

Internal Interview Policy

SCOPE OF POLICY

1. This policy is intended to give guidance to staff on the College's procedures for interviewing prospective students.
2. This policy is consistent with good admissions practice in higher education, as defined by:
 - UK Quality Code: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access.
 - The Schwartz Recommendations for Good Practice - Admissions to Higher Education Steering Group (2004) Fair admissions to higher education: Recommendations for good practice.
3. It also complies with the following current legislation affecting the admissions of students:
 - Children Act 2004
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Freedom of Information Act 2000
 - General Data Protection Regulation 2018
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - Race Relations Act 1976
 - Race Relations (Amendments) Act 2000
 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
 - Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
4. This policy is monitored by the Registrar, and is reviewed and updated as appropriate by the Academic Board in the light of experience, research and good practice.

WHY INTERVIEW?

5. The purpose of the interview is to gain a better understanding of the intellectual capability of the applicant and their enthusiasm for the chosen course subject. The interview itself allows the applicant to express their views and understanding of the subject, based upon prior study and discussions prompted by an interview task or discussion point. It also provides the applicant with an opportunity to decide whether the College

and course is right for them.

6. The Admissions Team and College academic staff, when determining whether or not to invite an applicant for interview, should base their decision on the following:
 - Application form
 - Attained and predicted grades
 - Academic reference/s
 - Personal statement (evidence of applicant's ability, skills, interests, motivation and potential)
7. A decision is not made solely on the basis of attained or predicted grades. After the request to review an application has been sent by the Admissions Team, College academic staff are asked to reply with a decision whether or not to interview within 5 working days.

INTERVIEW FORMAT

8. Applicants should be informed that there will be an opportunity for them to ask questions, as interviews are a two-way process.
9. It is important that the College creates a positive environment in which the candidates are given the opportunity to perform well. A good environment will help to ensure the most appropriate applicants are admitted, that all applicants are given the opportunity for equal consideration by interviewers, and no applicant is discriminated against.
10. Interviews will be generally held within the College building, however, arrangements will be made for applicants who are unable to travel to London for the interview to attend virtually via Zoom.

CONDUCT OF THE INTERVIEW

11. Interviews normally will be conducted by one trained interviewer. The interviewers used should reflect a balance of ethnicity, gender and academic interest wherever possible. Interviewers should be aware of the differences in educational experience that applicants may have and should not assume that an applicant has progressed via a particular educational route or pathway.
12. Interviews should be conducted in appropriate surroundings. Interviews should last around 25-30 minutes. This is the same time allowance that should be allocated for video conference interviews via Zoom. For quality assurance purposes, all interviews are to be recorded with the designated dictaphone for interviews conducted within the College, or via the recording function on Zoom for interviews conducted via Zoom. Interviewers are asked to verbally notify the applicant of this and to state their name, the applicant's name and the date and time of the interview.
13. SPA recommended the following considerations for the interview environment:

- An accessible office or room;
 - The layout of the interview room should be non-confrontational, for example chairs arranged at angles to one another and thought given to interviewers not sitting behind a desk;
 - The room should be heated at an appropriate temperature and water should be available for both interviewees and interviewers;
 - The room should be tidy and well-organised;
 - Admissions staff should be informed of the interview arrangements;
 - An appropriate waiting area with refreshments should be available for interviewees;
 - Appropriate facilities or arrangements should be provided for visitors accompanying applicants on the day, including any necessary support arrangements;
 - All efforts should be made to ensure the interview can be conducted without interruption;
 - A notice should be placed on the door of the room stating that an interview is in progress;
 - Any telephone or other equipment in the room should be diverted, switched to silent or switched off;
 - Interviewers should ensure they switch to silent or to off their mobile phones, pagers or other similar electronic equipment and ask the applicant to do the same before the interview begins.
14. The Head of Admissions tries to ensure interviews keep to time throughout the day so as not to cause unnecessary anxiety to waiting interviewees. The interviewee is given the name and role of the interviewer prior to the day of the interview.

THE ROLE OF THE INTERVIEWER

15. Interviews should start with a basic question or questions designed to put interviewees at ease, e.g. a subject about which the applicant expressed an interest in their application. Interviewers should ensure they are interested in interviewees and do not appear bored or rude. Interviewers should ensure that all questions cannot be construed as discriminatory and any humorous remarks should be appropriate. Examples of inappropriate interview questions/subjects are included as Appendix A.
16. Interviewers should be courteous, respectful, and culturally aware and should avoid stereotyping interviewees or making assumptions or presumptions. Interviewers should make good eye contact, smile and encourage interviewees to be themselves.
17. If an interviewer thinks an interviewee has had a poor interview, this should not be communicated, either verbally or otherwise. Interview questions may be scripted and prepared in advance; they should not be closed, but open-ended questions which are relevant to the interview purpose. Different types

of questions may be used such as probing, reflective and/or hypothetical questions, but questions should be consistent between interviews to ensure fairness.

18. While supplementary questions may be asked to draw out the interviewee if necessary; the interview should not lose its focus. Questions should flow well, be well-organised, logical, thorough and probing and should reflect the overall purpose of the interview. If an interviewee is in obvious difficulties, the interviewer should move on.

APPLICANTS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

19. Applicants will be given the opportunity to notify the College beforehand of any additional support they may require such as extra time, building access, larger text fonts, etc.
20. Applicants requiring additional support should be assessed on their academic suitability to their chosen course, support requirements should remain a separate issue.

INTERVIEWING MINORS

21. All staff involved in the interview process should be aware of the potential sensitivities of interviewing an applicant under the age of 18.
22. If the interview is conducted in-person, interviewers are asked in this instance to ensure that the door of the room in which the interview is conducted is left partially open. All interviews must be recorded.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

23. Interviewers should be clear about what they should do with all interview materials and in particular, any information that has been recorded about applicants, following the interview. Those conducting the interviews are asked to return the interview recordings and results to the Head of Admissions within a maximum of 5 working days after the date of the interview.
24. An audit trail from the start to the end of the process should be kept for all interviewees, documenting clearly all steps that were taken. All paperwork and other material, including audio recordings of interviews and interview report forms and scoring sheets, should be securely stored for the appropriate length of time. All those involved in interviewing applicants should be aware of the College's [Admissions Complaints Policy & Procedure](#) in order to direct applicants appropriately, if necessary.

Title: Internal Interview Policy					
Approved by: Academic Board					
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3.1	September 2021	September 2021	Head of Admissions	NCH Academic Handbook/politics and procedures/admissions	August 2023
3.0	September 2019	September 2019	Admissions Manager	NCH Academic Handbook/policies and procedures/admissions	August 2021
2.1	December 2017	December 2017	Head of Admissions	NCH Academic Handbook/policies and procedures/admissions	August 2019
Referenced documents	Admissions Complaints Policy & Procedure				
External Reference Point(s)	UK Quality Code: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access; The Schwartz Recommendations for Good Practice - Admissions to Higher Education Steering Group (2004) Fair admissions to higher education: Recommendations for good practice; Children Act 2004; Equality Act 2010; Freedom of Information Act 2000; General Data Protection Regulation 2018; Human Rights Act 1998; Race Relations Act 1976; Race Relations (Amendments) Act 2000; Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006; Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001				

APPENDIX A: EXAMPLES OF INAPPROPRIATE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS/SUBJECTS

Institutions must ensure they meet the requirements of legislation with regard to equality of opportunity and provide environments within which unfair discrimination does not occur. Interview questions should fit within this environment and interviewers must ensure that no question asked at an interview could be construed as being discriminatory on grounds of gender, race, nationality, ethnic identity, social or economic background, religious or political beliefs, disability, age, family circumstances or sexual orientation.

In addition, no question should be contrary to the principles and requirements of the admissions process itself and institutions should ensure that all questions reflect a high level of knowledge and skill on the part of interviewers.

The following examples are of questions which are generally viewed as being unacceptable or inappropriate to ask at interview:

1) Questions about other institutions or subject choices at other institutions the applicant has applied to

This information may be volunteered by the applicant, but it is inappropriate for us to ask the applicant.

2) Questions or discussion about the equivalence of qualifications

Unfamiliar qualifications should be researched by interviewers or by the Admissions Team. Good practice recommends this is done in advance of the interview; the applicant should not be asked about this.

3) Disabled applicants or those with support needs should not be asked questions about the nature of their disability or support required in an interview for a place on a course

Interviewers should be aware of any special needs the applicant has which may affect their interview performance.

4) Questions that are, or could be, interpreted by the applicant as having a sexual, racial, social, political, gender, age or religious bias, for example, questions about marital, financial and/or parental status, ethnic origin, domicile, social status including parental occupation, childcare or other caring arrangements for applicants who have dependents.

5) Questions about family connections with particular professions

6) Closed questions where there is only one obvious answer

If closed questions with a yes or no answer are asked, they may be used to confirm a specific fact such as 'Did you take a gap year after your A-levels?' However, interviewers may need to seek further information by probing, open questions.

7) Un-focused questions where the meaning could be unclear to the applicant

8) Lengthy, multi-part questions which could lead to the applicant becoming confused

9) Interviewers should avoid careless comments which may give false expectations, for example, "We look forward to seeing you in September".

- 10) Interviewers should not refer to the personal appearance of applicants.**
- 11) Applicants should not be given any indication at the end of the interview about what the outcome is likely to be. The interview should be ended in a formal but pleasant manner, whatever the performance of the applicant.**