



## **Career Planning Resources for TECHNE- funded PhD Students**

### **Academic Interviews**

For academic interviews, preparation is key. Examine the Job Description and Person Specifications closely. Questions usually directly relate to job needs. Prepare answers which give examples of when you have shown the skills and competencies outlined.

Remember you can [book a practice interview](#) with one of our Careers Consultants to get tips and feedback on your interview technique.

### **Interview Practice**

You might also like to use our practice interview resources below to practice with colleagues or friends. To try out this activity get into a group of 3 and take turns in the role of interviewer, interviewee and observer.

When preparing for an interview ensure you research:

#### **The institution, the department, the research group**

- Current projects/ recent history
- Output & outcomes:
  - i.e. what has been delivered and its impact
- By whom: read online profiles of prospective colleagues
- Collaborations: within the institution and/or with external organisations

#### **Teaching**

- Course content / possibly view online overview if not detailed syllabus
- Your own teaching style, teaching philosophy?

#### **Administration**

- Awareness/knowledge of committees, possible admin. roles
- Talk to current tutors? What might a new person do? Current opportunities to observe?
- Use of electronic media, e.g. Moodle/Blackboard
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#### **Funding**

- knowledge of sources, process and issues

#### **Publications**

- knowledge of process and issues

Remember that the [TECHNE Whatever Next? Career Development Programme](#) offers career support including:

- [1:1appointments](#) with a TECHNE dedicated Careers Consultant
- [webinars](#) on topics such as developing a portfolio career, job interviews and using LinkedIn
- [workshops](#) on topics such as CVs and cover letters for academic and non-academic jobs, academic and non-academic careers, and networking

# Academic Interview Questions

To use this resources get into a group of 3 and take turns in the role of interviewer, interviewee and observer. Ask each interviewee two questions from the list below and share constructive feedback, then swap roles.

## Postdoctoral Positions

### If interviewee has specific role in mind

1. How will securing this position fit with your long term career plans?
2. What attracts you to this department / institution?
3. What makes you the best candidate for this role?

## General Questions

1. What were the key achievements of your PhD? How did these come about?
2. Who are the key researchers in your field and how does your work compare to theirs?
3. How have you managed your research?
4. How successful has your PhD been?
5. How much creative input have you had in the design and / or execution of your project?
6. If you haven't adhered to your research plans at any point, what did you learn?
7. What aspects of your research abilities require further development?
8. What has been your contribution to your research group?
9. How would you supervise a postgraduate researcher?
10. If you were starting your PhD today what would you do differently?
11. What would other members of your research team (or collaborators) say about you?
12. A technical question: get client to pick one key technique or research method used in PhD, then ask the following:
  - a. What were the benefits of using technique / methodology X
  - b. Are there any potential pitfalls with using technique / methodology X
  - c. Describe in layman's terms how technique / methodology X works

13. If, after this postdoctoral position, you were awarded your own funding what would you like to research and why?
14. What publications do you have to date, if any, and what plans do you have for publication of your current research?

### **Lectureships**

1. Describe your research, what are you currently working on? What is your 5 year plan?
2. What have been the key achievements of your research career so far?
3. If I were to give you unlimited funding and personnel what would you most like to investigate and why?
4. How will you seek funding to support your research?
5. How would your appointment benefit us in regards to our future performance in the Research Excellence Framework?
6. Where do you intend to publish?
7. If you were given complete freedom to put on any course you liked, what would it be? How would you teach it and why?
8. What classes have you taught?
9. How does your research inform your teaching?
10. Can you tell me about an administrative task that you have done and what you think you achieved in it?
11. In this institution we are keen to develop collaborations between departments. What opportunities for multi-disciplinary work does your research have?
12. The University is keen to serve the wider community and economy. Does your planned research have any benefits in these areas?
13. What support would you expect from the institution? (i.e. training, research networks, help with funding applications)
14. In your opinion, how do you get the best out of a research student? Can you give me an example?

### **If specific role in mind:**

15. What particularly attracts you to this department and / or institution?
16. What aspect of our undergraduate curriculum would you change, and why?
17. How would your appointment benefit the work of other researchers within this department?

# Instructions for the OBSERVER

You will be observing the INTERVIEWEE as they answer their questions.

Look out for the following:

- **Eye contact:** How much of the time are they looking at the interviewer?
- **Smiling:** How much of the time are they smiling and looking confident?
- **Body language:** Do they look alert and attentive? How does their body language change over the interview?
- **Speech:** Can you hear them clearly all the time? Do they talk too quickly or too slowly? Do they vary their delivery?

For each of the questions, note any particularly convincing or unconvincing parts of their answers.

**Some guidelines:**

- Did they keep their answer relevant to the question?
- Did they digress?
- Was there a clear structure?
- Was enough detail provided to make the answer convincing?
- Was there too much detail?
- Did they use positive language (e.g. action verbs)?
- How effectively did they promote themselves as a good candidate?
- Were they engaging?

**Interviewee: Name**

Q 1.

Q 2.