

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

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 have you overcome any challenges you have faced to get to where you are now?
- 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 academic referees

Academic referees:

- Should be able to support your research experience or enthusiasm
- Should be people 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

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