

Preparing Students for Online Oxbridge Interviews

Siân Bex – Queens' College Cambridge

Why Are Interviews Online?

- Limit travel in Covid times
- There were positives for those having online interviews last year
- Online interviews may remain for some subjects, at some Colleges



What will it look like?

- Aim and content will be the same as if the interview was in person
- Cambridge on either Zoom or Whereby
- Oxford used Teams in 2020
- Technology and resources required will depend on the University / Course / College however...
- Run through with student helpers?



What they might need

- A fully charged internet enabled device (not a mobile phone) with webcam, speakers and microphone – do a test run
- A reliable internet connection
- A quiet location away from distractions that's suits the student
- Pen and paper
- Access to technology that you have been asked to use i.e. tablet to access Jamboard
- Inform the College if you have any access needs



Some might need...

- To share their workings with the interviewer
- Ideally access to a tablet and stylus (some subjects)
- Their college will confirm expectations in the invitation
- Speak to the College if you need anything to access the interview



At Interview Assessments and Pre-Reading for Interviews

- Traditional At Interview Assessments expected to take part in the weeks before interview
- Expect a staff member to observe
- Cancelled for some subjects
- At interview pre-reading sent out via email
- Cambridge winter pool in January this year



Technical Fails and Other Misses

- Keep a copy of the admissions office telephone number in case there is a problem
- Tell us if there is a problem
- Connection drop? Try to reconnect
- Don't panic – we know they will happen and we have built in time to allow for this



Preparation

- Encourage / support students to have a practice run
- Examples online
- Cameras on
- Don't record it or share the questions you were asked



Preparation for Content

- Aim of the interview is the same as it would be in person
- Talk confidently about their subject
- Practice but don't over prepare
- Online example interviews
- Reread the personal statement, books they said they read and submitted essays



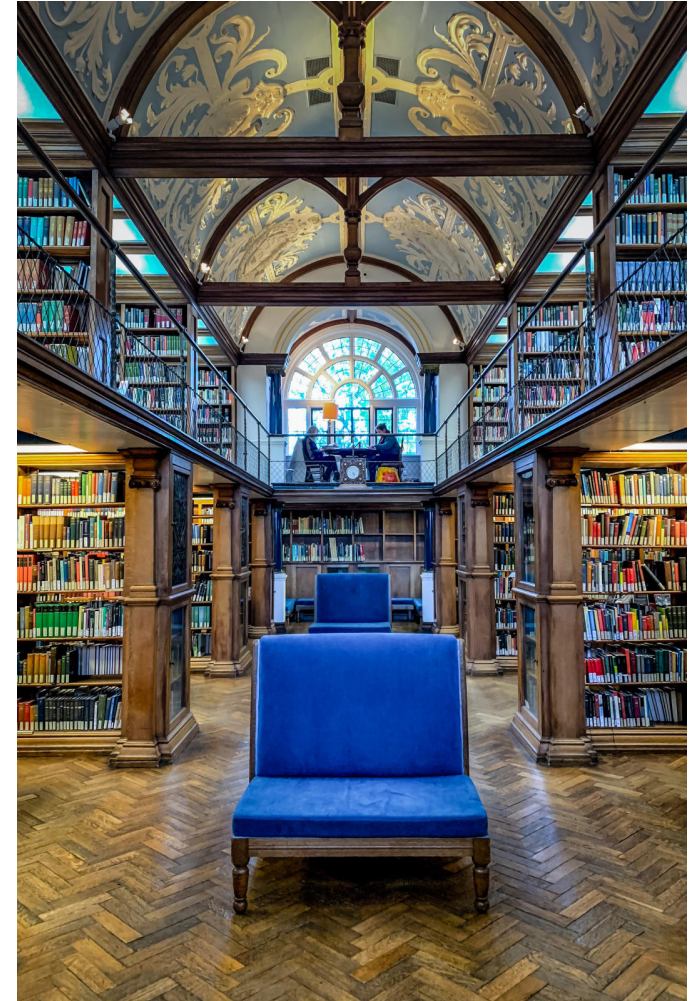
Possible Questions? Cambridge

- Relevant to your course
- Information provided in the written application / essays submitted
- Related to what they have read
- Think about what might get asked
- Read around the subject
- Show an interest in topics that they want to talk about
- Sciences – ‘read in more depth about 1 or more aspects of the subject you are particularly interested in’
- Arts – ‘read something outside your prescribed text and think critically about it’
- Ensure existing knowledge and understanding is fluent
- Topical issues and developments that relate to your subject



Preparing

- Practice talking about their subject with someone they don't know well
- Gain experience of expressing their ideas and opinions in response to unknown questions
- Don't want them to sound practiced – just comfortable
- Don't know an answer?
- Making mistakes?
- Opportunity for questions at the end
- Enjoy the experience
- Relax
- Be themselves
- Be on time



Any Questions



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE