

We are really pleased that you are considering applying to the Franklin PhD programme. Please see below for guidance on writing a personal statement, choosing an appropriate academic referee and preparing for a video interview.

We hope this is useful to you in completing the different parts of our recruitment process, and wish you the best of luck in your application.

## Writing a personal statement

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Your personal statement should consider answering the following questions:

- What is your motivation for applying to the Franklin?
- How would your career aspirations be aided by completing your PhD with us?
- Have you held any relevant positions of responsibility that have helped you develop as a researcher?
- Do you have any achievements or prizes to demonstrate academic excellence?
- What in this particular programme interests you?
- How did you develop your interests and skills practically in your field of interest?
- What inspires you?
- Do you have any relevant shadowing experience? What did you learn?
- How can you contribute to the Franklin community?
- What modules or content in your degree do you feel is relevant for the Franklin PhD programme?
- Have you been involved in any scientific outreach or public engagement initiatives?
- Have you actively participated in any conferences through a poster or oral presentation?
- What research skills do you have e.g. techniques?
- What software have you been trained in using, and to what proficiency?

Additional tips:

- Focus on what you learnt and did, rather what you attended or saw
- Try not to list what you consider to be good qualities, but rather demonstrate with examples how you exemplify each quality. Evidence should underpin everything you write about

## Choosing an academic referee

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An academic referee:

- Should be able to support your research experience or enthusiasm
- Should be someone who can vouch for you professionally as an academic; perhaps a personal tutor, a lecturer, a course director, a research project supervisor, or a line manager
- Must not be a friend, fellow student or a relative

Please ask referees (before writing their details) whether they are happy to complete a reference for you.

## Preparing for a video interview

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When preparing for a video interview:

- Ensure you have Zoom downloaded before the day of the interview and that you know how to use it
- Practise talking on Zoom with a friend / colleague to feel comfortable answering questions
- Test your microphone and camera and that you can both hear and be heard clearly by another party (if not, borrow or buy a separate microphone / webcam)
- Position the camera so that you are centred on the screen, and if possible, keep the camera at eye level
- Make sure you are in a quiet and private room, and minimise if possible, any noisy distractions (including pets) – but if this not possible, we do understand
- Conduct the interview in a room with good lighting in the background
- Keep limited notes to refer to during the interview
- Make sure you have some relevant questions for the interviewers
- Make sure you have a professional name on your Zoom call
- Print a copy of your application with you to refer to during the interview

On the day of your video interview:

- Ensure your computer is charged / has enough battery for the interview
- Close all unnecessary tabs and windows on your desktop screen
- Check you have steady Wi-Fi bandwidth (we have all experienced connection issues before)
- Check there is no clutter, or anything distracting / incriminating in the background
- Keep a glass of water to the side
- Check that you do not have any Zoom background or face filters turned on
- Ensure you have a pen and paper to make notes if needed
- Make sure everything is ready before you join the call
- Join the call 5 minutes before your scheduled interview time
- Dress professionally, as you would do for an in-person interview
- Set your phone to silent mode
- Let us know before the interview begins if you are facing any difficulties
- Try to relax, smile and be friendly – your interviewers are people too, they want you to succeed and are not trying to catch you out