Admissions Interview Policy

King’s Admissions Office
Admissions & Registry Services
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1. **Purpose**

1.1 To set out principles and procedures for the management of interviews for admission to King's College London, to ensure a fair and transparent admissions process. Interviews can be a stressful experience for applicants and this policy aims to ensure they are conducted in a professional, welcoming and appropriate manner.

2. **Scope**

2.1 This policy applies to all interviews conducted to assess the suitability of applicants for entry to King’s College London programmes (both at undergraduate and postgraduate level) and which result in a formal offer or reject decision on an application to study at the university. Informal meetings with university staff or recruitment activities such as open days, where prospective applicants can discuss the university’s programmes, entry requirements and their suitability for selected programmes are not considered interviews in the context of this policy.

3. **Background**

3.1 A report conducted by the Admissions Committee Subgroup in 2006 highlighted inconsistencies in interview practice across the university. The report identified variation in the purpose and structure of interviews across the university.

3.2 The findings of the report identified areas which required key standards to be set in order to adhere to a university wide interview policy. Key standards are required to ensure applicants are given the best environment to demonstrate their suitability for a specific programme and to allow interviewers to carry out the process fairly, effectively and without discrimination.

3.3 The Admissions Interview Policy outlines principles and recommendations which should apply to all undergraduate and postgraduate taught and research interviews. The key interview principles have been reviewed and updated in accordance with Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) good practice guidance.

4. **Pre Interview Principles**

The following are the key principles which, when planning for and selecting for interview, must be adhered to in order to comply with the Admissions Interview Policy.

4.1 A review of the interview process must be conducted ahead of the admissions cycle every two years. The Admissions Operations Team are responsible for conducting...
this review and maintaining a centralised record of responses from those involved in the interview process. The review should determine the intended outcomes and rationale of the interview process and aim to assess if the same interview method used in previous cycles is still relevant or if more practical methods can be employed (for example, a Skype interview could replace an interview in person).

4.2 Before being invited to interview, all interviewees must have formally applied to the university through UCAS, a direct application to the university or via CommonApp.

4.3 Where there is selection for interview, criteria must be fair, clear, transparent and implemented consistently by selectors. Applicants called for interview may be a pool of applicants chosen on the basis of academic or other criteria determined by the Admissions Office, Faculty or department, or due to the needs of professional bodies. Overseas fee paying applicants can be regarded as a separate pool of applicants. For example, Medicine MBBS has a quota for international students which is set by the UK government.

4.4 The invitation must make it clear the candidate is attending a formal interview as part of the section process. It should not be confused with any other informal meeting to discuss a possible or current application.

4.5 Clear information should be sent to each applicant in advance of the interview and be sent in sufficient time to allow for travel arrangements to be made and for the interviewee to prepare. This information should include:

- A specific date by which they must respond to confirm their attendance
- Information about opportunities to reschedule, how to request this and the possible consequences of not attending an interview
- Details on how to prepare themselves for the interview, including details of a dress code policy (if applicable)
- A brief outline of what to expect at the interview in terms of interview format. If there is a test element involved in addition to the interview, this should be clearly stated in the invitation
- Information on the structure of the day
- Information regarding whether it is appropriate to bring accompanying guests
- Date, time, duration and location of the interview and a contact name and number in case of queries on the day
- Details of any documentation which should be brought to the interview, including verification of the applicant’s identity
- A question to applicants in relation to any accessibility requirements they may have for the interview to allow for a clear opportunity for this to be declared and any reasonable adjustments implemented. Suggested text:
"If you have any specific needs, such as requiring extra time for tests, or mobility or sensory concerns, please contact us through the Kings’ Apply portal as soon as possible so that any reasonable adjustments can be put in place for the interview. This may include communication support, lift access or other types of support."

### 5. Interview Principles

The following are the key principles which, when conducting an interview, must be adhered to in order to comply with the Admissions Interview Policy.

5.1 The aims of the interview and the skills and qualities sought from the interviewee must be identified in advance by those administering the interview and be fair, clear, transparent and implemented consistently.

5.2 On no account should any information be divulged to a candidate at interview about the outcome of that interview. Applicants must not be given any impression as to whether they are likely to be successful or unsuccessful. Applicants should be aware that they can request feedback through the King’s Apply portal. Applicants should also be made aware of the Admissions Appeal Procedure if they would like to make a formal complaint or appeal the decision.

5.3 There must be clear standard processes and transparent criteria for making an applicant successful or unsuccessful based on interview.

5.4 The interview should be conducted in line with the university’s Equal Opportunities Statement. All interviewers should complete unconscious bias training and this training should be delivered flexibly at the different sites across the university. Training materials will be developed and delivered by the King’s Admissions Office to ensure interviewers are briefed on what to expect from the interview format and expectations in their role as an interviewer. At a minimum, interviewers will be provided with training documents or presentations in advance of the interview to allow them to prepare independently.

5.5 There must always be more than one member of staff present; unless conducting a multiple mini interview (MMI). Staff on the interview panel must be trained in accordance with 5.4. If only one academic is present, an administrative member of staff must be present to participate or observe. All staff present should have clearly defined roles and responsibilities (for example, a designated chair for the panel) and be fully conversant with interviewing policies and procedures. Deviation from this principle will be allowed only in exceptional circumstances, for example, when conducting overseas interviews. An explanatory account of the alternative arrangement should be recorded on the applicant’s record.

5.6 A formal written record of the interview, such as a score sheet and interview notes, and a clear decision should be provided to the King’s Admissions Office (KAO) or to the department administering the interview and associated with the application. This
information should be maintained in accordance with the Data Protection (Personal Information Management) Policy and King’s College London Records and Data Retention Schedule.

5.7 This policy is intended to be applied to Skype, telephone and Video Conference (VC) interviews. Skype, telephone and VC interviews should follow the same key principles as a face-to-face interview.

6. Pre Interview Recommendations

The following are recommendations which, when planning for and selecting for interview, should be considered in order to maintain good and consistent practice across the university.

6.1 The applicant should be informed in writing of the interview date as far in advance as possible and no later than one week before the interview (longer if the applicant is travelling from outside the UK). The location of the applicant should be considered when inviting to interview, for example those travelling a significant distance should be offered an afternoon interview if at all possible. The invitation to interview should include detailed travel instructions.

6.2 It is advisable to interview any applicants whose qualifications and experience indicate academic potential, however may be non-standard when considered alongside specific programme entry requirements.

7. Interview Recommendations

The following are recommendations which, when conducting an interview, should be considered in order to maintain good and consistent practice across the university.

7.1 Interviews should be, at a minimum, semi-structured.

7.2 Interview questions should be accompanied with a clear scoring system or assessment criteria for responses. Scoring and/or comments should be completed by interviewers at the time of the interview.

7.3 Questions should be fair and have purpose which is relevant to the programme.

7.4 The interview panel, or interviewers conducting an MMI, should reflect a balance of ethnicity, gender and academic interest wherever possible.

7.5 Applicants should be told when they should expect to hear the outcome of the interview.
7.6 Unless the programme is adopting a policy of ‘blind’ interviewing (when interviewers are not aware of the candidate’s background beyond their selection for interview - interviewees must be made aware of this), the interviewer should familiarise themselves with the application and have a record of the information which is pertinent to the interview. For example, a list of modules an applicant is completing within their current qualification.

7.7 Interviews should be conducted in appropriate surroundings. This includes an accessible office or room and an appropriate waiting area. Applicants attending the interview should be welcomed and made to feel comfortable in an environment that aims to reduce anxiety. Where appropriate, applicants should receive a briefing in regards to what to expect before the interview begins. They should be made aware of any housekeeping/health and safety issues. They should also be told when it is appropriate to ask any questions that they may have (i.e. at the end of the interview or in a debriefing session).

7.8 Interviewers should be aware that applicants can request feedback from their interview at any point, including seeing the comments recorded during their interview. Consequently, comments should be professional, factual, appropriate and should not cause offense to the applicant.

7.9 A note of any extenuating circumstances should be made by the interviewer so that these can be taken into account at the point of making a decision or at appeal. For example, an unexpected illness during the interview.