

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM A GUIDANCE INTERVIEW

So, you've booked a guidance interview – but what actually happens at one? Will your career path magically open up before you during it? Will everything become clear as a result?

Much as we'd love the answer to those questions to be 'Yes', in all honesty the guidance interview is really the start of the process where you begin to figure these things out for yourself. The Careers Adviser you see will, at your pace, help you clarify what to focus on and explore strategies that you can use to make progress.

A few facts:

- A guidance interview lasts around 45 minutes, is private, confidential, free of charge, and can be used to discuss your future in any way you wish. Common subjects in guidance interviews are
 - 'I'm in my final year and I haven't decided what to do next. How can I start to make some plans?'
 - 'I'd like to do this – but I've also always wanted to do that – how can I choose and which would be better?'
 - 'I'm interested in further study, but will it be worthwhile?'
 - 'I think I'm on the wrong course/want to leave'
 - 'I'm not sure what jobs I'd be good at'
 - 'I do/don't want to use my degree when I graduate but don't know what my options are'
- A guidance interview will give you 'time out' to explore your options, look at yourself objectively and think about the implications of any decision you are contemplating. If one interview proves not to be long enough, you are welcome to book another, with the same adviser, or another, if you wish.
- Careers Advisers will not do your work for you! If you come in and say that you would like to know how to become, for example, an accountant, you can expect to be directed to our information staff and catalogue of resources. Guidance interviews are not for dissemination of readily-available information.
- Guidance interviews can be hard work – a Careers Adviser may challenge your statements and will want you to do most of the talking. We aim to make the picture clearer for you and to enable you to plan your next steps. You may not leave with all the answers – but you should be closer to finding them.
- We are happy to use guidance interviews for interview preparation by focusing on some of the questions you are most concerned about. However, at busy times of year (October to December) we may not be able to fit you in immediately. If you get a last-minute interview and we can't fit you in, you could use a drop-in slot, which will give you up to 15 minutes with a Careers Adviser.
- All our Careers Advisers are able to see all our students. They don't have 'specialist' career areas, although they do have links with certain academic departments for liaison purposes.

If you realise, even on the day, that you can't make it or will be late, please telephone 01225 386009 to let us know. You might be the beneficiary of someone else's cancellation one day...

This is **your** guidance interview, so you set the agenda, the pace, and are totally in control. We, as Careers Advisers, are here to facilitate your career choice and development, not to lead it.

Careers Advisory Service
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www.bath.ac.uk/careers

PREPARATION FOR YOUR GUIDANCE INTERVIEW

Now you've booked your guidance interview, you can relax in the knowledge that a Careers Adviser will take the weight of your career planning off your shoulders....

Well, actually, that's not quite true. Yes, a Careers Adviser will help you with your career planning, and that will happen at the guidance interview, but to get the most from it, a bit of preparation is highly recommended.

But I don't know what I want to do – how can I prepare anything?

On the face of it, that is tricky. You might be surprised how many other people feel the same! But even if you don't know what you want to do, there are some things you could think about:

- How much do you want to use your degree in your career? Have a look at the 'Options with your degree' series (www.prospects.ac.uk/links/options) and information about what Bath graduates have gone on to do (www.bath.ac.uk/careers/destinations) for some ideas.
- What sort of tasks and situations do you enjoy/try and avoid?
- What would be important to you in a job – money, power, work-life balance?
- Try using Prospects Planner (www.prospects.ac.uk/links/pplanner) – a computer tool for matching people's skills and motivations to jobs. Not a predictor, but a good starting point.

I know what I want to do, I'm just not sure how

Have a look at our website, particularly the catalogue of resources (www.bath.ac.uk/careers/catalogue). You might find all the information you want there. Also try looking at profiles (www.prospects.ac.uk/links/occupations) of the types of jobs you're interested in on Prospects.ac.uk. If you can't find enough detail, or need help planning a strategy, a Careers Adviser will be better able to help you if you've done some groundwork.

I'm not happy with my course and I'm thinking of leaving

This situation can be painful and difficult to deal with. It can help you in your discussion if you've thought about why your course doesn't suit you, and what course or institution might suit you better. Have a look at our web page on this subject (www.bath.ac.uk/careers/guidance/coursechange.bho/coursechange) for some more information and other resources.

I just want help with my interview technique– isn't it better not to prepare for that?

We can't give full 'mock interviews' in a guidance session. Rather, your Careers Adviser will help you focus on the questions you are most concerned about and talk through strategies for answering them. If you bring the advert and further particulars with you, they could also help you predict questions that might be asked. As with any interview situation, though, preparation is key, so please come having done some homework on the organisation you're applying to and the evidence you have that you can do the job!

Hopefully this will have given you some useful pointers on how to prepare for your guidance interview. Remember, you are welcome to come to a drop-in session at any time before your guidance interview if you'd like to speak to someone to help you get started.