**2020 Oxford online interviews: Tier 1 subjects**

The transcription does not include speech errors, false starts, and various filler words.

**[0:00] Opening title: 2020 Oxford online interviews: Tier 1 subjects**

**[0:08] Dalveen, Student.**

Hi I’m Dalveen and I’m studying Spanish and Linguistics. If you've been invited to interview by Oxford congratulations, it's a huge achievement and you should feel very proud of yourselves. You might also be feeling a bit nervous which is completely natural. There are lots of myths about interviews at Oxford but really they're just conversations about your chosen subject with someone who knows lots about it. We asked some Oxford tutors about interviews, let's see what they had to say.

**[0:37] Title: Why does Oxford hold interviews?**

**[0:41] Jessica Goodman, French.**

Oxford holds interviews to give applicants the chance to show us what they can do beyond what's on the UCAS form. The interview is a lot like the tutorial that's at the centre of Oxford teaching, so we get a chance to see how you would learn and respond to that kind of environment. It's really about offering you the chance to think independently and show us your potential for responding to new and exciting ideas.

**[01:07] Tom Crawford, Mathematics.**

Interviews are an important part of the selection process at Oxford, helping us to make offers to students that have the most potential to succeed on the course. In some sense, they act like practice tutorials - the main method by which you are taught at Oxford. In a typical tutorial we will work through tricky problems together to try to find a solution, much like we will do in your interview.

**[01:32] Matthew Williams, Politics.**

All of the applicants we get at Oxford are brilliant, so we need more information than we can possibly glean from the UCAS application form that everyone sends in. We need to work out from those who've applied whether or not they would be well suited to the way we teach in Oxford. We teach in quite an unusual way, in very small tutorial groups, and the interview is therefore an audition for that style of teaching.

**[01:57] Hannah Skoda, History.**

They are truly not designed to be terrifying or daunting and we do everything we can to make you feel at ease. The interview is just one part of a bigger application process. We have lots of bits of information about you and we're trying to build up a bigger picture, so don't let yourselves get too nervous and fundamentally (I know it's hard), but try and enjoy the process - it's actually a really nice opportunity to talk about the things that interest you and that interest us.

**[02:28] Title: What do you look for in a candidate?**

**[02:33] Angela Griffin, Biology.**

What do I look for in an applicant? Curiosity. I know you can pass exams, everybody that comes for interviews passes exams! I've got to teach you for four years, so I want to teach people who want to learn, and that's what I’m looking for.

**[02:45] Matthew Williams, Politics.**

We’re looking for a degree of energy. We want to get this sense that you're motivated to take on this degree. So we're looking for you to light up, to enjoy yourself and also to speak for yourself. We're interested in you and your energy and what you would like to bring to the conversations.

**[02:59] Hannah Skoda, History.**

What we're looking for is flexibility of thinking. We're looking to discover your kind of analytical abilities. We're looking to see how you respond to new pieces of evidence. We're looking to see how you think when confronted with new ways of thinking about a problem. Do listen really carefully to our questions. Sometimes it's very difficult when you're really nervous to listen carefully because you're sort of flooded with all these ideas and these things that you want to tell us about and you're feeling very anxious. But do try and take the time just to listen carefully to what you're being asked so that you're responding to what we're asking you.

**[03:40] Will Poole, English.**

So what I look for above all in a candidate is a combination of curiosity and dedication. I want you to be so curious about your reading, that you don't mind being dedicated to it and that to you it's a pleasure to read a lot.

**[03:55] Title: How can a candidate best prepare for interview?**

**[04:01] Hannah Skoda, History.**

It's not a memory exercise, we're not interested in how many facts you can remember. Do have a reread of the written work that you've submitted before the interviews because that is a useful thing to be able to talk about.

**[04:12] Matthew Williams, Politics.**

By all means do some reading or watch some lectures, but try and see a variety of perspectives. Ultimately we want to get the best possible performance out of our interviewees.

**[04:24] Jessica Goodman, French.**

Don't feel like you need to read hundreds of texts. I would so much rather somebody had just read one or two texts but really thought about them. It can be really useful too, to practise talking to people about your reading - explaining what you thought about texts and why.

**[04:39] Tom Crawford, Mathematics.**

It's also a good idea to revise the material you've learnt so far at school or sixth form, and to try out some practice questions. The very best of luck and hopefully I’ll see you around Oxford in the near future.

**[04:53] Dalveen, Student.**

We hope that makes it all seems a bit less daunting. So we know that interviews this year are going to be a bit different. You'll still usually be interviewed by two tutors in your subject, but this year you'll be talking to them via a video link.

This is Ian from the University's Admissions Operations Team who has been working out the best technology to use for this year's interviews. Hi Ian, so if I was applying this year what can I expect and how will it all work?

**[05:23] Ian, Admissions Operations Team.**

Hi Dalveen. All interviews will be taking place remotely this year using Microsoft Teams. You don't need to have a Microsoft account for this but you will need to use a computer that either has Teams installed or can access Teams on the internet. The computer will also need a microphone, speakers and webcam. If you have any problems getting hold of the right technology, talk to your school and if you still aren't able to access it then contact the college you're being interviewed by.

**[05:52] Dalveen, Student.**

Great, do I need anything else?

**[05:54] Ian, Admissions Operations Team.**

You should have paper and pens to take notes and in all interviews, you may be asked to hold some paper-based workings up to the camera. It's also a good idea to have a copy of your personal statement and any written work you've submitted, because you might be asked about these. You could be asked to read a passage or article before your interview which will be sent to you by email. If so, then make sure you have a quiet space to read it before your interview, same as if you were taking an exam. Your college will explain this to you beforehand. Just a reminder here that as your interview invitation makes clear you must not record these interviews or share any of their content verbally or otherwise including any pre-interview reading tasks.

**[06:34] Dalveen, Student.**

Okay, but do I need anything else on the technical side?

**[06:37] Ian, Admissions Operations Team.**

For tier one subjects no. During the interview your interviewers might share their screens to show you a document or hold something up to the camera but otherwise it's just a conversation.

**[06:47] Dalveen, Student.**

Thanks that makes sense, but how will I be invited to interviews?

**[06:51] Ian, Admissions Operations Team.**

For each interview you'll be sent a separate calendar invitation containing a link that will take you to the virtual interview lobby. You'll then be accepted into the call and your interview will begin.

**[07:01] Dalveen, Student.**

And, will there be more than one interview?

**[07:04] Ian, Admissions Operations Team.**

You are quite likely to have more than one interview, you might also be interviewed by more than one college. For some subjects you'll be invited to interview at more than one college before your interviews have started. In other subjects you might have initial interviews at your first college and then you might be invited to additional interviews at another college after these have taken place. We aim to give everyone a minimum of 24 hours’ notice of these additional interviews. You can find out more by looking at the interview timetable on our [website](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/guide/interviews/interview-timetable2) which has the interview dates for each course.

**[07:37] Dalveen, Student.**

And what if the technology goes wrong or the internet disconnects?

**[07:41] Ian, Admissions Operations Team.**

Above all don't worry. We know these things can sometimes happen and your interviewers will understand. We do recommend that you and your school, if that's where you're having your interview, test the technology beforehand to make sure it works and that you're comfortable with it. Remember your interviewers will want you to do well and be able to see your potential. If the technology goes wrong or the connection is bad, make sure you tell your interviewers so they're aware. If the interview can't proceed then don't worry, the college will rearrange it as soon as they can.

**[08:12] Dalveen, Student.**

Thanks so much Ian.

We hope the technical side of things makes sense to you now, but there are some other things you might like to think about before your interview, some of these are very practical.

* Talk to school if your interview is taking place there and make sure you know where it will be. Make sure this is a quiet place. If it's at school they'll be able to help with this, but if it's at home you'll need to think in advance.
* Wear headphones if you're likely to be distracted by background noises.
* If there are any adjustments you need because of a disability make sure whoever has invited you to interview knows about these.
* Have a drink of water to hand, ideally in a bottle that can't spill.
* Once you're in the interview, check that your head isn't cut off by your camera and that you can look directly at the screen. Please don't record this interview - it's meant to be a private conversation.
* In terms of the questions you might be asked, have a copy of a personal statement and any written work you've submitted just in case you want to refer to them.
* Remind yourself about the answers you gave in any admissions tests and don't worry if you don't know an answer immediately see if you can work your way through it out loud, this helps the tutor see how you think. Remember in most subjects there's often no right or wrong answer.
* Practice by talking to someone, anyone, even your dog about your subject. Remind yourself why you wanted to study it in the first place.
* Don't try and Google any answers during your interview. Aside from the fact that this is cheating, an interview is like a conversation and you'll be very obvious if you zone out or are distracted.

More than anything, try not to worry too much and just be yourself. Remember if you're being interviewed it means you're a strong contender. You just have to show the tutors how awesome you are!

You can find out more information and advice about all aspects of interviews including some detailed subject-specific information about the sort of questions you might be asked on our [website](http://www.ox.ac.uk/interviews). Good luck and we hope you find the experience interesting and maybe even enjoyable!

**[10:22] Closing title: University of Oxford www.ox.ac.uk/interviews**

**[10:34] END**