



# University Interviews Guide

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## Accountancy

(also banking, finance and insurance)

**Essential A levels** None.

**Useful A levels** Possibly maths and economics.

**Chance of being interviewed** Most applicants are offered places on the basis of their UCAS form, but there is a chance you may be interviewed.

What you need to know

- An accountancy course will not train you to become a professional in the field: you will still have to complete professional qualifications after your degree. However, you will normally be exempted from some parts of the professional course.
- You should try to get some work experience in a finance-related industry. Identify what you have learned from the experience in order to discuss it in an interview.
- Make sure you have some understanding of what the industries of accountancy, finance, insurance and banking involve and be clear about why you want to work in them. For example, accountancy is concerned with the management of money, but a degree may not just lead to a job as a chartered accountant. Graduates may go into high finance, or general management, or become entrepreneurs.
- Find out as much as you can from the websites of the industries' professional bodies listed here.

### Accountancy

The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales: [www.icaew.co.uk](http://www.icaew.co.uk)

The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants: [www.accaglobal.com](http://www.accaglobal.com)

The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants: [www.cima.global](http://www.cima.global)

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy: [www.cipfa.org.uk](http://www.cipfa.org.uk)

### Retail banking

Chartered Institute of Bankers: [www.cib.org.uk](http://www.cib.org.uk)

Building Societies Association: [www.bsa.org.uk](http://www.bsa.org.uk)

### Investment and Corporate Banking

London Investment Banking Association: [www.liba.org.uk](http://www.liba.org.uk)

### Insurance

The Chartered Insurance Institute: [www.cii.co.uk](http://www.cii.co.uk)

## Sample interview questions

- What is the difference between a certified and a management accountant?
- What is accountancy?
  
- Why does a career in accountancy/banking/insurance interest you?
- Why do you want to do this degree rather than a business studies degree?
- If you can become an accountant after any degree, why do you want to specialize now?
  
- Have you looked at any of the websites of the professional bodies? What did you find out?
- What did the accountancy firm you visited on your work experience do? Who were its clients?

## Actuarial science/studies

**Essential A levels** Maths.

**Useful A levels** Further maths and economics.

**Chance of being interviewed** Many applicants will be offered places on the basis of their UCAS form, but some applicants are interviewed.

### What you need to know

- Actuaries calculate insurance and pension risks using statistical techniques.
- You need to be very good at maths and very interested in financial issues.
- You will need to stick at it: you will have more years of professional training after graduation.
- Try to meet an actuary and talk to them about what the job involves.
- Visit [www.actuaries.org.uk](http://www.actuaries.org.uk).

### Sample interview questions

- What are the tasks of an actuary?
- Why do you want to be an actuary?
  
- What are your favourite areas of maths and why?
- What did you learn from your work experience with the pensions company?

- How could an ageing population affect the pensions industry?
- What are the insurance implications of higher levels of car crime in some inner-city areas?
- From what you have studied in A level maths, can you think of a possible statistical method to help us calculate car insurance premiums?

## Agriculture

### What you need to know

- You should have work experience in farming.
- You must be up to date with current political and economic issues in farming.
- Visit [www.ukagriculture.com](http://www.ukagriculture.com).

Look at the sample interview questions under: 'Biology', 'Business studies' and 'Veterinary science'.

## American studies

**Essential A levels** Requirements vary, but English and History are often asked for.

**Useful A levels** Politics.

**Chance of being interviewed** Interviews are more common than for other humanities degrees. This is because people often have misconceptions about the course they are applying for.

### What you need to know

- If you want to study some literature, some history and some politics, and get to study at a foreign university, then this could be the course for you.
- Courses vary. Some offer the chance to study film, music or visual arts. Others are more like a traditional English or history degree. Make sure you know which you are applying for.
- Expect questions on American literature that you have read (questions will mostly be based on what you have put in your personal statement).
- Expect questions on American history.
- Visit [www.americansc.org.uk](http://www.americansc.org.uk).

## Sample interview questions

- Do you have any personal or family reasons for wanting to do American studies?
- Do you think American culture is overwhelming British culture?
- What do you think are the social problems facing Britain today?
  
- What American literature have you read away from your set texts?
- Will J D Salinger be remembered in 200 years time? Why or why not? What about Jack Kerouac?
- What was the context in which John Steinbeck wrote *The Grapes of Wrath*?
  
- What current American political issues interest you?
- What are the differences between the Democrats and Republicans?
- Was George W Bush elected fairly?
  
- What do you hope to gain from your time at an American university?
- Do you know which American and Canadian universities are linked with our university?

## Anatomy

See sample interview questions under: 'Biology' and 'Medicine'

## Animal sciences

### What you need to know

- Look at the sample interview questions under: 'Biology' and 'Veterinary science'.
- For specialist courses, such as equine science and animal welfare management, relevant work experience or voluntary work will be vital.

## Anthropology

**Essential A levels** None.

**Useful A levels** For a small number of courses, a science A level such as biology or sociology is helpful.

**Chance of being interviewed** Many applicants will be offered places on the basis of their UCAS form, but some courses do still interview.

### What you need to know

- Be very clear in your own mind that you understand what anthropology is. It is the study of human behaviour, beliefs, institutions and the various societies in which people live.
- Think about whether you are interested in the social or biological aspects of anthropology, or both.
- Interviews will tend to focus on comments made in your personal statement.

- Interviewers are looking for evidence of interest (books you have read, museums you have visited, overseas visits). If you have travelled abroad, can you compare other societies with your own?
- Check if the course will involve field work and whether you will be funded to do this.

### Sample interview questions

- What made you decide to apply for anthropology?
- Have any of your A level subjects influenced your interest and why?
- What do you read when you are not studying?
- What tensions do you think the Inuit deal with?
- Do all societies have heroes?
- Why do we need laws?
- How has life changed for men in the last fifty years?
- Why do some societies try to impose their values and beliefs on to others?
- Explain the national grief during Princess Diana's funeral.

## Archaeology

**Essential A levels** None.

**Chance of being interviewed** While many courses will make you an offer on the basis of your UCAS form, a significant minority will interview.

### What you need to know

- Really do try and get some experience of excavations and digs (visit [www.britarch.ac.uk](http://www.britarch.ac.uk)).
- Do as much introductory reading about archaeology as you can.
- Think about how the study of archaeology helps us to understand history.
- If the course involves overseas trips, will financial help be available?

### Sample interview questions

- Why do you want to do a course in archaeology?
- Which do you prefer: archaeology or prehistory?
- Do people learn from history?
- Why should money be spent on archaeology when medicine needs so much?
- Why should taxpayers spend £10,000 for you to study archaeology?
- Who cares if evidence of an ancient basket-weaving tribe is found in southern Italy?
- How can we date artefacts? Are there any other methods besides radiocarbon dating?
- What are the arguments for and against keeping the Parthenon marbles (Elgin marbles) at the British Museum?
- What countries have you travelled to?

- Have you visited any archaeological sites? Which ones?

#### Student's comment

- 'There were (luckily) few questions about archaeology itself and nothing on ancient history. The interviewer did, however, give me an address to contact when I said I wanted to go on a dig in my year off.'

#### Architecture

**Essential A levels** For a small number of degree courses, maths and/or physics, plus art, are required. Some universities ask for an arts/science mix. *NB A portfolio of drawings and ideas is essential.*

**Useful A levels** Art, maths and physics.

**Chance of being interviewed** Most courses will interview and inspect portfolios.

#### What you need to know

- It is essential to show an interest in the history of architecture (for example classical Greek and Roman, Gothic, organic and international styles) and the work and influence of architects such as Vitruvius, William of Sens, Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier.
- You must have a portfolio of drawings including your own ideas for buildings and drawings of existing buildings. Other artwork could be included as an addition.
- You must be able to talk about your ideas. Think about the three elements of design: the look, the cost and the making.
- You will need to have confirmed your commitment to a career in architecture through work experience.
- Remember that architecture is a multidisciplinary profession requiring a combination of artistic, technological and sociological expertise. The challenge of architecture is to produce, within a given budget, an aesthetically pleasing design which will stand up to wear and tear and is the kind of building people would like to live or work in.
- Visit the website of the Royal Institute of British Architects: [www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com).

#### Sample interview questions

- Why do you want to study architecture? How long have you wanted to be an architect?
- Architecture is an underpaid and overworked profession, so why do you want to go into it?
- Schools of architecture each have their own strengths and specialities. Why did you choose to apply to study architecture at this particular university?
- Are there any buildings that have particularly influenced you?
- Do you have a favourite contemporary architect? Who is it and why?
- Describe a building that you like, of any style or period.
- What do you know about the architectural styles of the 18th and 19th centuries, i.e. neoclassicism, the Gothic revival and romantic architecture?
- Describe the front of St Paul's Cathedral in London.
- Have you read any books about architecture? Which ones?

- How have you tried to broaden your knowledge and understanding of architecture?
- Do you think your A levels are relevant to studying architecture?
  
- What do you think about Prince Charles and the modern/post-modern debate in architecture?
- Do you think that the redevelopment of the Docklands area in London has been successful?
- How do you think office blocks should be designed?
- Do you have anything against buildings showing their structures outwardly?
- Finland has a much higher percentage of women architects than Britain. Why do you think that is?
  
- Why are you interested in landscape architecture?
- Do you think community landscaping is important and why?

### Students' comments

- 'I was asked to solve some 3D problems on a piece of paper, which I couldn't do, but the interviewer refused to let me give up until I'd at least got close. As a result I spent about ten to fifteen minutes on two problems.'
- 'While I showed the interviewer my portfolio he maintained a perfectly blank expression and made no comments.'
  
- 'I was asked very specific questions about periods of architectural history, which is hard with a subject like architecture because you don't study it at school. These questions only show how well you've been drilled for the interview, not whether you will be a creative and good architecture student.'
  
- 'I was told in a letter about the interview to be prepared to answer questions on modern architecture, construction and the building industry, but none was asked. However, the interviewer was very interested in all the artwork in my portfolio.'

## Art and design

**Essential A levels** Art or design A level or AVCE. These will allow you to build up the portfolio you need to get on to an art foundation course. *NB Most entrants to art and design degrees will have done a one-year art foundation course after their A levels. Some AVCE art and design students gain entry to higher education courses without doing a foundation course.*

### What you need to know

Mostly, artistic sixth-form students take art A level, which is the study of painting, drawing and sculpture. Yet most university students in this field study design subjects such as graphic design, fashion design, product design and interior design. An art foundation course acts as a bridge between A levels and design degrees.

The normal attributes of an art foundation course are as follows.

- It is one year long, full time.
- Fees are not normally charged if you take the course while you are still eighteen years old.
- In the first term you will try out all the major areas of design – graphic, fashion, product, interior and others depending on the course.
- In the second term you will try to decide which area of art and design you would like to specialize in. You will begin to concentrate on this area so that you have a specialist portfolio ready for the degree or HND course you wish to apply for.
- You will be expected to work hard on your drawing skills throughout the course.

- It is a very intense year and it is not an easy option. By the time you have completed the course you should know whether art and design is for you or not. If you feel that you do not want to do a degree in art or design then you can apply for other degrees on the strength of the A levels that you have.
- It is very common for students to start an art foundation course thinking that they want to do a certain sort of design (for example, fashion) and then, once they have tried out everything else, to decide to do something different (for example, illustration).
- Most art and design degrees and HND courses make the successful completion of an art foundation course an entry requirement.
- Visit the websites of the National Society for Education in Art and Design ([www.nsead.org](http://www.nsead.org)) and the Design Council ([www.designcouncil.org.uk](http://www.designcouncil.org.uk)).

### Sample interview questions

- How did you design and make some of the pieces in your portfolio? Why did you choose a particular style?
- Which is your favourite piece of work from your portfolio?
- What do you think is good about your drawing?
- What motivates and inspires you?
- Which aspects of the art foundation course do you particularly wish to pursue?
- What kind of career are you considering after completing your art foundation course?
  
- What examples of industrial design inspire you?
- What types of graphic design interest you? Give me examples. Who do you think has influenced this designer?
- Choose a piece in your portfolio? Why have you selected it?
- Is fine art design?
- Which fashion designers have you looked at? What is different about their work?
- How many sections will you need to make this garment?
  
- Who are your favourite artists?

### Students' comments

- 'There were no questions, just a review of my portfolio. It is really important to make sure all your good work is in your portfolio, and to include a wide range of work.'
- 'It wasn't really like an interview. We had a group talk about the textile design course and then we were shown round the department. Then they saw us individually but there were no questions. They just told us what they thought of our portfolios.'
- 'I was left feeling in great doubt about the quality of my work.'

'One thing that I was quite pleased about was that the interviewer told me what was good and bad about my work. He told me how I could improve my style in my year off.'

## Astronomy

### What you need to know

- Look at the sample interview questions under: 'Physics' and 'Maths'.
- Wider reading and visits to observatories will be important.

## Biochemistry

**Essential A levels** Always chemistry. Some degrees will say you must have biology as well. Others will ask for chemistry plus one of maths, physics or biology. Doing chemistry, biology and maths or physics will keep all biochemistry courses open to you.

### *What you need to know*

- Biochemistry is the study of biology at a molecular level.
- Look at the sample questions under: 'Biology', 'Chemistry' and 'Natural sciences'.
- Visit the website of the Biochemical Society: [www.biochemistry.org](http://www.biochemistry.org).

## Biology

**Essential A levels** Biology and chemistry.

**Useful A levels** Maths or physics.

**Chance of being interviewed** Most courses will make you an offer on the basis of your UCAS form but a significant minority of courses still interview.

### *What you need to know*

- You need to be fascinated by the living world and have examples to prove this that you can talk about in the interview.
- Questions will cover topics that you have already studied for your biology A level.
- Degree courses can involve much independent research, so examples of your interest in biology outside of school will be useful.
- If you are applying for a more specialist course (for example, botany) can you explain why?
- Visit the website: [www.iob.org](http://www.iob.org).

### Sample interview questions

- Why do you enjoy biology and which aspects of the subject do you like most?
- Why didn't you apply to study medicine, rather than anatomy and developmental biology?
- You want to study cell biology, so why are you *not* taking chemistry A level?
- What kind of career are you interested in pursuing after your degree?
- Tell us about the fieldwork you have done for your biology and geography A levels.
- Tell us about one main theory of cell biology.
- Why do you think free-living chloroplasts 'decided' to form into membrane-bound cells?
- How can you show the differences between a free-living chloroplast and one from a cell?
- Describe the structure of an amino acid. What are the properties of the amino and carboxyl groups? Tell us about the formation of peptide bonds.
- What do you know about protein folding?
- Describe the structure of DNA.

- Tell us about the sequencing of the human genome. What else do you know about the human genome project?
- What features make fungi different?
- In the study of human sciences, how can you make a connection between economics and biology?
- Can theories in economics and biology fully mix in a society?
- How is maths used in biology? Is it important?
- Why are you interested in epidemiology?
- What articles have you read in the *New Scientist*?
- What do you think about human cloning and other biology-related issues currently in the news?
- What do you think about animal/human dissection?
- How would you go about curing cancer?
- What nutritional problems are caused by famine?
- What are the issues when a society relies on one main type of foodstuff?
- What are the benefits of genetically modified foods? Are there disadvantages?
- What do you think is the value of gardening programmes?
- Tell us what you know about acid rain.
- What is the difference between nature studies and ecology?
- Why do you want to study zoology?
- How do you investigate animal behaviour experimentally?
- Look at this object [an elephant's tooth]. Guess what it is.

### Students' comments

- 'The two interviewers would begin by quizzing me on A level biology concepts by asking me straightforward questions and getting me to draw things on the blackboard. Then they would throw in some difficult, advanced chemistry and expect me to take the discussion to a biochemistry degree level. I was not able to do this well at all and I had to say "I don't know" many times. Much of the interview was spent with them explaining principles of biochemistry to me, which I still found very difficult to follow.'
- 'I was shown round the whole department and asked if I had seen such equipment before. Everything was explained to me, but if I had known beforehand what equipment I would be shown it would have helped.'
- 'We were shown a lot of the labs, but it was very much a case of "look but don't touch". A lot of the equipment was very expensive.'

'When he asked me about acid rain I couldn't answer sufficiently and so I asked him to explain to me so that I learnt something. He seemed pleased by the fact that I wanted to learn.'

## Biotechnology

See sample interview questions under: 'Biology', 'Chemistry' and 'Natural sciences'

## Botany

See sample interview questions under: 'Biology', 'Chemistry' and 'Natural sciences'

# Building

## *What you need to know*

- You should have a clear idea about why you want to enter this career field and evidence to support this (for example, work experience or talks with building professionals).
- Look at the sample interview questions under: 'Architecture', 'Engineering' and 'Surveying'.
- Visit the website [www.ciob.org.uk](http://www.ciob.org.uk).

## Business studies and management

**Essential A levels** None.

**Useful A levels** Possibly maths and economics.

**Chance of being interviewed** Most courses will make offers on the basis of the UCAS form.

## *What you need to know*

- The subjects that are always studied for these degrees are: economics; human resources; marketing; accounting; finance; and, usually, quantitative methods (statistics) and IT. Try to get across to an interviewer that you can cope with a wide range of subjects.
- Do not be concerned about the plethora of different course names. Business studies, business and management, business management, management studies, business administration, commerce and so on – it's all the same thing.
- Some courses allow you to specialize in a particular field (for example, marketing) by the end of the course. Others stay general to the end.
- Think about your personal qualities and what you have learned from any work experience or part-time work you have done. Any evidence of working in a team would be particularly useful.
- Visit [www.bized.ac.uk](http://www.bized.ac.uk) or the website of the Institute of Management: [www.inst-mgt.org.uk](http://www.inst-mgt.org.uk).

## *Sample interview questions*

- Why do you want to study business when your A levels are not directly linked to it?
- What specific areas of business are you interested in and why?
- Define marketing.
- What types of marketing are there?
- Could you market a product or service you do not believe in?
- What is direct marketing?
- Do you know what below-the-line marketing is?

- What do you think will be the most important industries in Britain in the next decade and after?
- What do you think about Sunday trading?
- What is the difference between a clearing bank and an investment bank?
- How can businesses make money out of leisure time?
- Is the customer always right?
  
- What qualities should a manager have?
- What skills are needed in hospitality management?
- What role does teamwork play in hospitality management?
- Can you think of examples of good and bad restaurant management?
  
- Tell us about any work experience you have had.
- Have you done any part-time work? If so, how would you improve the company you worked for?

### Students' comments

- 'Apart from the actual interview there was also a group discussion session, where they monitored our behaviour and reactions within a group.'

'We were placed in groups of five and each group was assigned a first-year student to be with us for the day. In the afternoon my group had to go into a room and discuss a particular issue, while the student, a lecturer and a retailer quietly listened and observed us.'

### *Chemistry*

**Essential A levels** Chemistry and usually maths or physics. Some courses ask for chemistry, maths and physics, while some prefer chemistry, maths and biology.

**Chance of being interviewed** Most universities will make offers based on the content of the UCAS form, but a significant minority still interview.

### *What you need to know*

- You will probably be asked questions on what you have studied at A level.
- Any extra reading of scientific journals and knowledge about science issues in the news would go down well with interviewers.
- Try to find out about the practical applications of chemistry, such as food science or the pharmaceutical industry.
- Visit [www.rsc.org](http://www.rsc.org).

### Sample interview questions

- Why do you want to study chemistry?
- What is your favourite topic in chemistry? Why do you like it?
- What kind of career are you considering after finishing your chemistry degree?

- Why is sodium chloride soluble in water and barium sulphate insoluble?
- What do you get if you react benzene with chlorine?
- How do you know that carbon forms a tetrahedral structure?
- What reactions do halogenoalkanes undergo and why?
- Draw some half-cells and discuss redox equilibria.
- What is special about transition metal compounds?
- How can you tell that sodium chloride is bonded ionically?
- What is the most recent chemistry experiment you have carried out? Describe it.
  
- What are your views on animal testing?

### Students' comments

- 'I was asked lots of A level chemistry questions, which I hadn't expected at all.'
- 'Both my interviews were subject based. One was organic and the other physical and inorganic. I was asked to discuss a topic of my choice and they developed it from there. The questions asked were quite demanding because they wanted you to answer in depth. They didn't want plain facts – they wanted you to think why things happen, apply your existing knowledge and predict reactions you hadn't come across before.'

## Classics/classical studies

**Essential A levels** For some classics courses, Latin or ancient Greek are required (you may have to translate some text at interview).

**Useful A levels** Classical civilization, English literature and history.

**Chance of being interviewed** You should presume that you will get some interviews.

### *What you need to know*

- For a classics degree, you will normally be required to have an A level in Latin or ancient Greek. For classical studies or classical civilization, however, most A levels would be considered.
- If not ancient Greek or Latin, some flair for languages will definitely help with this course.
- The course covers literature, drama, history, politics and philosophy. It is suitable for students who enjoy reading books and thinking about the ideas behind them.
- Try to visit museums with relevant collections and ancient sites (in Rome or Greece if possible!).
- Interview questions will often relate to what you have studied already, especially if you have studied ancient Greek, Latin or classical civilization. Most other questioning will tend to refer to what you have put in your personal statement.
- Visit [www.sas.ac.uk/icls/ClassAss](http://www.sas.ac.uk/icls/ClassAss) and [www.british-museum.ac.uk](http://www.british-museum.ac.uk).

### *Sample interview questions*

- History is a large part of a classics degree, so why aren't you studying it at A level?
- Why are you interested in classical archaeology?
  
- What do you think are the differences (if any) between Roman and Greek drama?

- What are the similarities between Homer and Virgil?
- What have you learnt from the dialogues of Plato?
- Is Epicurus misunderstood?
- How has Greek tragedy influenced modern literature? Give me some examples.
- If, as you say, Aristotle has influenced empirical philosophers, in what ways has this occurred?
- How is the human body represented in classical art?

## Community and youth studies

### *What you need to know*

- Look at the sample interview questions under: 'Education', 'Professions allied to medicine', 'Sociology' and 'Social work'.
- Relevant experience or voluntary work will be important.
- Visit [www.csv.org.uk](http://www.csv.org.uk).

## Computer courses

**Essential A levels** Some courses require maths. A very small number of courses want further maths.

**Useful A levels** Maths, physics, philosophy and ICT.

**Chance of being interviewed** You should presume that you will get some interviews.

### *What you need to know*

- Computing degrees vary in their content. Make sure you know exactly what you have applied for as there is a wide range of courses on offer.
- Some courses will be very concerned about your maths ability. For others this will be less of an issue. Some courses may be interested in your design ideas.
- Try to think about all the experience you have had with computers and programming, inside and outside of school. Also, think about any work experience that may have involved computer systems. What did you learn from this? Did you have any ideas for improvement?
- Visit [www.bcs.org.uk](http://www.bcs.org.uk).

### Sample interview questions

- What interests you about computer science? How did you become interested in computers?
- What experience have you had of working with computers?
- What did you do for your A level computer science project?
- Why haven't you done computer science up to now? How do you know you will like it?
- What do you see yourself doing ten years from now? Will it involve computers?
- How many zeros are there in 25! (i.e. factorial twenty-five)?
- How many zeros are there in 1000! (i.e. factorial one thousand)?
- Look at this set of data [provided by interviewer]. What is the minimal spanning tree?
- Using Turbo Pascal, draw a circle without using the circle command.
- Suggest a method of listing prime numbers to 1000.
- Can machines make their own decisions?
- What is in a computer?

## Students' comments

- 'After a preliminary conversation and questioning, I was asked to solve some problems on paper. As soon as each problem was on paper they expected the solution – impatience was in the air, as was an unforgiving demand for accuracy. I'm afraid I cracked under the pressure. Applicants should be aware that the nature of pressure changes very much when one has to write, rather than talk.'
- 'A lot of the interview seemed to be based on the question, "Why did you apply for this course?" It would seem the stock response is, "Because I like computers." So a better answer to this question would probably be about why computers are important.'

## Criminology

See sample interview questions under: 'Sociology', 'Law' and 'Psychology'

## Dance

### *What you need to know*

- Prepare well for auditions and take account of the differing procedures at the various schools of dance that you have applied to.
- Make sure you know whether or not the courses you are applying for will train you as a professional dancer.
- Look at the sample interview questions under: 'Drama and theatre studies'.
- Visit [www.cdnet.org.uk](http://www.cdnet.org.uk).

## Dentistry

**Essential A levels** Chemistry and biology would be acceptable for most courses, but a few still prefer chemistry, biology and maths or physics.

**Chance of being interviewed** Expect to be interviewed by all of your choices.

### *What you need to know*

- You will need to be able to explain fully why you want to become a dentist and provide evidence to back up your claims.
- Interviewers will be interested in any work experience you have done in dentistry. Can you explain what you learnt from it?
- Show your interest by being aware of some current issues or difficulties facing dentists. Is there one that you could talk about in more depth?
- Interviewers will want to know that you have a high level of manual dexterity. Try to think of things you have done that *prove* your manual dexterity.
- Visit the websites of the British Dental Association ([www.bda-dentistry.org.uk](http://www.bda-dentistry.org.uk)) and the General Dental Council ([www.gdc-uk.org](http://www.gdc-uk.org)).

## Sample interview questions

- Why do you want to do dentistry, rather than medicine?
- How come you want to do dentistry when you are not doing biology A level?
- What would you like to do after your dentistry degree, for example: research, a BSc or general practice?
  
- What qualities make a good dentist? Give some examples.
- How do you know that you are manually dexterous?
- How do you help a friend if they are anxious?
- What would you *not* like about dentistry?
  
- What are orthodontics?
- What is cosmetic dentistry?
- What is preventative dentistry?
- Tell us what you know about tooth decay.
  
- Do you know of any current issues or difficulties facing dentists today? Tell us more about one particular issue.
- Where do you see dentistry going in the future?
- Do you think that a degree in dentistry is about training or education?

## Students' comments

- 'I came away feeling that it was an unfair interview, but in fact I was only questioned about things I had put on my UCAS form (though in a very challenging manner). Nothing really was asked about dentistry.'
  
- 'It was very important to know what you had gained from your work experience – sort of, "What is life like beside the dentist's chair?"!'

## Development studies

See sample interview questions under: 'Economics', 'Geography', 'Politics', 'Sociology' and 'Anthropology'

## Dietetics

See 'Professions Allied to Medicine'

## Drama and theatre studies

**Essential A levels** Some courses require English literature. A few courses specify English and theatre studies.

**Useful A levels** English literature, English literature and language and theatre studies.

**Chance of being interviewed** Expect to be called for an interview and audition from all of your choices.

## *What you need to know*

- If you want to enter a career in professional acting, you will find essential information on the website of the Conference of Drama Schools ([www.drama.ac.uk](http://www.drama.ac.uk)). Or get a copy of *The Conference of Drama Schools Official UK Guide to Drama Training 2004* by sending a C5-sized stamped addressed envelope to: President CDS Ltd, c/o 11 Bates Close, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 7NT. You can download an abridged version of the official guide from the above website.
- You need to be clear about which courses will train you to work as a professional actor and which courses are more concerned with the criticism and analysis of the theatre.
- If you are applying for acting courses, be clear about what you have learned from all the roles you have played so far.
- If you are applying for technical courses, think about the problems you have encountered in the productions you have been involved with and how you have dealt with those problems.
- Seek advice from teachers or tutors with recent and successful experience of helping people prepare for audition.

## Sample interview questions

- Which modern playwrights do you like?
- Talk about the last play you saw.
- What books do you like to read?
- In what ways would an actor benefit from learning to dance?
- Talk about Shakespeare as a dramatist.
- Tell us about the qualities you like in an actor you admire.
  
- What type of dance are you interested in?
- What dance experience have you had (i.e. lessons, performances)?
- What do you hope to do as a career after this course?

### *Students' comments*

- 'It was not an interview, it was an audition. I had to learn three pieces to perform, of no more than two minutes each: some Shakespeare in blank verse; a contemporary work; and something of my own choice.'
- 'As well as the interview there was a 45-minute drama practical, which included mime and speech, individual and pair work. I didn't find it too difficult.'
- 'It's essential to arrive early for your dance audition so that you have plenty of time to warm up. Some dancers arrived late and got in a panic about changing and warming up.'
- 'When it came to the actual dance audition the panel made people wearing legwarmers take them off – but they didn't ask nicely at all. Being shouted at in front of a group of people you don't know is very unnerving!'

## Economics

**Essential A levels** Some courses specify maths.

**Useful A levels** Maths and economics.

**Chance of being interviewed** Most courses will make offers on the basis of the UCAS form, but a small number of courses still interview all applicants.

### *What you need to know*

- Keep abreast of economic issues that are in the news.
- If you are studying economics at A level, be prepared to talk in depth about topics you have covered.
- If you are not studying economics at A Level, be prepared to do some extra reading on some economic issues that interest you. Also, think about the A Levels you *are* taking to see if they have any cross-curricular links with economics. Be prepared to talk about these.
- It is important to show that you have a genuine interest in economics – not just an interest in working for an investment bank!
- Visit [www.res.org.uk](http://www.res.org.uk).

### Sample interview questions

- Discuss interest rate movements and their effects on the strength of a currency, imports/exports and investment.
- Is the current British taxation system fair? What effect do tax thresholds have? What is meant by 'the poverty trap'?
- What is so bad about inflation?
- What would you do to solve a country's long-term inflation problems?
- What are the possible advantages and disadvantages of introducing a minimum wage?
- If a high minimum wage leads to unemployment, would you still support it?
- What do you think about the inequality of earning in society? Is it right for people of higher natural intelligence to earn more money?
- What is wrong with having a balance of payments deficit? Can't a surplus be just as bad?

- What do you think about the privatization of public utilities and the oligopolies it creates?
- Should prisons or the army be privatized?
- Should there be tolls on motorways if they could be introduced with no social costs?
  
- What are the pros and cons of European Monetary Union?
- Discuss the European Union's agricultural policy. How does it work and who does it benefit?
- When the countries of eastern Europe joined the European Union, what were thought to be the disadvantages?
- In terms of world trade, what are the benefits for a country of being in a trade bloc?
  
- How important are economic models?
- What is monetarism? Who started it?
- Work out, on a whiteboard, the principle of supply and demand, starting from first principles.
- In economics, what is the multiplier?
- Why has Keynesianism been abandoned?
- How did the economic policies of the early 1980s, designed to combat inflation, lead to higher unemployment?
- What caused the crisis in the Asian economies in the 1990s?
  
- What stories have you been following lately in *The Economist*?
- Do you think that *The Economist* has a political standpoint and, if so, which one?
- Discuss any major current economic problem or issue.
  
- What can be done to reduce pollution in the world, particularly in developing countries?
- Compare the effects of an earthquake in San Francisco and one in a developing country.
- Should we encourage nuclear power?
- What are the problems facing agriculture in Britain?
- What economic effect would a peace settlement in the Middle East have?

### *Students' comments*

- 'It's important to be up-to-date with current affairs and to have an opinion. You also need to know about all the relevant books, journals and newspapers and be aware of their political stances.'
- 'I was asked to choose a mathematical technique or theorem (such as induction or dimensional analysis) and explain the process. Then the interviewer asked me to apply that technique to economics. It was a very unusual interview.'
- 'Most of the interview was taken up with questions on maths and statistics which the interviewer set out for me. I had to do the equations on a board in front of him.'

## Education (teacher training)

**Essential A levels** At least one from: art, biology, chemistry, design and technology, drama (theatre studies), English, French, geography, German, history, ICT, Italian, maths, music, physical education, physics, religious studies (theology), Spanish. The subjects that are underlined are those usually best for primary teaching.

**Chance of being interviewed** It is a requirement that all applicants for teacher training are interviewed.

### *What you need to know*

- At interview you are normally asked to provide a short written statement on a given topic to ascertain your standard of written English.
- You must have had some sort of work experience or observational experience in a school appropriate to the age range you are applying for.
- You must do more than just describe your experience. What did you learn from it? What difficulties did the teachers face? What did they enjoy about the job? What initiatives were being implemented? Did you think there was too much testing?
- Is there an academic discipline you want to specialize in? If not, why not?
- Visit [www.canteach.gov.uk](http://www.canteach.gov.uk).

### Sample interview questions

- Why do you want to become a teacher?
- What is a teacher's role?
- What kind of qualities should a teacher have?
- What, in your opinion and from your own experience, makes a bad teacher?
- Tell us about a teacher you admire, and why.
- What are your own good qualities and how are they relevant to teaching?
- What is your weakest subject at school?
  
- What experience of children have you had? Do you have experience of working with children?
- How is your work experience relevant to teaching? What has it taught you?
- What additional skills do you have that would be of benefit to a career in teaching (e.g. drama, sports)?
  
- What do you think about the National Curriculum?
- What do you think about the idea of 'back to basics' in education?
- What do you think about recent changes in the education system?
- Discuss an educational issue that has been in the news recently.
  
- How would you relate to other members of staff at school? What skills would you need?
- How would you deal with prejudices in the classroom?
- Do you think you will be able to develop good relationships with parents? How?
  
- Why is PE important in schools? How are the skills gained from PE important later in life?
- What is the importance of teaching history in schools? In what ways can history be taught to children?
  
- Why do you want to specialize in teaching the youngest age group?
- Why do you particularly want to teach children with learning difficulties?

### Students' comments

- 'It was a very well-structured day. It started with a 45-minute talk about the course. Then we had to write an essay with the title, "Who is a teacher accountable to?" They said it didn't matter so much what we wrote – they were more interested in style and accuracy. Then we were interviewed individually by a local head teacher and a lecturer from the university.'
- 'I applied to specialize in English and drama. The first part of the day was a session of practical exercises in drama techniques. Then we were put into groups of six and had to do a critical analysis of some poetry. Finally, there was a personal interview.'

- 'The practical PE assessment was very tiring and physically demanding. It included running, ball skills, gymnastics (forward and backward rolls, handstand, cartwheel) and a short dance sequence.'
- 'I applied to specialize in history and they expected me to have a lot of knowledge. I was asked to identify some historical artefacts. Then they asked me how I would explain them to children and how they could be used for further work.'

## Engineering

**Essential A levels** Maths and physics (chemistry for chemical engineering).

**Useful A levels** Further maths, design and technology.

**Chance of being interviewed** Many courses do still interview.

### *What you need to know*

- Make sure you know whether the courses that you are applying for will lead to you becoming a chartered or an incorporated engineer.
- If you are applying for a general engineering degree, you will need to be able to explain why. If you are applying for a more specialist engineering degree (for example, civil engineering), again, why?
- Look at the world around you. Do you see examples of engineering that fascinate you? Why do they fascinate you? How do they look? How were they made? What elements of maths and physics were used?
- Be aware of programmes such as 'a year in industry'. Visit [www.yini.org.uk](http://www.yini.org.uk).
- Visit the websites of the professional bodies listed here.

Royal Academy of Engineering: [www.raeng.org.uk](http://www.raeng.org.uk)

Institution of Civil Engineers: [www.ice.org.uk](http://www.ice.org.uk)

Institution of Chemical Engineers: [www.icheme.org](http://www.icheme.org)

Institution of Electrical Engineers: [www.see.org](http://www.see.org)

Institute of Mechanical Engineers: [www.imeche.org.uk](http://www.imeche.org.uk)

The Royal Aeronautical Society: [www.raes.org.uk](http://www.raes.org.uk)

### Sample interview questions

- What do you think engineering is?
- Give a dictionary definition of engineering.
- Where does your interest in engineering stem from?
- Have you had any experience of industry? Do you know anyone who works in industry?
- Have you thought about getting sponsorship?
- Consider a car accelerating up a hill. Describe all the external forces.
- How would you calculate acceleration? Apart from  $F=ma$ , give another way of writing Newton's second law.
- What is charge?
- Define simple harmonic motion, giving equations.
- What do you understand by the word 'acoustics'?
- What aspect of electronics are you interested in?
- How do you see the relationship between electronics and mathematics?
- What is the difference between a civil engineer and an architect?

- What do you find interesting about the new Wembley Stadium? What forces will the arch have to deal with?
- Describe an experiment you have done in physics. Where have you used what you learnt from this experiment?
- Tell us about your GCSE technology project.
- Describe the aerodynamics and electronics you designed for your GCSE technology project.
- What work have you done on computers and what programs have you written?
- You are applying to do chemical engineering, but why didn't you consider doing physics A level?

### Students' comments

- 'Most of the interview revolved around differential equations when applied to taps filling buckets with water, and questions about capacitors.'
- 'In the computation interview, the interviewer asked me how many questions I would need to ask to find a specific square he had chosen on a chessboard, if he could only answer my questions with yes or no and if the board had 128 squares.'
- 'I was asked specific questions about mechanics, oscillation and magnetic fields.'
- 'Both my interviews were very technical. Most questions somehow related to physics subjects (mechanics, electricity, forces and moments, etc.).'
- 'I was the only girl there out of approximately fifteen applicants.'

## English

**Essential A levels** English literature or English literature and language.

**Useful A levels** History, theology/religious studies, classical civilization, modern foreign languages, Latin and ancient Greek.

**Chance of being interviewed** Most courses will make offers on the basis of the UCAS form, however a significant minority of courses do still interview.

### *What you need to know*

- You need to be genuinely enthusiastic about poems, plays and novels, from classical civilizations to the present day.
- Reading beyond your A level syllabus is essential. You will need to talk about your favourite authors, poets and dramatists and explain why you like them.
- The sample interview questions below give you an idea of the type of questioning you will face. The texts chosen for discussion, however, will be those mentioned by you on your UCAS form.
- Try to think about issues relating to literature in a wider context, such as the difference between studying a text in depth or reading it for pleasure, and its links with history and religion.
- Most degrees are literature based so do *not* go on about creative writing and journalism!

### Sample interview questions

- Who is your favourite nineteenth- or twentieth-century novelist?

- What do you think of the character of Fanny Price in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*?
- In *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, how limiting is the use of the first-person form of narration?
- In *The Return of the Native* by Thomas Hardy, what do you think Egdon Heath represents?
- Do you think novels such as those of Jane Austen should be adapted for the screen?
  
- Which of Shakespeare's plays have you read, other than those you have studied at school?
- How would you define Shakespearean tragedy?
- What do you think of the ending of *King Lear*?
- How do you think the opening scene of *King Lear* influences the rest of the play?
- What does the interaction between the mad Lear and the disguised Edgar communicate and achieve?
- Is *Macbeth* Shakespeare's greatest tragedy?
- What should one feel about the character of Macbeth?
- What do you think Shakespeare suggests about the character of Macbeth in the scene in which he hallucinates and thinks he can see a dagger?
- What do you consider to be the main theme of *Othello*?
- Why does Othello shy away from talking about sex?
- Describe the sexual tension in *Much Ado About Nothing*. What does it tell us?
- What are the dramatic failures in *Hamlet*?
  
- Discuss Chaucer's art.
- Do you think Chaucer's *Wife of Bath's Tale* represents women well?
- How is *The Wife of Bath's Tale* relevant to today?
- Do you think the wife of Bath is a strong character?
  
- Choose a poem you have read and discuss its imagery, sentence structure, tone and meaning.
- Recite 'On a Grecian Urn' by Keats and then analyse it.
- Discuss some poems from *The Whitsun Weddings* by Philip Larkin.
- Analyse the poem 'Harrow-on-the-Hill' by John Betjeman.
- Was William Wordsworth patronizing towards his sister Dorothy?
- What do you think of the poetry in Ben Jonson's play *Volpone*?
- What poetry do you read outside of school and why do you enjoy it?
  
- What book are you reading at the moment? Are you enjoying it and, if so, why?
- Compare *Bridget Jones's Diary* by Helen Fielding to *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole aged 13¾* by Sue Townsend.
  
- What is the relationship between literature and art?
- How would you approach translating a text?
- Why would a writer bother to write a play when it will inevitably be subject to interpretation from the actors and director?
- When does satire become cynicism?

#### Students' comments

- 'Having taken a year out, I found it quite difficult to discuss Shakespeare in great detail, especially *Macbeth*, which I studied for GCSE.'
- 'The interview was based almost wholly on poetry and a good base of knowledge was imperative. It seemed almost like a verbal practical criticism. Every statement I made had to be fully supported.'

- 'Make sure you are thoroughly familiar with the work of at least two poets. It is important to be confident and the only way you will be is if you are familiar with all your texts and a base of poetry.'
- 'I was handed a lengthy poem, told to read it and asked to deliver a practical criticism. This was a bit nerve-racking but I think it is important to take your time to read and absorb the text and form your own opinions.'
- 'It is vital to know your texts well and it is worth preparing a couple of books that aren't on the syllabus for a discussion about your private reading.'
- 'I was asked to read over a poem and then discuss it with the interviewer. Then I was asked to speak for five minutes on a book of my choice (unprepared).'
- 'They are impressed if you use short memorized quotes to illustrate the points you make, especially from the poetry you study.'

## Environmental health

### *What you need to know*

- Environmental health officers ensure that people are protected from a wide range of hazards in the environment in its widest sense. To find out more, visit the website of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health: [www.cieh.org.uk](http://www.cieh.org.uk).
- You will need to be able to explain fully why you want to become an environmental health officer. Can you provide evidence to back up your claims?
- If you have done some work experience in environmental health, can you explain what you learnt from it?
- Be aware of some current issues or difficulties facing environmental health officers. Is there one that you could talk about in more depth?
- Try to identify anything in the subjects you have studied so far that relates to environmental health. Be prepared to expand on this.
- Think about the qualities you would need to be a good environmental health officer. Try to give examples.

## European studies

See 'Languages'

## Film, radio and TV studies

See 'Media and communication studies'

## Finance

See sample interview questions under: 'Accountancy', 'Business studies' and 'Economics'

## Geography, geology and environmental science

### Geography

**Essential A levels** Most degrees require geography.

**Useful A levels** Some BSc degrees prefer one of: biology, chemistry, maths or physics.

### **Geology/Earth sciences**

**Essential A levels** Usually two from: maths, physics, chemistry and biology.

**Useful A levels** Geography and geology.

### **Environmental science/studies**

**Essential A levels** Many courses will ask for two from: biology, chemistry, maths, physics and geography or geology.

**Chance of being interviewed** Most courses will make offers on the basis of the UCAS form but a significant minority of courses do still interview.

### *What you need to know*

- Be prepared to talk in detail about field visits you have been on.
- Make sure you are as aware as possible about your own locality. Show that you have taken in as much as possible of the world around you. Also have an awareness of world issues.
- Expect questions on the parts of the A level geography syllabus that you have covered.
- Mention any magazines that you have read or TV programmes that you have watched, but then be prepared to answer some in-depth questions on these.
- These courses contain many practical elements – they are about doing not just thinking. So try to think of examples where you have actually done and completed something, rather than just thought about it.
- Visit [www.geography.org.uk](http://www.geography.org.uk).

### **Sample interview questions**

- What is the definition of geography?
- Why study geography? What do you like about it?
- Which areas of geography do you like best?
- What interests you in the field of geology?
- Why are you interested in earth sciences?
  
- Look at these photographs. What landforms do they show and what types of rocks form these features?
- Tell us what you know about plant succession on dunes.
- Talk about the geography of a country you know.
- What era do you think the buildings in Manchester date from?
- What is special about London as opposed to other cities in England?
- What are the environmental problems in the area that you live?
- What is waste?
  
- What did you learn on your geography field trip?
- What experience of field work do you have?
- How can you apply the statistics you have learnt on your geography A level course?
- In what areas do you think sociology and geography overlap?
  
- What are the arguments for 'trade not aid'?

- What books or articles about geography have you read lately?

## Students' comments

- 'Know your subject well. Know current events. Know the reasons why you want to study geography.'
- 'I was asked a lot of questions relating to geography theory, which I was unprepared for as the letter did not indicate that the interview would be formal.'
- 'He asked me: "Do you have any questions?" So I asked: "How can the position of plate boundaries on the crust change?" This happened to be his area of research and so took up the whole interview!'

## History

**Essential A levels** Most degrees require history.

**Useful A levels** Economics, English literature, philosophy, politics, sociology and theology/religious studies.

**Chance of being interviewed** Most courses will make offers on the basis of the UCAS form, but a significant minority of courses will interview.

### *What you need to know*

- You will need to put across your passion for history – with evidence to support this.
- Show that you are genuinely interested in periods of history other than those you are studying for your A level.
- Think about the links between history and the other subjects you may be studying (for example, English literature).
- Questions will mostly be based on your A level history syllabus, wider reading that you have mentioned in your personal statement and, in a few instances, work that you have sent in.
- Try to think of examples where you have learned independently and not just relied on your teachers.
- Visit [www.history.org.uk](http://www.history.org.uk).

### Sample interview questions

- Why is history important?
- Is history really relevant to the present? Even ancient history?
- Why do you want to study history and not science, when the world is crying out for more scientists?
- What are the differences and similarities between the sciences and history?
  
- What area of history are you most interested in?
- What has been your favourite topic in the history you have studied?
- What are you studying in British and European history for your A level?
- What history books have you read?
- How is history taught at your school and in schools generally?

- For a history essay you have written, what books did you read on the topic? How did the opinions of the various authors differ?
- How important is the role of the individual in history? Is it dangerous to attach too much importance to individuals?
- In your study of social history, what group of people do you think has been hidden from history? What sources of evidence can we gain from this group?
- What is the importance of using first-hand evidence and documents in studying history?
- How can we tell whether historical documents are reliable? Even if they are one-sided, are they still useful?
- What do you think are your personal biases when you study history?
- What do you think of 'women's history'?
- Do you think historical novels are useful for historians?
  
- Do you think the holocaust should only be interpreted by Jewish historians?
- Is there any comparison between Hitler attacking the Sudetenland and Boris Yeltsin attacking Chechnya?
  
- Why are current affairs important?
- Name a situation in current affairs in which views have changed over the past fifteen years.
- What do you think of proportional representation?
- What modern trends are the political parties in Britain setting?
  
- What career do you want to follow after studying history?
- How does your work experience relate to history?

### Students' comments

- 'The interview was generally a discussion about history and he really let me choose the period that I wanted to talk about.'
- 'I had sent in an essay on Mussolini, and particularly about his use of propoganda. The interview was a detailed discussion of the ideas in my essay.'
- 'Many of the questions about the relevance of studying history were repeated many times in different ways – so know your arguments.'
- 'My interview was more of an oral examination on the history A level syllabus. I was not expecting this and had not begun to learn my syllabus in the depth required.'

## History of art

**Essential A levels** None.

**Useful A levels** Art, English literature, history, theology/religious studies, French, German, Spanish and Italian.

**Chance of being interviewed** Most courses will make you an offer on the basis of your UCAS form but a significant minority of courses do still interview.

### *What you need to know*

- If you have not studied history of art before, make sure you have visited galleries and museums. You will be expected to talk about the works of art you have seen and what you felt about them.
- Questions will mostly be based on the content of your personal statement.

- Visit [www.artchive.com](http://www.artchive.com).

### *Sample interview questions*

- Are you familiar with the main European schools of painting?
- Who are your favourite artists?
- What is your favourite period of art?
  
- Analyse eight paintings.
- Look at this reproduction of a Rembrandt painting and then talk about it.
  
- What is the difference between studying history of art and history of design?
- What do you perceive the history of design to be?
- How do you feel about studying social history as part of a course on history of design?
- Discuss the progress made in design and technology between 1850 and 1900.

## Hospitality management

### *What you need to know*

- These courses provided the basis for careers in hospitality, including jobs such as: hotel manager, restaurant manager, professional chef and receptionist. Find out more by visiting the websites of the Hospitality Training Federation ([www.htf.org.uk](http://www.htf.org.uk)) and the Hotel and Catering and International Management Association ([www.hcima.org.uk](http://www.hcima.org.uk)).
- Most courses provide training in hotel and restaurant operations, as well as teaching subjects that are very close in content to a business studies degree (but with a hospitality slant).
- Relevant work experience is important.
- Look at the sample interview questions under: 'Business studies'.

## Information management

### *What you need to know*

- The information specialist has to deal with a range of sources far beyond books and other printed material. To find out more, contact the Library Association ([www.la-hq.org.uk](http://www.la-hq.org.uk)) and the Institute of Information Scientists ([www.iis.org.uk](http://www.iis.org.uk)).
- Look at the sample interview questions under: 'Computer courses' and 'Media and communication studies'.

## International relations

See sample interview questions under: 'History' and 'Politics'

## Languages

### **European studies**

**Essential A levels** A modern European foreign language, for example, French, German, Spanish or Italian.

## French

**Essential A levels** French.

**Useful A levels** Another modern foreign language.

## German

**Essential A levels** German.

**Useful A levels** Another modern foreign language.

## Italian

**Essential A levels** Italian or another language such as French, German or Spanish.

## Spanish

**Essential A levels** Spanish (some degrees will also consider French, German or Italian).

**Chance of being interviewed** Many courses will make offers on the basis of the UCAS form, but you should presume that you will get some interviews.

### *What you need to know*

- Be prepared for some sort of grammar, comprehension, reading or translation test at the interview.
- Expect questions on the A level work that you have done, visits abroad and the literature, history, politics, geography and culture of the country that you are interested in.
- Read newspapers, magazines and websites in the appropriate language.
- Visit the website of the Institute of Linguists ([www.iol.org.uk](http://www.iol.org.uk)).

### *Sample interview questions*

- Why do you want to study your chosen language as opposed to any other?
- Do you think that language and literature are completely separate and should be studied separately?
- Are you better at language or literature?
- Which would you like to focus on most at university – literature or linguistics?
  
- Do you think being half French and wanting to do a degree in French is a cop-out?
- Are you better at French or German? Which do you prefer?
- Do you find grammar difficult?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of translating?
- How would you teach a language? How are French and German taught at your school?
- Do you think learning Hebrew has prepared you for learning Russian?
- What do you expect it will be like to learn Spanish from scratch?
- If you want to study modern languages, why are you not doing Spanish A level?
- How does your study of maths and economics relate to your language studies?
- Read this French text aloud and then translate it into English.
- Read this passage in French and then discuss it, explaining some of the vocabulary.

- [To a candidate applying to learn Italian from scratch] Look at this poem in Italian with a translation in English. Identify the meaning of each Italian word. Now look at these very different translations of the same poem and compare them.
- Is there an element of literature in your French and German A level courses?
- Have you studied literature at all? What types of literature interest you?
- Do you feel that you will be at a disadvantage doing a literature-based degree, when you are not studying any literature-based A levels?
- What books have you studied in French? Which ones did you *not* like and why?
- Have you read any French books apart from the ones on your A level syllabus?
- Look at this poem by Baudelaire for fifteen minutes, then discuss it in the interview.
- Look at this passage in French. Is it a poem or drama? What is it about the language that makes you say it is poetic?
- Have you ever been to Spain? What do you know about Spain?
- What attracts you to Spanish culture?
- Have you read any Spanish literature in translation?
- How has Spain contributed to the arts and humanities?
- What do you know about Spanish architecture?
- Why would Spanish be important in a career/in business/in Europe?
- What makes an English person English?
- Why is communication important in the EU?
- What do you think of a two-speed Europe and further EU integration?
- Do you think German reunification was a good thing?
- What aspect of European affairs are you particularly interested in?

The following questions were asked and answered in the relevant foreign language.

- Have you ever been to France? What were your impressions? What shocked you?
- Pretend you are a guide and take me on a tour of the French town where you stayed.
- What are the differences between the French and the English?
- What tensions exist between the French and the English?
- What are the differences between French and English newspapers?
- Define existentialism. Do you believe in it?
- What do you think of Paris and the Parisians?
- What do you think of the National Front in France?
- What problems are linked with Algerian immigration to France?
- Tell us about the French political scene.
- Have you been to Germany? Tell us about your visit.
- Do you prefer French or German food?
- What are you studying for your history A level?
- What do you intend to do in your year off?

### Students' comments

- 'The interview was conducted partly in German, partly in French and of course in English. The more intellectually demanding questions were in the main asked in English.'
- 'Although the course is not wholly based on literature, I got the impression that it is a very important part. Even in my general interview I was asked to read a poem in English and discuss it.'
- 'The grammar test took one hour and I was given a text in English which I had to answer three questions about and translate part of. No dictionaries were allowed.'

- 'I was asked some difficult questions in French about the passage they gave me to look at, which was very wordy. I was asked a lot about my further reading of French books, but all the literature and personal questions were in English.'
- 'The woman from the Italian department asked me a few questions about the reasons I wanted to study Italian, and asked me if I spoke any. The fact that I couldn't speak any Italian was not a problem at all.'
- 'I was very surprised that I was only asked one question in French, and that we spoke for about twenty minutes about the books I am reading for my English A level.'
- 'I had to do a written test. The first part was a text in English about British and American poetry, which I had to summarize in English. The second part was a text in French, summarized with words missing. I had to find words to fill in the gaps.'

## Law

**Essential A levels** None.

**Useful A levels** Critical thinking (this will help with the LNAT test).

**Chance of being interviewed** Most courses will make offers on the basis of the UCAS form, though a small number of courses do still interview.

### What you need to know

- You must be interested in studying law as an intellectual discipline, not just as a means to becoming a solicitor or barrister.
- Many questions will be based on what you have put in your personal statement.
- It is important, however, to read the law sections in the broadsheet newspapers and follow legal arguments in the press.
- Visit some law courts.
- Read *Learning the Law* by Glanville Williams and *Understanding the Law* by Geoffrey Rivlin.
- Visit the websites of the General Council of the Bar of England and Wales ([www.barcouncil.org.uk](http://www.barcouncil.org.uk)), the Law Society ([www.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk)) and the Law Careers Advice Network ([www.lcan.csu.ac.uk](http://www.lcan.csu.ac.uk)).
- If you will be taking the LNAT test, prepare yourself by finding out about critical thinking techniques.

### Sample interview questions

- Why do you want to study law? What in particular interests you in the law?
- Do you want to be a judge?
- What is the point of studying law as an intellectual discipline, as opposed to, say, literature?
- Did you choose your A levels with the aim of studying law?
- What law books have you read?
- Have you ever visited a court? What did you think?
- You don't seem to have any relevant work experience. Why is that?
- What recent legal cases have you heard of?
- Comment on a current legal issue that interests you.
- What would you do to reform the legal system?
- What changes would you introduce to the British constitution?

- What are your views on proportional representation?
- What do you think about employment law in relation to the sacking of pregnant women?
- What is civil disobedience? Do you know any examples of it?
- How would any loss of British sovereignty to Europe affect the judiciary?
- Do you disagree with capital punishment? Why?
- What do you think about censorship?
- How do you feel about the lack of women in the higher ranks of the law?
- What do you know about the American legal system? What problems does it have?
- Why do we need laws for acts such as murder?
- What is the difference between intention and motive?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of the right to silence?
- Define racial hatred. Distinguish between racial, religious, ethnic and political hatred. Is one worse than any other?
- How right is it to stop a crime before it has been committed?
- Is it ever justifiable to break a promise?
- Are there any cases when laws should be broken (for example, to defeat Nazism)?
- Should the law intervene in moral issues? What is the link between law and morals?
- Should the state interfere in family matters?
- How are the law and politics linked?
- What is the Marxist view of law? Does it still apply today?
  
- Are you interested in current affairs? Tell us about a recent news story.
- What do you think about the wars in Iraq?
- Why did you decide to get involved with Friends of the Earth?
- Tell us about a current economic issue.
- What books do you read? Tell us about, for example, George Orwell's *1984* and *The Prince* by Machiavelli.
- What books are you studying for your English A level?

## Students' comments

- 'They gave me a paper about the General Pinochet extradition case, with some contradictory laws relating to it. I had to interpret them and answer questions such as: "Do you think Pinochet should have been extradited?" and "Does international law take precedence over human rights?"'
- 'I was given a discussion sheet with a definition of the offence of battery on it, followed by three different situations. I had to decide whether battery had been committed in each of the situations, according to the given definition.'
- 'I was given a sheet with some statutes printed on it and I was asked to read one of them (which happened to be about theft). I was then given a particular situation to respond to, which was: "Is taking someone's car road-tax disc and returning it after it has expired classified as theft?"'
- 'I had to read a long passage (a side of typed A4 paper) and then say what was illogical about it.'
- 'The legal questions forced me to think on the spot, and we discussed issues in what seemed to me to be great depth. He was interested not so much in my answers, but my reasoning.'
- 'The questioning was designed for me to respond, though at times I felt it was too aggressive. Having said that, for a law interview it seemed fair as they were able to judge my arguing skills and the way I responded to rigorous questioning.'

- 'Many of the questions posed could be interpreted in a number of ways and there was plenty of opportunity to guide the conversation to talk about the areas of law that I knew about.'

## Leisure and recreation management

See sample interview questions under: 'Business studies' and 'Sports studies'

## Linguistics

*What you need to know*

- Linguistics is the scientific study of languages in general – that is, how languages work and how people use language. It can cover subjects such as: how languages developed historically; phonology (the study of sounds); grammar (as it applies to all languages); meaning; the sociological aspects of language such as dialects and accents; the biological aspects of how our brains acquire language.
- Interviewers will mostly be concerned with why you want to do the course and what steps you have taken to find out about it.

Sample interview questions

- What do you understand by the term 'linguistics'?
- Name some sounds in English which foreigners get wrong.
- Talk about some grammatical structures which differ between English and another language you know.

## Marketing

See sample interview questions under: 'Business studies'

## Materials science

(including biomedical materials science)

See sample interview questions under: 'Biology', 'Chemistry', 'Engineering', 'Natural sciences' and 'Physics'

## Maths

**Essential A levels** Maths and sometimes further maths.

**Useful A levels** Physics and philosophy.

**Chance of being interviewed** You should definitely expect to be called for some interviews.

*What you need to know*

- The interview will be about *maths*! Any questions about your social life or outside interests will only be included to put you at your ease.
- As well as your strength in maths, you need to be enthusiastic. Show proof of your love of maths – for example, through wider reading, entering competitions, joining maths clubs.
- One book worth reading before your interview is *How to solve it* by Polya.
- Visit [www.ima.org.uk](http://www.ima.org.uk).

## Sample interview questions

- Define the concept of differentiation using first principles.
- Give examples of situations where differentiation is *not* possible.
- How would you show that integration is the opposite of differentiation?
- How would you explain integration and differentiation to a sixth-former?
- Differentiate  $x^2$  and  $\sin x$  from first principles.
- Integrate  $\int x^n/nx \, dx$ .
- Draw graphs of  $x^2+y^2=1$  and  $x^3+y^3=1$ .
- Draw graphs of  $y=\sin x$  and  $y=\sin^2x$ .
- Find the minimum value of  $x^2+6x+1$ .
- Prove that  $\sqrt{2}$  or  $\sqrt{3}$  is irrational.
- How does one find 2 to the power of  $\sqrt{2}$ ?
- Prove that every fourth value of the Fibonacci series is a multiple of 3 and that every third value is even.
- Let  $z=1+2i$ . Show in an Argand diagram  $z$ ,  $3z$ ,  $iz$ ,  $|z|$  and  $\sqrt{z}$ .
- Prove that in any function that maps from  $(0$  to  $1)$  to  $(0$  to  $1)$  there is at least one fixed point.
  
- Which are your favourite topics in maths?
- How do you think science is portrayed in the media?
- What career are you interested in after your degree?

## Students' comments

- 'The interview was very friendly and informal and when I was stuck with problems the interviewers were ready to prompt me.'
- 'The interview included a whole load of questions on differential equations. I also had to do a test for which calculators were not allowed (despite not being told this beforehand).'
- 'The interview was more a case of us working together on how to show integration as the opposite of differentiation. He didn't expect me to know how to do it, but he wanted to see how I could think my way through it and solve it with his help.'
- 'He said he was pleased to speak to someone who could have a conversation as opposed to just sitting down in silence. Reading *New Scientist* that morning proved to be a good idea!'

## Media and communication studies

**Essential A levels** A few courses specify English or media studies.

**Useful A levels** English, media studies, sociology and psychology.

**Chance of being interviewed** While many courses will make you an offer on the basis of your UCAS form, a significant minority of courses still interview.

### *What you need to know*

- You need to be very clear about the sort of media course you are applying for. Some are more theoretical, others more practical. If yours is one of the more practical courses, do you know exactly what it will train you to do? Also, these courses by themselves will not normally guarantee you a job in the media. So, do your reasons for applying *correspond with* the content of the course?
- Many media courses will expect to see some sort of work experience or examples of taking initiative (for example, writing a sixth-form newsletter or contributing to a website).
- Try to think of examples (with evidence) of occasions when you have worked in a team. This is very important in media industries.
- Some courses may set you an extra test or assignment at the interview, usually to check your writing skills and spelling.
- Visit [www.skillsformedia.com](http://www.skillsformedia.com).

## Sample interview questions

- Define the word 'media'.
- Have you done any research into the media?
- Do you have any interests or hobbies that would be of benefit to a course in journalism?
- What are you hoping to do in the future?
- There are more people on media courses than there are jobs at the BBC. Why do you think you are going to get into this industry?
- How do you think your sociology A level will help you with this course?
  
- What impact do you think digital technology is having on the broadcasting industries?
- What is your favourite TV programme and why?
- Should the government renew the BBC's charter?
- How important is the *Today* programme on Radio 4?
- What is the difference between online and offline editing?
- What newspapers do you read? Talk about an article you read yesterday.

## Students' comments

- 'The interview day for my course in broadcast journalism involved a current affairs test and a group interview. The current affairs test was quite simple, but you do have to be well informed about recent news stories and past and present media magnates. I made a silly mistake from not being aware of the names of certain important media people! However, I think much of the selection process was based on how you presented yourself in the group interview. You have to be yourself and be clear.'
- 'I was expecting to be asked about my work experience. Most of the interview consisted of questions relating to media issues I had covered in sociology A level.'

## Medicine

**Essential A levels** If you take chemistry, biology and one of maths or physics you will keep all the medical schools open to you. If you take chemistry and biology you will keep open the vast majority of them. If you do chemistry and one of maths or physics your range of choices will be much more limited.

**Useful A levels** Critical thinking (this will help with section 3 of the BMAT test).

**Chance of being interviewed** Expect to be interviewed by all of your choices.

### *What you need to know*

- Most questions in an interview will relate to the content of your personal statement.
- You will be expected to explain fully why you want to become a doctor and provide evidence to back up your claims. What evidence do you have that proves you are genuinely interested in scientific issues and the welfare of others?
- If you have done some work experience in the fields of medicine or health, you will need to be able to explain what you learnt from this time.

- Know who the current Secretary of State for Health is and have some idea about how the National Health Service is funded. It is a good idea to be aware of some current issues or difficulties facing doctors. Is there one that you could talk about in more depth?
- You will probably be asked what qualities you think make a good doctor. Try to think of examples.
- Prepare yourself for any additional aptitude tests.
- For information on medical schools visit [www.chms.ac.uk](http://www.chms.ac.uk). Also visit the website of the British Medical Association – [www.bma.org.uk](http://www.bma.org.uk).

## Sample interview questions

- Why do you want to study medicine? How did you come to your decision?
- Has the fact that both your parents are doctors influenced your decision to apply for medicine?
- When did you first decide you wanted to become a doctor?
- What types of career do you think medicine offers?
- What are the disadvantages of medicine as a career?
- After qualifying as a doctor, how do you go on to become a consultant?
- Do you know what an elective is?
- What is a physician?
  
- What qualities do you think a doctor should have?
- What qualities do *you* have that would contribute to this medical school?
- What steps have you taken to ensure that you will be suited to a medical career?
- How would you deal with the hard work and commitment needed on a medical course? Are you prepared for six years of study?
- Do you think medicine is stressful? How do you deal with stress and pressures?
- What do you think your life will be like as a doctor? What are your worries about being a doctor?
- What sort of person are you (for example, extrovert or introvert)? What are your good and bad points?
- What makes you angry or upset?
- Do you consider yourself to be a perfectionist?
- Which do you prefer: conceptual stuff or nitty-gritty things?
- Are you more of a scientist or someone who likes working with people?
- What would you do if your patient disagreed with your advice?
- Is there any type of person that you think you would not be able to handle?
- How would you feel treating a child with a terminal illness?
- Are you a stranger to seeing people in pain?
- How would you cope with your first fatal mistake?
- Can you lead a group, or be part of a group led by someone else?
- What experience do you have of working in teams? Do you prefer working in a team or individually?
- Do you think medicine is a glamorous career?
- What problems do doctors face today?
- How have people's attitudes towards doctors changed in the last fifteen years?
- Do you have a pessimistic or optimistic view of health care in this country?
  
- Tell us about your work experience. What did you learn from it? Was it a daunting experience?
- What did your work experience show you about medicine?
- Tell us about your work shadowing. Have you watched how doctors work?
- Have you had any experience of a medical life? Have you visited hospitals or spoken to any doctors?
- Tell us about your voluntary work.
- Have you done any previous research?

- Have you read an article about health or medicine lately that has interested you? Tell us about it.
- What literature do you think is the best for keeping you informed about medicine?
- What have you found interesting about medicine or medical ethics recently?
- What medical breakthroughs have taken place in the last 100 years?
- Name and discuss advances in medicine that have happened in the last five years.
- What medical advances do you think will happen in the next ten years?
- How do you think chemistry, biology or maths has influenced medicine in the last twenty years?
- What is the future of transplants?
- What is a retrovirus? How do retroviruses work?
- Why can we not (in practical terms) do the same with humans as we did with Dolly the cloned sheep?
- Do you know how genetic engineering works?
- What ethical problems can you see arising from genetic selection against disease?
- What do you think about the present state of the NHS. What do you think will happen to it in the near future? What do think about privatizing the NHS?
- If you could solve one problem in the NHS, with unlimited resources, what would it be?
- How can you justify spending £600,000 treating an overweight, drinking, smoking, middle-aged man instead of improving the health of seventy children?
- Do you feel more money needs to be spent on community medicine, i.e. prevention rather than cure?
- If a doctor has AIDS should he/she practise medicine?
- Does alternative medicine have a place in hospitals?
- Do you think people can 'think themselves better'? If so, what is the mechanism for this?
- What would you do if the Jehovah's Witness family of a patient refused a blood transfusion?
- On what criteria would you base decisions about who to treat and who to turn away?
- Who has the final say in a patient's treatment – the doctor, the patient or relatives?
- Should we cure people with cancer? Aren't they going to die anyway?
- If a child came to you with an injury, with the parents saying she fell, how would you check there was no problem of abuse at home?
- Do you agree with testing cosmetics on animals?
- Is medicine an art?
- What is your favourite topic in biology?
- What is the function of the skull? Why do new-born babies not have their skull cages fully fused?
- How do people turn their heads in all directions?
- How does blood get from your toes to your heart? What about at the venae cavae?
- Describe the structure of the heart.
- How does oxygen get from the air to your toes?
- Tell us about haemoglobin and the transportation of oxygen. What effect does high altitude have?
- Describe how air is inhaled and exhaled by mammals.
- What makes the body reject donated organs?
- Describe a neurone. How does an impulse travel down one?
- Why is an old person's long-term memory better than their short-term memory?
- Into what groups can amino acids be divided?
- How would a ketone react with an amine?

Students' comments

- 'They basically wanted to know about me rather than my academic ability, despite this being an important factor. Also, it's useful to know about current events in relation to health and medicine, from articles and news reports.'
- 'If I didn't know something they gave clues to the answer. They seemed to want to know how I would think about finding the answer, rather than simply knowing it.'
- 'Be prepared for the usual questions: why medicine? why this medical school?'
- 'They seemed concerned about whether you were a normal person, able to cope with work as well as having hobbies, interests, etc.'
- 'They are very interested in anything you've done in or around medicine, such as work shadowing.'
- 'They were keen on probing about topical issues. In fact, much of the interview was spent trying to find out what I knew about the political side of medicine.'

## Microbiology

See sample interview questions under: 'Biology'

## Music

**Essential A levels** For most courses, music A level plus Grade VII or VIII.

**Chance of being interviewed** You should presume that you will be interviewed for all your choices and at interview you could be tested on one or many of the following areas (look at the prospectuses for the individual entry requirements for each course).

Performance	Aural
Keyboard	Harmony and counterpoint
Sight-singing	Extracts for analysis or 'naming of composer and period'

### *What you need to know*

- Make sure that you are clear about the type of course you are applying for and why you want to do it. While there are still a large number of traditional courses, there has been a growth in popular and commercial music courses. Even among traditional courses, some put more emphasis on musicology while others emphasize performance.
- If you are very interested in performance, make sure that you can explain why you do not want to go to a *conservatoire*.
- You should expect questions to be based on the interests you have expressed in your personal statement. If you have mentioned a composer, expect questions on his or her use of instruments, harmony, counterpoint, time signatures and other compositional techniques, as well as historical setting, influences and so on.
- You need to have a wide grounding in music history – do not just rely on what you have studied for your music A level. As well as your areas of particular interest, you must have an overview of the Renaissance (1400-1600), baroque (1600-1750), classical (1750-1800), romantic (1800-1900) and modern (1900 onwards) periods.
- Visit [www.abrsm.ac.uk](http://www.abrsm.ac.uk) and the websites of the Incorporated Society of Musicians ([www.ism.org](http://www.ism.org)) and the British Phonographic Industry ([www.bpi.co.uk](http://www.bpi.co.uk)).

## Sample interview questions

- Do you enjoy performing?
- What sort of music do you like?
- Do you enjoy all types of music?
- What was the last concert you went to?
- Is there a performer you particularly admire?
- Have you written any original compositions? Describe them for us.
- Who has influenced your own compositions?
- What impact do you think digital technology is having on music?
- What is the role of live performance?
  
- Do you think Bach is an important composer?
- What do you learn from harmonizing in the style of Bach?
- What do you know about madrigals?
- Explain Haydn's influence on chamber music.
- How did Beethoven help develop the symphony?
- In the romantic period, what political and social changes affected composers?
- In what way did Debussy challenge the musical language of his time?
- What influenced Stravinsky?
- Why were patrons important?

## Students' comments

- 'The most important part is your performance. I was asked to perform some Grade VIII flute music and I was also required to do some sight-reading and aural tests.'
- 'It was much simpler than I had been prepared for with my mock interview. The actual performance of the candidate is the top priority with most musicians, rather than any knowledge of musical history.'

*NB These comments would not hold true for certain courses, for example at Oxford or Cambridge.*

## Natural sciences

**Essential A levels** Normally three out of biology, chemistry, maths and physics.

### *What you need to know*

- While this course is well known as a Cambridge course, it exists at a number of other universities as well.
- The course can really suit talented scientists who are not yet sure which direction they would like to take. It can also suit those who know what they would like to specialize in in the future, but who want to cover more general science areas first.

## Sample interview questions

- Draw a graph of a solid being heated.
- Why is it worse to be scalded by gas at 100°C than water at 100°C?
- Explain Newton's second law of motion, defining the terms you use.
- Describe and explain what is happening to a ruler balanced on one end when it falls on: a) smooth surfaces; b) rough surfaces. Why does the base slip?
- How would a body behave if it was removed from the plane of an ellipse of a solar system?
- Why do high tides occur twice in twenty-four hours?
- Why does an egg spin when it is hard boiled?
- How can waves travel through a vacuum?
- How does light behave as both a wave and a particle?
- Describe your last chemistry practical.
- What is the importance of photochemical reactions? How do they occur and how do they lead to the photoelectric effect?
- If you are religious, do you have a problem with Darwin's theory of evolution? What other theories of evolution are there?
- Talk about DNA and describe protein synthesis.
- What is the human genome project and why is it useful?
- Compare aerobic to anaerobic respiration.
- What type of rock is this [shown rock sample] and how can we date it?
- Why is it important to use fossils to date rocks?
- What problems are there with the environment?
- Talk about a scientific discovery that has revolutionized its field.
  
- What aspects of science are you interested in and why?
- Describe an article you have read recently in the *New Scientist* and discuss it.
- What is the last book you read?
- How aware should the public be about scientific developments?

## Students' comments

- 'I was asked academic questions on chemistry (addition polymerization, esterification), physics (metal stresses, simple harmonic motion) and maths (integration, polar coordinates). The interviewers deliberately chose topics that I said I hadn't covered in my A level studies. They are more interested in how you think and respond to new situations, than in how much you know. All you can do as preparation is brush up on you A level work to act as a foundation for the unfamiliar situations you will be presented with.'
- 'Whenever I told them that I hadn't yet covered certain topics at school they said, "Good, let's talk about it."
- 'The interview opened with a question about what interested me in the subject and I mentioned an article I had read. He then asked me questions about this for nearly the whole interview. If I had realized, I would have mentioned a topic that I really knew about, rather than something I found fascinating but didn't know much about.'

## Nursing and midwifery

See sample interview questions under: 'Professions allied to medicine'

## Nutrition

See sample interview questions under: 'Professions allied to medicine' (dietetics) and 'Biology'

# Occupational therapy

See sample interview questions under: 'Professions allied to medicine'

## Optometry (ophthalmic optics)

**Essential A levels** Two from biology, chemistry, maths or physics (some courses prefer biology as one of the choices).

**Chance of being interviewed** You should expect some interviews.

### *What you need to know*

- You will need to explain fully why you want to become an optometrist and provide evidence to back up your claims.
- If you have done some work experience in optometry, you will be asked to explain what you learnt from this time.
- It is a good idea to be aware of some current issues or difficulties facing optometrists. Is there one that you could talk about in more depth?
- Think about what qualities you would need to be a good optometrist. Try to think of examples.
- Visit [www.college-optometrists.org](http://www.college-optometrists.org).

### Sample interview questions

- Why do you want to study optometry?
- Where did your interest in optometry come from?
- What did you learn from work shadowing?
- When you were on your work experience, what eye defects did the optometrist have to deal with?

### Students' comments

- 'I wasn't really asked anything about optometry. The interviewer seemed more interested in the personal section of my UCAS form.'
- 'The first question she asked was, "Why optometry?" You must be clear on this.'

## Pharmacology

See sample interview questions under: 'Biology', 'Chemistry' and 'Pharmacy'

## Pharmacy

**Essential A levels** Taking chemistry and two from biology, maths and physics will keep the vast majority of courses open to you. Some courses specify chemistry, biology and maths. Taking chemistry and biology keeps most courses open.

**Chance of being interviewed** You should expect to be interviewed by most of your choices.

### *What you need to know*

- You will be asked to explain fully why you want to become a pharmacist and provide evidence to back up your claims.
- If you have done some work experience in pharmacy, you will need to be able to explain what you learnt from this time.
- It is a good idea to be aware of some current issues or difficulties facing pharmacists. Is there one that you could talk about in more depth?
- Try to identify anything that you have studied so far that relates to pharmacy. Be prepared to expand on this.
- Think about what qualities you need to be a good pharmacist. Try to think of examples.
- Visit the website of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain – [www.rpsgb.org.uk](http://www.rpsgb.org.uk).

### Sample interview questions

- Why do you want to study pharmacy? Why not medicine?
- Have you had any practical experience of working in pharmacy?
- What do you think medical pharmacy involves?
- What other areas of pharmacy are there (for example, in industry)? What do you think they involve?
- What do you think is the role of the pharmacist?
- How did you find out about pharmacy? Have you done any research into careers in pharmacy?
- What career do you want to go into?
  
- Talk about a topic you are currently learning in biology or chemistry.
- How do you make a one-molar solution of sodium chloride?
- What does the liver do?
- What is an ECG (electrocardiogram)?
- What is the difference between a drug and a medicine?

## Philosophy

**Essential A levels** None.

**Useful A levels** Maths, classical civilization, philosophy and religious studies/theology.

**Chance of being interviewed** Most courses will make offers on the basis of the UCAS form, but a significant minority of courses do still interview.

### *What you need to know*

- A good starting point is to read *Philosophy: The Basics* by Nigel Warburton. Then try Bertrand Russell's *Problems of Philosophy*.
- You may be asked to sit a test or write an essay at the interview.
- Visit [www.royalinstitutephilosophy.org](http://www.royalinstitutephilosophy.org).

## Sample interview questions

- Why do you want to study philosophy?
- Have you read any books about philosophy?
- What interests you most about philosophy?
  
- Which of these three sentences are the most similar? All bats are blind. All mothers have babies. All water is made up of hydrogen and oxygen.
- If most lawyers are rich and most rich people live in the countryside and most country people go fishing on Sundays, does it follow that most lawyers go fishing on Sundays?
- If you keep adding grains of sand, one at a time, when does it become a heap? If you take away grains of sand one at a time, when does it stop being a heap? Is this a valuable intellectual debate?
- If it takes two to make a fight, when there's an argument are both sides equally to blame?
- I have promised my class a surprise exam one week in an eight-week term. Which week can I give it in?
  
- Why do we seek supernatural explanations for the unusual (for example, a tossed coin showing heads 1000 times) but not for the usual (for example, bodies obeying the laws of gravity)?
- If cosmic beliefs are religious, are religious beliefs cosmic?
- Discuss this statement: 'It has not yet been proven that God doesn't exist.'
- Does God exist?
- Is time travel possible?
  
- Why is a bag of diamonds more expensive than a glass of water? When might this change?
- What is the difference between Mill's principles of utilitarianism and the rights of an individual?
- Can a business act morally when its aim is to maximize profits?
- Is it the nature of man to be altruistic or to promote his own interests?
- When is it OK to break a law? Who says when a law is unjust?
- How does one balance the views of two different cultures, for example in the case of the fatwa against Salman Rushdie?

## Students' comments

- 'He assumed I had no prior knowledge of philosophy unless I told him otherwise.'
- 'It was very relaxed and informal and the discussion took the format of giving different arguments for and against several philosophical topics ranging from politics to theology.'
- 'Before the interview I was given a paper with five statements and arguments. I had twenty minutes to pick two to discuss in the interview. For example: "I might be wrong about anything I know. Therefore I might be wrong about everything I know."'
- 'I had to do a written test, stating the differences between words in pairs and then incorporating them in sentences to convey their meanings. The pairs were: accident/mistake; short/succinct; deny/refute; contradict/disprove; uninterested/disinterested.'
- 'He started to bombard me with unanswerable philosophical questions: "Why are we here?"; "What is life if it isn't a dream?" I was thoroughly confused and found it absurd and a little unfair that he expected me to answer such questions with no philosophical background at all, as if I

had already done the course. He also looked remarkably like Benny Hill, which didn't help matters much!

## Photography

What you need to know

- Visit the websites of the Association of Photographers ([www.the-aop.org](http://www.the-aop.org)) and the British Institute of Professional Photography ([www.bipp.com](http://www.bipp.com)).
- Look at the sample interview questions under: 'Art and design', 'Media and communication studies'.

## Physics

**Essential A levels** Maths and physics.

**Useful A levels** Further maths and chemistry.

**Chance of being interviewed** Most courses will make offers on the basis of the UCAS form, but a significant minority of courses do still interview.

*What you need to know*

- Interview questions will tend to relate to what you have already studied at A level (including mechanics and pure maths), as well as subjects you have mentioned on your personal statement.
- Sometimes there may be a test at the interview. This could be written or the questions could be asked orally.
- Visit the website of the Institute of Physics – [www.iop.org](http://www.iop.org).

Sample interview questions

- What area of physics interests you most? Would you like to specialize in this area?
- If a centripetal force is acting inwards, why do you feel thrown outwards when travelling around a bend in a car?
- If an anchor is thrown out of a boat into a lake, will the water level of the lake rise or fall?
- Why do light spectra radiate from the centre of the surface of a compact disc?
- Being in space is associated with weightlessness. What does weightlessness mean to you?
- Galileo timed light and heavy objects rolling down inclined planes. How do you think he timed the rolling?
- Would you expect all records to be broken were the Olympic Games to be held in a hall on the moon?
- A sheet of white paper is viewed through a piece of blue glass and the paper looks blue. Why?
- What do you know about the ways in which atoms are arranged in a solid. What happens when the atoms in a solid are heated?

For astrophysics:

- Tell us what you know about the origins and evolution of the universe.
- What is the Hubble constant?
- Does the earth turn clockwise or anticlockwise?

## Students' comments

- 'I was also asked some maths questions about integration and something else to do with complex numbers that we hadn't covered at school yet.'
- 'Questions were asked on everything we have done for A level so far. The questions were occasionally badly worded making it difficult to understand what was wanted.'
- 'The interviewers were happy to give help if they saw you were in trouble and did not just leave you to baffle over the questions.'

## Physiology

See sample interview questions under: 'Biology' and 'Medicine'

## Physiotherapy

See sample interview questions under: 'Professions allied to medicine'

## Podiatry

See sample interview questions under: 'Professions allied to medicine'

## Politics

**Essential A levels** None.

**Useful A levels** Politics, history, philosophy, law.

**Chance of being interviewed** Most courses will make you an offer on the basis of your UCAS form but a significant minority of courses do still interview.

### *What you need to know*

- If you are not taking politics A level, you should still have done some reading around political philosophies, political history and the workings of government.
- You need to be aware of the political world around you, by following current affairs.
- Try to find out more about the politics of a country other than the UK.
- Questions at interview will tend to be based on your current studies and what you have put in your personal statement.
- Visit [www.psa.ac.uk](http://www.psa.ac.uk).

### Sample interview questions

- Why are you interested in politics?
- What political ideology are you most attracted to?
- How active are you in politics and what are your views?
- Who would you vote for in a general election and why?
- How would your religion and politics affect your course?
- Tell us what you think about the current political situation in Britain.
  
- Does your vote count?
- Is Britain a democracy? How could it be made more democratic?
- What are your views on electoral reform?

- What system of proportional representation should Britain introduce?
- What do you think about reform of the House of Lords?
- Does Britain need a bill of rights?
- Discuss the differences between the views and policies of the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat Parties.
- What do you think about devolution in Scotland and Wales?
- Ken Livingstone was first elected mayor of London as an independent, not as a Labour candidate. What is the difference between a political party and an individual?
- What would you do if you were prime minister?
- Account for the enduring reputation of Margaret Thatcher.
  
- What do you think about Europe and the European Union?
- Does Britain have control of its monetary policy when it is part of the European Union?
- What do you think about the euro?
- If there is a more federal Europe, what control would Britain have over its own policy?
- Why is Britain uncompetitive?
  
- Do the media provide impartial reporting?
- Is there, or should there be, censorship of the media?
- Do the owners of newspapers determine their content?
- How aware do you think the general British public is about politics?
  
- What are the differences between the political systems of the United States and the United Kingdom?
- What do you know about American politics?
- How would you define a developing country?
- Why do you think some countries are developed and others underdeveloped?
- Why should we give aid to other countries?
- What are the underlying reasons for the Arab-Israeli conflict?
- What do you think about Middle East terrorism?
- In what ways is the conflict in Northern Ireland similar to the Arab-Israeli conflict?
- Is there more to the Northern Ireland conflict than religious issues?
- What do you think about South Africa?
  
- Define ideology.
- Is environmentalism an ideology?
- Tell us about Marxism.
- What is the main principle of liberalism?
- What is the difference between power and authority?
- Distinguish between: right and good; just and fair; nation and state.
- What role does economics play in politics?
- What should the role of the church be in politics?
- Comment on this statement: 'It is inevitable that there will be conflict between state and freedom.'
- Do you think we are freer with laws?
  
- What period of history are you most interested in? What have you learned from it?
- Could dictators such as Hitler arise in the present day?
- Map out the history of Russia, up to the present day, for someone who knows nothing at all about it.
- What type of books do you read?
- Name a book that has had an effect on your view of politics or economics.

## Students' comments

- 'The interviewer asked very general political questions, such as "Is Marxism dead?" and let me lead on to subjects I felt strong in.'
- 'They didn't ask any particularly interesting questions but they did persist on every point I made and forced me to really develop every answer.'
- 'The interview would have been a lot harder had I not done politics A level.'
- 'Before the interview we had to read a passage about the merits and demerits of the welfare state, and two tables of results from the French elections in 1958 and 1962. I had to answer questions on these in the interview, for example saying what the election results indicated. It was tricky stuff and I felt I kept getting things wrong.'
- 'It was very personal. I was asked who I would vote for in a general election, and who my parents vote for and why.'

## Professions allied to medicine

### Dietetics

**Essential A levels** Chemistry and biology.

### Nursing and midwifery

**Essential A levels** Some courses ask for biology or another science.

### Occupational therapy

**Essential A levels** Some courses ask for biology. Some will also consider psychology, physical education, sociology or another science.

### Physiotherapy

**Essential A levels** Most courses will consider you with just biology. However, some ask for a second science from chemistry, maths or physics.

### Podiatry

**Essential A levels** Courses normally require at least one science, and usually prefer biology. Some courses specify biology plus another science.

### Radiography

**Essential A levels** Most courses ask for one science A level, a few ask for two.

### Speech therapy

**Essential A levels** Some courses require a science such as biology, chemistry or physics (some specify biology). However, some will consider candidates with none of these.

**Useful A levels** A modern foreign language (French, German, Spanish, Italian), English language (and literature), psychology.

**Chance of being interviewed** You should expect to be interviewed and prepare for this.

What you need to know

- Dietetics** The dietician's skill is to translate the science of nutrition into understandable and practical information about food and health. Contact the website of the British Dietetic Association ([www.bda.uk.com](http://www.bda.uk.com)).
- Nursing and midwifery** These courses train you to become a hospital or community nurse, health visitor or midwife. Contact NHS Careers ([www.nhs.uk/careers](http://www.nhs.uk/careers)), the Royal College of Nursing ([www.rcn.org.uk](http://www.rcn.org.uk)) and the Royal College of Midwives ([www.midwives.co.uk](http://www.midwives.co.uk)).
- Occupational therapy** This can also be called rehabilitation therapy. It is concerned with helping people with physical and mental disorders to live a full life by overcoming as much as possible the effects of their disability. Contact the College of Occupational Therapy ([www.cot.co.uk](http://www.cot.co.uk)).
- Physiotherapy** Physiotherapists use exercises and movement, electrotherapy, manipulation and massage to treat the injured, disabled, sick and convalescents of all ages for a large variety of conditions. Contact the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy ([www.csp.org.uk](http://www.csp.org.uk)).
- Podiatry** The Society for Chiropodists and Podiatrists can be found at [www.feetforlife.org](http://www.feetforlife.org).
- Radiography** Diagnostic radiographers use X-rays, ultrasound and magnetic resonance imaging to produce images of the body. Therapeutic radiographers are involved in the treatment of cancer. Contact the Society of Radiographers ([www.sor.org](http://www.sor.org)).
- Speech therapy** Speech and language therapists assess and treat all kinds of voice, speech and language defects. Contact the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists ([www.rcslt.org](http://www.rcslt.org)).
- You will need to be able to explain fully why you want to enter your chosen career and provide evidence to back up your claims.
- If you have done some work experience that relates to this career, you will be expected to explain what you learnt from it.
- It is a good idea to be aware of some current issues or difficulties associated with this career. Is there one that you could talk about in more depth?
- Think about what qualities you would need for this career. Try to think of examples.

### Sample interview questions

- What do you see as the role of a nurse?
- Why do you want to do nursing?
- Why do you particularly want to do children's nursing?
- What qualities do you have that would make you a good nurse?
- In what ways would you help a stroke victim?
- Why do you want to be a physiotherapist? How did you get involved in physiotherapy and how long have you been interested in it?
- What qualities do you think a physiotherapist needs. Do you have them?
- What does physiotherapy involve?
- What areas do physiotherapists work in?
- What steps did you take to find out more about physiotherapy before you applied?
- What did you learn from you work experience?
- Are your A levels relevant to physiotherapy?
- What do physics and maths have to do with physiotherapy?
- Why do you want to do speech therapy?
- What sparked your interest in such a specialized area?
- What qualities does a speech therapist need? Do you have them?
- Tell us about your work placement. What did you learn from it? Did it reaffirm your decision to do speech therapy?
- What have you learned from speech therapy clinics you have visited?
- Have your A levels taught you anything that would be relevant to speech therapy?

- Have you read any books about speech therapy?
- What do the terms 'linguistics', 'phonetics' and 'neurological impulses' mean to you?
- How does phonetics work?
- Do you think there are medical and teaching elements in a speech therapist's work?
- What are the problems with speech therapy?
- Why might parents not take their child to speech therapy sessions?
- Do you think deaf people should be encouraged to use sign language or learn verbal skills?
- Courses in this area have various names – speech therapy, speech science, speech pathology. Are there differences? What do you know about this particular course?
  
- Why do you want to do midwifery?
- Have people been negative about you choosing midwifery?
  
- What are the differences between working as a dietician in a hospital and in the school meals service?
- What issues face dieticians?
- What topics have you studied for your chemistry A level that relate to nutrition?
  
- Why do you want to become an occupational therapist?
- On your work experience did you see the occupational therapists working with other professionals? How did they do this?
- What do you think occupational therapy involves?
  
- Which types of patient do podiatrists come into contact with?
- What did you learn from your time at a podiatry clinic?
  
- Which other professionals would use a radiography department?
- What is the difference between diagnostic and therapeutic radiography?

### Students' comments

- 'We watched a video (about one-and-a-half minutes long) about a man who had suffered a stroke and the effect it had had on his speech. Then we had to discuss it in the interview.'
- 'We had to take part in a one-hour activity about delayed auditory feedback, which we had to answer questions on afterwards.'
- 'As part of my physiotherapy interview they asked to see my hands, to check for any problems.'
- 'My first physiotherapy interview included a physical examination, which was not a problem. However, while I was getting dressed I was being asked several questions at the same time so, between ripping my tights and putting my jumper on, my answers were slightly muffled!'

## Psychology

**Essential A levels** A few courses ask for one of biology, chemistry, maths or physics.

**Useful A levels** Biology, maths, psychology and sociology.

**Chance of being interviewed** Only a small number of courses interview applicants.

### *What you need to know*

- If you want to become a professional psychologist, make sure the course has been accredited by the British Psychological Society.
- Psychology degree courses do not involve helping people with their problems! You will be studying subjects such as personality types, defining and testing intelligence, perception, memory and developmental psychology.
- The main reasons for rejection are a lack of reading about psychology and not understanding what is involved in a psychology degree course.
- It is helpful to know the differences between the different branches of psychology: clinical psychology; educational psychology; occupational psychology; criminal and legal psychology.
- Visit the website of the British Psychological Society ([www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk)).

### Sample interview questions

- Why do you want to study psychology?
- What aspects of psychology are you particularly interested in?
- Why do you want to do a BSc in experimental psychology rather than a BA in psychology?
- Why do you particularly want to do social psychology?
- What do you want to do after your psychology degree?
  
- What books have you read about psychology?
- What have you learnt about psychology through your other A level subjects?
- What do you think you will be studying in the first year of your psychology course?
  
- Do you know what a psychology experiment is? Have you ever carried one out?
- Design a psychology experiment concerning colour blindness.
- How could you devise an experiment to find out if animals see in black and white?
- What is perception?
- What is the benefit to psychologists of a person who has been blind all their life and then regains their sight?

### Student's comment

- 'There was no need to be nervous. You just have to know why you want to do your course and be confident.'

## Quantity surveying

See sample interview questions under: 'Surveying' and 'Accountancy'

## Radiography

See 'Professions allied to medicine'

## Religious studies and theology

**Essential A levels** None.

**Useful A levels** Religious studies/theology, philosophy, English literature, history.

**Chance of being interviewed** Most courses will make offers on the basis of the UCAS form, but a significant minority of courses still interview.

### *What you need to know*

- There is no need to be religious to study many of these degrees. In fact, if you are very conservative in your beliefs you may not enjoy the majority of courses in this field.
- An attempt to gain some knowledge of a broad range of religions will be welcomed.
- Questions in interviews will generally be based on your current studies, information you have put in your personal statement and topical issues.
- Visit [www.multifaithnet.org](http://www.multifaithnet.org).

### *Sample interview questions*

- Why do you want to study theology?
- Why do you want to study divinity rather than religious studies?
- Do you believe in a God? How can you prove his existence?
- What is a miracle?
- What do you think about 'Pascal's wager'?
- What other religions interest you as well as Christianity? Why?
- Do we need religion to understand human existence?
- What do you think the influence of Socrates has been?
- What do you think is the importance of religious architecture?

## Social policy

See sample interview questions under: 'Politics', 'Sociology', 'History' and 'Economics'

## Social work

**Essential A levels** None.

**Useful A levels** AVCE health and social care, sociology, psychology, law.

### *What you need to know*

- You will need to show an understanding of social and community work at a basic level. Read *Introduction to Social Work* by Coulshed and Orm.
- You must have an understanding of, and an ability to define the meaning of, discrimination. What does it mean? How does it manifest itself? How can it be challenged?
- You will need to demonstrate a commitment to this career path through work experience (paid or voluntary).
- All candidates have to be police checked (but a criminal conviction will not automatically exclude you).
- Visit [www.gsc.org.uk](http://www.gsc.org.uk) and [www.socialworkcareers.co.uk](http://www.socialworkcareers.co.uk).

### *Sample interview questions*

- What does a social worker do?

- Can you talk about some of the issues affecting social work in general?
- Think about your voluntary work or work experience. Can you think of two changes you would make that would have improved the service delivered?
- What qualities and skills do you think a social worker needs?
- What qualities and skills do you think you can bring to social work?
- Which of your qualities and skills would you like to develop or improve while you are on the course?
- What has been your experience of academic life to date?
- Can you talk about an idea or theory that you have studied that has influenced your views?
- Can you give an example of discrimination that you have experienced or observed? How was this dealt with?
- If you were faced with an unpleasant scenario (for example, having to interview an aggressive parent who has been mistreating their young child) how do you believe you would cope?
- What client group would you like to deal with on qualification? Why?

## Sociology

**Essential A levels** None.

**Useful A levels** History, politics, sociology, psychology, geography and media studies.

**Chance of being interviewed** Most courses will make offers based on the content of the UCAS form, though a minority of courses do still interview.

### *What you need to know*

- If you are not taking sociology A level, you should do some introductory reading on the key themes of: social theory; social change; social identities and structures.
- Interview questions will tend to be based on your current studies and on issues you have raised in your personal statement.
- It is a good idea to keep abreast of current affairs and issues that interest you that affect society, past, present and future.
- Visit [www.britsoc.org.uk](http://www.britsoc.org.uk).

### Sample interview questions

- Why do you want to study sociology?
- What are you looking for from a course on sociology?
- State three social problems that exist in Britain and explain them.
- As a sociologist, how would you explain crime?
- Why do eighteen-year-olds commit crimes?
- Can schools play an important role in reducing criminal behaviour, particularly among eighteen-year-olds?
- Are single-parent families a symptom or a cause of instability in society?
- What is social policy?
- What newspapers do you read? What makes a good columnist?
- What books do you read?

## Students' comments

- 'Be topical. Have a listen to the news or read the paper on the day of the interview.'
- 'I mentioned that I was interested in crime and deviance, which I had studied at AS level. This led to a long discussion. If you're going to bring something up, read up on it first.'

## Speech therapy

See 'Professions Allied to Medicine'

## Sport and physical education

**Essential A levels** Many courses want to see one of biology, chemistry, maths, or physics.

**Useful A levels** Physical education, psychology.

**Chance of being interviewed** Most courses will make offers on the basis of the UCAS form but a significant minority of courses do still interview.

### *What you need to know*

- You need to be clear about the type of course you are applying for. Sports courses tend to cover physiology, psychology, sports performance, coaching and the business and administration of sport. A leisure management course will be more like a business studies course, a sports journalism course is a journalism course, a sports therapy course is closer to a physiotherapy course.
- Interviewers will be very interested in your sporting history to date. Reread your personal statement to make sure you got this across. However, being a talented sports person is not enough in itself to get you on to a course.
- Visit the websites of Sport England ([www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org)) and the Central Council of Physical Recreation ([www.ccpr.org.uk](http://www.ccpr.org.uk)).

### *Sample interview questions*

- How can we get more children involved in sport?
- Why do you want to do a degree in sports science?
- What is your favourite sport and why?
- Why do you think football is much more popular than hockey in the UK?
- How do you think you could improve your sporting performance?
- Why do you want to train as a PE teacher after this degree?
- Do you agree that athletes using banned substances should not be allowed to compete?
- If you are so interested in physiology, why haven't you applied for a physiotherapy degree?
- What is the best sort of diet for your sport? Why?
- Are you considering a career related to sport?
- Why do you think the armed forces encourage so much sporting activity?

## Statistics

See sample interview questions under: 'Maths'

## Surveying

**Essential A levels** None.

**Useful A levels** For some types of surveying (for example, building surveying) maths and physics could be helpful. For estate management (general practice surveying) most A level combinations will be considered.

**Chance of being interviewed** Most courses will make offers on the basis of the UCAS form, however a significant minority of courses do still interview.

### *What you need to know*

- Surveying is the measurement, management, development and valuation of anything and everything – whether it is natural or man-made.
- There are different types of surveying. The main ones are: general practice surveying (valuation, estate agency, auctioneering and property development); quantity surveying (building accountants); building surveying; land surveying; mineral surveying.
- For more information, contact the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors ([www.rics.org.uk](http://www.rics.org.uk)).
- Interviewers will be concerned with why you want to enter this career field and what you have done to find out about it, for example through work experience.

### Sample interview questions

- Why do you want to do quantity surveying?
- Do you know what quantity surveying is?
- What do you know about quantity surveying? How did you find out about it?
  
- Why are you interested in a career in property?
- Do you know the difference between retail and commercial property?
- What is 'buy to let'?
  
- When you did your work experience, what kind of business was the company you went to involved in?
- What experience do you have of dealing with customers?
- You have done arts A levels. How will you cope with some of the technical parts of the course?
- What will you do with your degree?

## Tourism

### *What you need to know*

- Look at the sample interview questions under 'Business studies'. Most of these courses are a business degree with a travel and tourism slant.
- Think about any positive or negative experiences you have had whenever you have left your normal environment.
- Try to think of any evidence that you can provide about your personal qualities (for example, communication skills).
- Visit [www.ttctraining.co.uk](http://www.ttctraining.co.uk) and [www.tournet.org](http://www.tournet.org).

## Town and country planning

### *What you need to know*

- You will need to explain fully why you want to enter this career and provide evidence to back up your claims.
- If you have done some work experience that relates to this career, you will be expected to explain what you learnt from this time.
- It is a good idea to be aware of some current issues or difficulties associated with this career. Is there one that you could talk about in more depth? Perhaps you could visit a new town in the UK.
- Think about the qualities you would need for this career. Try to think of examples.
- Look at the sample interview questions under 'Geography' and 'Architecture'.
- Visit [www.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.rtpi.org.uk).

## Veterinary science

**Essential A levels** You need to take chemistry and biology, plus either maths or physics, in order to keep all six courses open to you.

**Chance of being interviewed** Expect to be interviewed by all of your choices.

### *What you need to know*

- You will need to explain fully why you want to become a vet and provide evidence to back up your claims.
- It is important to have done some relevant work experience and be able to explain what you learnt from it. To play safe, you should have done two weeks in a veterinary practice, two weeks with large domestic animals or livestock and two weeks with others animals (kennels, stables, zoo, etc.).
- It is a good idea to be aware of some current issues or difficulties facing vets. Is there one that you could talk about in more depth?
- Think about what qualities you would need to be a vet. Try to think of examples.
- Visit the website of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons ([www.rcvs.org.uk](http://www.rcvs.org.uk)).

### Sample interview questions

- Why do you want to read veterinary science?
- Which of the sciences do you prefer? Why?
- Which aspect of biology do you enjoy most?
- What work experience have you had that is relevant to veterinary science?
- What dilemmas do vets face in their profession?
- Talk about the quarantine laws with respect to rabies.
- How do vaccinations work?
- With respect to mammals, are herbivores on the whole larger than carnivores? Why are they larger?
- Horses and cattle have similar digestive systems? What disease do they have in common?
- What do you think about current farming methods? How would you change them?
- What are your views on animal experimentation?
- If you felt a pig farmer was being cruel to his livestock, what would you do?
- Are you a vegetarian?
- Could there be an NHS for animals?
- Could the government have handled the foot and mouth crisis differently?

- How are physics and maths applied to veterinary science?
- Describe an experiment you have carried out in one of your science subjects. Explain what happened and why.
- Talk about the cell membrane. Give an example of a substance that protein molecules allow into the cell.
- Where does respiration occur in cells? Explain the theory behind the presence of mitochondria in cells.
- Talk about the differences between gases, liquids and solids, with particular reference to water.

## Zoology

See sample interview questions under: 'Biology' and 'Veterinary science'