nature or intent (an applicant's age and/or family status should not be asked about where this might influence the decision whether to offer a place) or (b) refer to choices made at other Higher Education institutions (e.g. where the applicant has applied).
- 2.4 Interviewers should be aware of the differences in educational experience that applicants may have and should not assume that an applicant has progressed via a particular educational route or pathway. Any queries regarding the equivalence of an applicant's qualifications should be discussed with the appropriate Admissions team **prior** to interview.
- 2.5 Interviewers should ensure that all questions cannot be construed as discriminatory and any humorous remarks should be appropriate.
- 2.6 All questions should be consistent between interviews to ensure fairness. Score sheets should be used to encourage consistency.

3. Equal Opportunities considerations:

- 3.1 Interviewers have a responsibility to ensure that the University's Equal Opportunities Policy is observed at every stage of the selection process.
- 3.2 Further advice should be sought from Student Support and Development Services on the needs of applicants who have declared a disability. Questions about disability can only seek to establish the level of support which may be required by an applicant to access their chosen programme of study. Interviewers may also need to take advice from their Academic School/Research Institute regarding professional and/or fitness to practise requirements. Where possible these discussions with the applicant should be done in a separate meeting with Student Support and Development Services.
- 3.3 The University has a duty to make reasonable adjustments and to provide where necessary appropriate facilities to ensure that disabled students are not placed at a disadvantage compared to non-disabled students. Interviewers should be aware of any specific needs of the candidate that may affect their performance in the interview. Where disabled candidates are to be interviewed, the interviews should be conducted in a location with adequate access arrangements.

4. Interviewing applicants aged under 18

- 4.1 Interviewing staff should be aware of the potential sensitivities of interviewing minors and be aware that the university has a duty of care to prospective students. The interview should be in an appropriate location and all aspects of the interview process should comply with the university's policy on Child Protection.

5. After the interview

- 5.1 Applicants should be informed at the end of their interview when and how they will be notified of the outcome of the interview. It is not good practice to inform applicants of the outcome on the day of the interview.
- 5.2 Interviewers should be aware that interviewees can request a copy of their interview notes under the Data Protection Act 1998. Interviewers must ensure that any comments regarding an interviewee's performance are noted appropriately.
- 5.3 An audit trail from the start to the end of the process should be kept for all applicants, documenting clearly all steps that were taken.
- 5.4 All those involved in interviewing applicants should be aware of the Admissions Feedback Procedure and Appeals Policy in order to direct applicants appropriately, if required.
- 5.5 The University will endeavour to provide applicants with appropriate feedback (see Admissions Feedback Procedure).
- 5.6 Storage of interview notes or score sheets should be kept in accordance with the University's Records Management Policy and Records Retention Schedule (<http://www.keele.ac.uk/recordsmanagement/recordsretentionschedule/>).

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