



## DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS

### Interview Advice for Visit Days

Here in the Department of Physics at York we interview all promising undergraduate applicants who are based in the UK. This helps us to get a better picture of you as an individual to help us in our selection, and enables us to discuss your choice of degree programme with you. We will ask you general questions regarding your application as well as some technical questions to help assess your abilities in Physics and Mathematics. We are not assessing your fashion sense, so 'smart casual' dress is fine. The individual interview part of the Visit Day typically takes 20-25 minutes and will be held in a member of staff's office.

#### Warm-up questions

As with most interviews, we start by asking gentle questions. You should be able to say why you have applied for University, for this particular University, and for this particular course. If you are applying for deferred entry, what are your plans and reasons for doing so? Do you have a passion for physics? What are your plans for your future career? The point of these questions is to see how carefully you have thought out the options for the next few years of your life. We are not looking for introspective soul-searching, just the signs that you value your time and abilities and want to make something of them. We also ask how things have been going at school and if there have been any disruptions to your studies. We want to make sure we have this information if your exams do not turn out the way they should.

#### Technical questions

We normally ask one technical question on maths and one on physics. The maths question will be something fairly straightforward and at an appropriate level so that you have a good chance of being able to tackle it. For example, we might ask how you might go about proving that  $\sin^2 x + \cos^2 x = 1$ . Some interviewees are able to answer this without help, but usually we need to talk about it. The physics question will be a little more open-ended and might not be on a topic that you have studied before. This is not because we are trying to catch you out or test your memory, but rather that we want to see how you think and explain things.

These are "skills" that we will help you develop during the degree programme, but some helpful tips are:

- focus your mind by thinking about the elementary things you know about the topic
- think aloud about what you might do
- draw a diagram

If you can show your thinking, then we will be able to help you get to an answer.

#### Your questions

Interviews always end with the opportunity for the interviewee to ask questions. You do not have to ask anything - there are no points for clever questions - but, this is your best chance to get a direct answer on anything about the University, the degree programme, the place, so why not take it?

**Please:      Be honest.      Be yourself.      Relax.**

Professor Brian Fulton, Head of Department  
Dr Matt Probert, Senior Undergraduate Admissions Tutor