



Interview Advice and Top Tips

General preparation:

- Before my interview, I set up a “mock” interview with a family friend to help my confidence in explaining my project and answering unexpected questions. This person wasn't an engineer but gave some helpful feedback and eased my nerves ahead of the real one.
- Conduct "mock interviews" on Teams. This could be with a teacher or a family member (especially if they are an engineer or work in higher education within an engineering department). This helps you to hone your presentation skills and make sure you can comfortably showcase your project in the time constraints given.
- Make sure that you read and re-read your application and think about questions that could be asked.
- Have a clear plan of what field you may want to work in or to have researched a particular area of engineering that interests you. This shows genuine interest in engineering and separates candidates that display extra motivation and are thinking outside of their studies.
- Prepare questions for your interviewers upfront.

Presentation preparation:

- Keep the presentation of your project brief and focus on aspects which show your strengths as an engineer, such as how you overcame problems.
- You could start with a few slides where you explain your prototype/design. Give some arguments why you used materials and mechanisms. Think about the answers to questions like: What was my motivation behind this project? How does this project reflect my interest in engineering? What have I learnt through the project? What were the things that went well/wrong? How did I overcome obstacles and challenges? How can I improve the project in the future? Diagrams help a lot. Include sketches, 3D models, pictures, circuit designs, screenshots of your code or a flowchart. Don't put too much text on a slide; be concise and go straight to the point.
- Take the time to properly research the individual components and principles behind your project. This'll not only deepen your understanding of your engineering field but can also really help you to show your passion and ability in interviews.
- Practice your presentation and a few possible questions you are likely to be asked (preferably with a teacher if possible)
- Time yourself when practicing your project presentation.
- Have a script or notes for the presentation.
- Remember you are the expert of your project, so you have all the information to explain it clearly and be yourself.



On the day:

- Try to join earlier in case there are technical issues.
- Smile, use open body language, and think about what you can ask an interviewer.
- Remember that you will always talk faster than intended, take time to explain every point you are making and make sure it is clear to the interviewer.

Answering questions:

- The interview is just as much about your current engineering knowledge and experiences as it is about the attitude with which you are approaching this opportunity. Show that you are willing to get as much out of it as you can and appreciate all the incredible opportunities that receiving the scholarship will give you.
- Openly talk about interests and explain your thinking, as interviewers value curiosity and potential more than perfect answers.
- The interviewers want to know how you think not just what you already know. It is more about how you, as an individual, can solve problems and explain your ideas well. If the interviewers ask you something that you don't know the answer to, you should explain your thought process for coming up with an answer.
- If you don't know something, it's okay if you give an explanation and maybe this could be something you research later (e.g. I was asked about how a certain electronic component worked and I had not been taught it but as I had previously said my passion doesn't reside within electronics and I was passionate about material science and chemistry, therefore they changed the question to something I was really passionate about).
- Think aloud during technical questions. When the interviewers ask how they would improve this product, don't jump to the correct answer - break the problem down, state the assumptions, compare the options, and finally justify your choices. This shows your process as well as your final answer.
- Be genuinely curious and reflective. The interview isn't about knowing everything - it's about showing how you think. The interviewers really value the engineering process and the way your mind works, rather than just the final output.
- Don't try to overcomplicate your ideas for the sake of sounding smart. It is a skill to explain complex ideas in a simple way.
- Make sure you pick lines of questioning you will be able to follow through on.



Presenting the best version of you:

- The interviewers are a lot friendlier than you might picture, being yourself and contributing to civilised conversations can not only make you more relaxed through the interview, but it will also show your best and true character to interviewers.
- Even though you'll be nervous, try to engage with the interviewers because they may be senior engineers from industry or the military, so it's a great opportunity for you to ask them questions.
- It will help you feel more at ease if you remember that this is something you're passionate about and it will come through to the interviewers as well.
- Don't be afraid to wear a bit of a confidence mask - saying something, and giving an answer even if you're not sure, is way better than not attempting to answer.
- Don't be too harsh on yourself - this for most scholars is the first time being interviewed and the interviewers want you to succeed, so don't get too stressed out. Be confident in yourself - they want to get to know you, not a seemingly perfect version of yourself, but someone who can understand their failures and weaknesses and build from them.