

# **Board of Admissions Interview Guidelines**

Taking time to prepare for a successful interview with the Teacher Education Admissions Board may make a significant difference in your chance of becoming admitted to the program of your choice. Therefore, this document has been prepared to offer students a wide range of suggestions on ways to make a positive impression on the Admissions Board.

## **Suggestions & Tips from Experienced Interviewers**

The following interview tips are provided by faculty who have served on the Admissions Boards and reflect their experiences interviewing hundreds of Teacher Education candidates.

1. Dress professionally in a way that communicates to the Admissions Board you believe this interview is important.
2. Locate your room prior to the interview and plan to arrive early.
3. Be yourself. People who try to put on a false front usually come across as insincere.
4. Be positive and upbeat. Teachers need to be optimists and believe they can make the world a better place.
5. Be expansive rather than brief in your answers. Answer questions openly and honestly.
6. Make eye contact with your interviewers.
7. Be friendly, not disagreeable. If you treat the board members with antagonism, they are likely to evaluate you in the same frame of mind.
8. Try your best to be relaxed and natural.

# Characteristics of Good Interviewees

Good Interviewees....

- Communicate that they take the process seriously
- Appear poised and confident, but not overconfident
- Are positive and optimistic
- Speak clearly and answer questions fully without prodding
- Answer questions directly and specifically
- Appear relaxed and friendly
- Communicate in a genuine sense that teaching is important and that teaching is what they have chosen to do with their lives.
- Display good listening skills
- Provide evidence they can relate with people different from themselves
- Exhibit creativity under pressure
- Exhibit an engaging personality
- Communicate well thought out ideas for wanting to be a teacher

## Examples of Typical Interview Problems

1. Extreme Shyness – Interviewees who avoid eye contact with the interviewers may be perceived as frightened or uncomfortable. They give very short answers to questions, forcing interviewers to probe with numerous follow-up questions to receive even a fraction of the response they were seeking.
2. Abrasiveness – Interviewees appear negative and, at times, seem hostile. They are abrupt in their responses. In many cases they also appear to be opinionated and lack the openness to hear other viewpoints.
3. Over Anxious to Please – Interviewees appear willing to say anything they think the interviewer wants to hear. They come across as not having an opinion of their own. They also tend to leave the board with the impression as lacking courage or convictions.
4. Overconfidence – Interviewees appear to believe they are already sure of acceptance into the program. They appear to be overly impressed with themselves, thereby communicating to the Admissions Boards that the interview process is unimportant.
5. Vagueness – Interviewees who display this trait generally communicate they are uncertain of what the whole process is about; they are uncertain about what they should say to the Admissions Boards and why they are choosing to enter the teaching profession.

## **Common Sense Suggestions for Dressing Appropriately for the Interview**

Teachers must comply with codes of professional dress in their schools and districts. It is beneficial if you show the Board of Admissions that you are aware of appropriate dress for the profession you are applying to enter.

Make sure your clothes are neat and professional. Selections including suits, dress pants, dresses, sport coats, ties, blouses, skirts may be appropriate. Avoid jeans, shorts, sweats, exercise gear, or any garment that does not meet dress code for teachers or students in the district or school where you wish to teach.

Additionally, avoid strong smells associated with cologne, aftershave, perfume, lotions, etc. As a teacher you will quickly learn that many students are allergic to such fragrances and should be avoided as a matter of professionalism.

Excessive makeup or jewelry should also be avoided as these can be distracting to students.

## **The Typical Structure of the Admissions Board Interview**

- Total time of interview is usually 20-30 minutes.
- Usually four members comprise the Admissions Boards.
- You will be asked a series of questions.
- You will be asked to make some closing remarks.
- You will be emailed a link to complete an online evaluation of the admissions and interview process when the interview is concluded.
- The interviewers may mark sheets or make electronic notes to evaluate your interview.

## Examples of Questions You Might be Asked

Many interviewers will ask you to comment on the answers you provided on the application questionnaire. Here you can expand on your comments and support your ideas.

- “Tell us about yourself” (Give information such as where you live, do you work, where you grew up, etc.)
- “Why did you choose your interest area?” (Indicate why you chose to major in History or Special Education or minor in Elementary Education).
- “Have you ever had experiences with children? What did you learn from these experiences?”
- “What benefits are you looking for when you become a teacher?” (This might be personal benefits, such as job security, compatibility of teaching with raising a family, or respect from community, etc.)
- “Have you ever been in a conflict you had to solve?” “What did you do?”
- “Describe an instance in which you have led others.”
- “Can you describe a circumstance when you had to be creative in a situation that could not be resolved easily?”
- “With a day off and money not an issue, what would you do?” (This question may be asked to determine if you have hobbies and to determine if you are a well-rounded person.)
- “Is there anything you would like to ask the board?” (Try to listen to what the board members say; draw a question from some of their comments.)