PhD interview preparation and tips

Careers and Employability Centre
Background research

- Know the programme - what makes it special, who might you work with?
- Know the projects on offer and be clear about which ones you are most interested in and why. Do background reading so you can expand your knowledge in that area.
- Understand the challenges of studying a PhD and how you would deal with them: https://www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/phd-study/5-challenges-faced-by-phd-students
You’re a good candidate!

- Remember your application – re-read it! Make sure you can expand on what you wrote about yourself and be ready to describe your relevant experience in more depth.

- Know what skills make a good researcher and how can you demonstrate these from your experiences – what personal qualities and experience make you a good candidate: https://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/research-scientist-life-sciences

- Be clear about your strengths – think of 3 or 4. Think about a weakness too, but choose something that you’re working on so that you can show how you’re learning and moving forwards.

- Be clear about your aspirations and where you want this to take you.

It can be helpful to discuss this with a friend, teacher or Careers Consultant.
Prepare some questions to ask

You must prepare some questions for the interviewers. Ask about:

• Specific questions about the programme – what makes it unique?
• Specific questions about the projects – technical aspects etc?
• What do they think the biggest challenges are?
• What opportunities there are to publish during your PhD?
You are likely to be asked to give examples from your own experiences so that you can demonstrate you have the skills and strengths required.

STAR is an excellent way of structuring these answers.

For some good examples: