

Preparing for the Mature Student Interview

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UNIVERSITY OF
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Do your research

- For detailed info on each degree programme:
- UL Admissions Office – Mature Student Applications
- <http://www.ulsites.ul.ie/admissions/mature-student-applications>

There are no interviews for:

- LM 038 Psychology and Sociology (application and essay only)
- LM 102 Psychology (MSAP test)
- LM 089 Sports and Exercise Sciences (MSAP test)
- LM 100 Physiotherapy (MSAP test)
- Nursing degrees
- Some science and engineering degrees

Interview Basics

All interviews revolve around 3 basic questions:

- Can you do the course? (Are you academically able for the course?)
 - Will you do the course? (How motivated are you?)
 - How will you fit in? (Do you understand the realities of being a full time UL student?)
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- Preparedness for third level and ability to cope with academic workload; prior education (Leaving Cert, QQI, Other qualifications or training, IT skills)
 - Work experience (relevant, paid or voluntary)
 - Evidence of interest (how can you prove your interest)
 - General suitability (motivation, academic ability, a realistic understanding of the workload and time commitment)

Be able to speak in detail about each area

06.11.19

Specific Requirements

Science and Engineering: Ability to cope with scientific and mathematical concepts; Prior education performance, key subject performance (science, maths, engineering, technology etc.)

Business: evidence of interest /relevant experience

Teaching: Understanding of teaching as a career

Arts and Humanities degrees: ‘Attention is paid primarily to evidence of interest in the course, but also to evidence of reading related material, any evidence that they wrote, or that they had completed other courses.’

Languages: Ability to speak and understand the language the applicant wishes to take at advanced level; Other relevant courses completed OR experience living outside home country; Willingness to engage with the course, including the compulsory aspect of Erasmus exchange programme

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Common Questions

Tell me about yourself

Tip: Keep it brief, but try to cover the following:

- Education
- Work experience
- Interests / competencies relating to the course

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Strengths - Link to course outline and give examples

- Make a list of your "Unique Selling Points" - anything which makes you a strong applicant: good academic results, relevant work experience, or other relevant skills. Back up these points with relevant examples of where you have demonstrated these.
- This question may be phrased in different ways such as "Why should we take you rather than the other applicants?" or 'What would you bring to the course'.

Weaknesses – Something you have worked on or turned around

- The classic answer is to state a strength disguised as a weakness, e.g. "I'm too much of a perfectionist" or "I push myself too hard". This has been used so often that, even if true it sounds clichéd and false.
- A better strategy, is to choose a weakness that you're working to improve and describe what action you are taking to remedy it. For example: "I used to find it hard to talk to people I didn't know well, but in my previous job I helped people with all kinds of queries. Now I'm confident talking to anybody and I'm willing to participate fully in all classes and group activities."

How does this degree fit in with your career plans?

- Research career paths, specialisms in your area
- Realistic- what's the typical career path for someone in your area
- Show self assessment & career planning

Your Answers

- Listen carefully, seek clarification
- Illustrate answers with **real examples and evidence**
- Keep answers specific and succinct
- Take time to respond
- Speak clearly, show enthusiasm
- Know what you want to say, and find the opportunity
- Be alert to interviewer's body language and be aware of your own

Some careers have very specific criteria (not a comprehensive list- do your own research on careers of interest)

- **Teaching** – you need to have specific subjects to be recognised by the Teaching Council (plus a two year masters degree in education if coming from a non education degree)
- **Primary Teaching** (Two year masters degree) + LC Hons Irish or equivalent
- **Journalism:** need to have a portfolio of work
- **Psychology/Social work-** masters degree (and relevant experience), possibly a PhD
- **Health Sciences-** Medicine, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy (2-4yr postgrad courses; special entrance exam after you've graduated, 2.1 degrees from any discipline)

Prepare and Practice

Review own skills, experiences and qualities

- Check application form/supporting statement
- Consider your motivation and interest in the course
- Emphasise your academic potential

Research course/subject area

- College prospectus etc
- Contacts- course directors, students, family, friends
- Professional contacts working in the area you're interested in

- Prepare your questions
- Practice with somebody and ask them for feedback

Finally best of luck and hopefully see you in September

The UL Careers Service :Using your UL Degree

Jobs, skills gained, further study from UL Degree programmes

<https://www.ul.ie/cecd/students/careerservices/options>

- **Information and advice on:**

- jobs, future careers, further study
- CV and interview preparation
- help preparing for Coop
- work experience; volunteering opportunities

Thank you



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