

Department of Politics Graduate School

INTERVIEW ADVICE NOTE FOR PROSPECTIVE RESEARCH STUDENTS

The aim of this advice note is to provide prospective research students with guidance on what they should expect from the interview process. This will help both the interviewer(s) and the interviewee to get as much out of the process as possible.

The Purpose of the interviews

We maintain that there is an integral relationship between the quality of a Politics Department and the breadth and vitality of its Graduate School. The interview is an important component of this process. An interview will be offered once the Director of Graduate Research and your potential supervisor have reviewed your application, and wish to gather further information before taking a final decision. The interview is normally conducted by your potential supervisor.

Demonstration of Understanding

In general candidates must be able to demonstrate a *preliminary understanding* of areas that might include:

- the gap(s) in the relevant literature(s) which your project will seek to bridge
This will require some knowledge of the appropriate literature(s);
- your project's central research questions;
- the theoretical tradition in which you are hoping to work
This will require some knowledge of the appropriate literature(s);
- the research methodology which you will employ
This will require some knowledge of the appropriate literature(s); and,
- the empirical focus of your analysis (usually not in the case of political philosophy students)

You will also be expected to make a preliminary assessment of the contribution to knowledge that your project will make. Candidates should expect their research proposal to be subjected to detailed critical evaluation.

The Structure of the interview

The interview is likely to last for approximately 30 minutes. While interviews normally take place by telephone or Skype, they can be conducted in person if convenient. The candidate will also be offered the opportunity to ask questions.

Remember: One of the most important messages for prospective research students to convey in their interviews is their enthusiasm for, and interest in, their proposed research project.