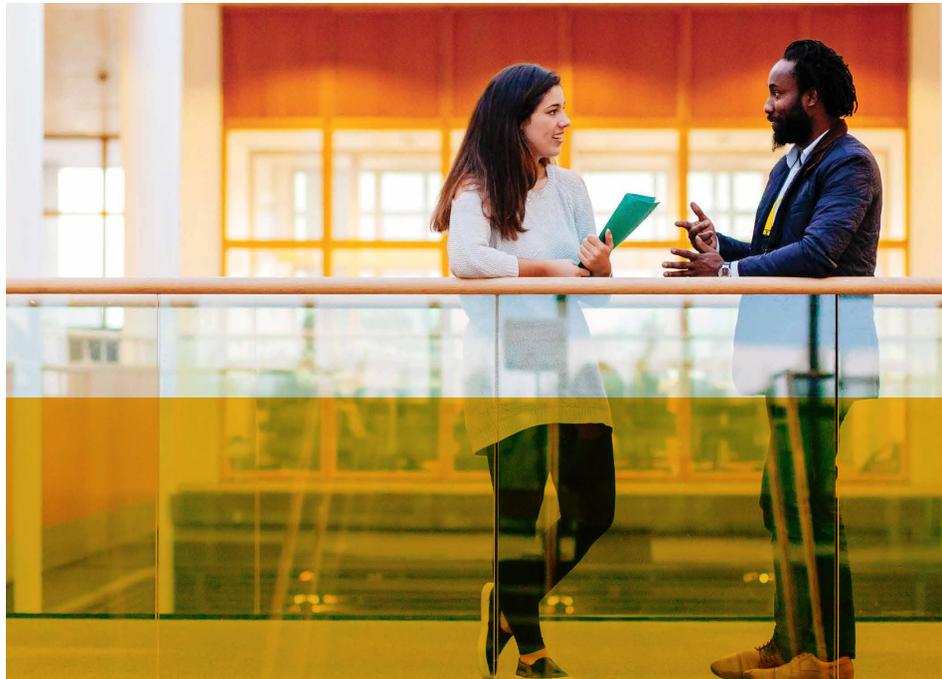




Ollscoil Chathair
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STUDENT SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT

Mature Student Interview Guide



Congratulations, you have passed the first hurdle with your application and have been invited for interview.

What happens next? What should you expect? What can you do to prepare? This information leaflet aims to address these questions for you and to help give you the confidence you need to excel at interview.

The Interview Process

At DCU, mature applicants are assessed through their CAO application, interview and on the basis of prior learning and experience. Depending on the programme, you may be required to submit a written piece or attend an assessment. DCU staff interview mature applicants because they often have “non-traditional” qualifications and learning experiences. The interview allows programme co-ordinators to discuss your application in detail and to make a final assessment on your suitability for the course.

Interest and motivation are key factors of success at third level and are especially relevant to mature students. At interview, DCU staff will be looking for evidence of your

commitment, motivation and interest in your chosen area of study, alongside your potential to succeed at third level

Interviews are usually quite informal and typically last between 15-30 minutes. In most cases, the chairperson of your course and usually one other staff member from the school to which you are applying will interview you.

Remember that the interview for mature applicants is a two-way process, as you can assess at interview if this is the right course and institution for you. The interview also provides you with an opportunity to “sell yourself” and to further highlight strengths and aptitudes, which you feel, make you suitable for your chosen course. By taking time to prepare adequately for interview, you can make a real difference to your chances of securing a place at third level.

Prior to interview: Be Prepared!

- Review your written application, paying particular attention to your personal statement. It is likely that the information you have provided here will form a basis for further discussion at interview.
- Research the content and structure of the course including both optional and mandatory modules. The university prospectus is a good starting point, and more detailed information is available on the DCU website at www.dcu.ie. Be prepared to discuss the various subject areas and why they appeal to you. You may also be asked to talk about the option of work placement or study abroad, where appropriate.
- Talk to admissions staff (in the Registry) or course contact staff for detailed information about the course. It is common for applicants to discuss the course informally with tutors in order to gain a greater understanding of course structure, specific entry requirements and the admissions process.
- Consider the reasons why you have selected this course of study. Are your choices based upon personal interest/ career goals?
- Be aware of the mode and duration of study. Most undergraduate courses at DCU are offered full-time over 3 or 4 years. This means a commitment of around 40 hours of lectures/study time per week. You will need to demonstrate that you can meet these requirements. Childcare, travel and working hours all have to be considered in order to make the most of your studies.
- The interview provides the opportunity to discuss your interests, and any relevant experience or learning prior to application. You may be asked to talk about any relevant literature that you have read to show an understanding of the subject area.
- Although mature students do not necessarily need to meet standard course entry requirements, interviewers may be concerned with your knowledge or competency with particular subjects which are central to your chosen course of study. Make sure you research these in advance in the University prospectus or on our website.
- Be aware of what you have to offer. Think back to your CAO application. What are your strengths, experiences and interests? What skills and qualities do you possess that will enable you to succeed at third level? What do you hope to achieve from a degree in your chosen area?
- It is always a good idea to keep up to date with current affairs and any other developments that have a direct impact upon your chosen area.
- Plan some questions to ask at the end of the interview. You want to make sure that this is the right course and institution for you. Sensible questions will also reveal your interest and research in the area.
- Have a note of the key points that you want to make during the interview. If you have not managed to cover everything, you can ask questions at the end to get these extra points across.
- Practice a “mock interview” with friends or family to ensure that you are fully prepared and confident about doing well.
- Opt for neat and tidy dress. Although interviews are typically quite informal, presenting yourself well will help to make a positive first impression and show that you are serious about securing a place at third level.

During the interview:

Be confident and be yourself!

- Be confident and think positive. Smile and shake hands with the interviewer(s). It is important to try and make a good initial impression.
- Show your motivation and enthusiasm for the institution and choice of course.
- Maintain eye contact with your interviewer as this will aid communication.
- Make sure to relax. If you are called for interview, the staff are interested in your application so relax and enjoy the experience.
- Keep your answers concise and to the point—avoid rambling.
- Listen carefully to the questions being asked and the information given to you.
- Take time to consider your reply. Try not to rush your answers; if your pause for a moment, you are more likely to cover everything, you wanted to include.
- When finishing, thank the interviewers for their time and shake hands before leaving.

After the interview

- Congratulate yourself on getting through it!
- Don't get too disheartened if you feel that you haven't done particularly well. Mature applicants are often surprised to find that they have done much better than they thought.
- Don't take it personally if you don't secure a place this time. Often it is just a case that there were more suitable applicants for your chosen programme than places available.
- Contact our Admissions Office in the Registry for feedback. This will provide you with useful hints and guidance for success if you wish to reapply next year.
- DCU's Admissions Office will contact you to let you know the outcome of your application. Official offers are issued through the CAO in July.

For Queries

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