

Overall Impression of the Interviewers:

The oral English interview was based on a total of 40 points. The interview consisted of having the candidates give a brief introduction about their academic background. The interviewers then asked some general questions and had the candidates read and interpret a scientific journal paragraph. The interviewers judged the candidates on their oral English skills and ability to comprehend and successfully answer the questions. Overall, the candidates appeared very nervous and felt out of place. Most candidates lacked confidence to answer the questions either in English or Chinese. The questions asked were very basic and it appeared that the students did not take time to prepare for the interview. Most of them did not have a general idea about our department (Life Sciences and Technology) or our research (fMRI, CT, EEG, BLT, and other medical imaging modalities). The interview was not meant to be difficult, but instead it was a good exercise to determine if the students had a good grasp of oral English and a solid research and academic background. We were mostly searching for good candidates for our program who would enjoy the work in our field and would be successful in their research and masters' program studies.

Good Candidate Qualities:

We found that some of the candidates had good math scores on their masters' program entrance exams. Some students actually had experience with programming such as Matlab and C++ programs along with doing research projects with ECG, MRI, and CT. A few students were able to fully answer the questions we asked them without hesitation. Overall, the students had good English pronunciation and we were able to understand the majority of what they were trying to say. Some students were confident in continuing their education such as in a PhD program. Other students had prior job experience which was helpful in shedding a positive light on wanting to continue their education. Candidates that were very interested in doing research were looked upon favorably. The more specific the students were about what they wanted to study and do in their program, the higher their interview score. Most importantly, we liked seeing students who were smiling and friendly.

Poor Candidate Qualities:

Most of the candidates were shy and acted as if they have never been to an interview before. Most of them came unprepared to answer even the simplest questions. We understand that oral English is difficult, but some of the students could only answer in Chinese after much effort. Some students took too long to answer the question. Time was limited for each interviewee so most of the candidates did not make good use of their time. Students who had prior job experience needed to be more assertive in "selling" their skills to the interviewers.

Tips on a Successful Interview Process:

Prior to the interview, do some research on the department or company. What do they do and what are they looking for in a future employee? Never go to an interview without having prior information about your future place of employment. You should think of questions that you want to ask them at the end of the interview as well (i.e. work environment, your job duties and responsibilities, contract information, etc.). Dress in clean, presentable clothes. Before entering the room, take a deep breath and RELAX! Mentally picture yourself answering any question confidently and with poise. Enter the room with a smile and address the interviewers in a positive and confident manner. Listen CAREFULLY to the questions asked and if you do not know the answer right away, take another deep breath, relax, and let the answer come to you. If you are unsure of the question, ask the interviewer to REPHRASE or even repeat the question. When asked about an introduction about yourself, keep it brief and to the point. Do NOT describe how wonderful your hometown is, what you like to eat or do in your spare time, or how great your friends are. You are here for a single purpose and that is to get the job position, so focus on your best WORK qualities and your educational background. The interviewer wants to see that you can answer ANY question well under pressure. Be informative, brief and concise in your answers. PRACTICE what you will say ahead of time. Below is a list of helpful questions that you should know by heart before any interview or examination. Review them carefully and compose your answers with thought and care. Most importantly, BE YOURSELF and don't answer mechanically like a robot!

- 1) What did you study in your undergraduate program?
- 2) What have you done in your research projects?
- 3) Why do you choose to continue your education instead of just finding a job?
- 4) Why did you choose Xidian University and this department to pursue your degree?
- 5) What will you do after you finish your degree?
- 6) What are your best and worst qualities or characteristics?
- 7) What is your ultimate academic or career goal?
- 8) What is your experience in this field?
- 9) Do you have any plans of studying abroad and why?
- 10) What is your ideal job or career?
- 11) Why did you choose to work at this particular job?
- 12) Why did you quit your job?
- 13) What is the greatest difficulty in learning English?
- 14) Where do you see yourself in five years? Ten years?