

Interview of the third round

The aim of the interview is to assess the level of motivation and academic competency of participants, their knowledge and potential as academic researchers as well as the formal compliance with the rules of the Olympiad and the requirements of the university chosen.

The interview aims to assess:

- the main motivation behind the decision to take a doctoral program in the chosen university;
- the propensity for research;
- the knowledge of the chosen area of science;
- the general level of research culture and erudition;
- the ability of the university and a potential research supervisor to provide education and research management services corresponding to the level of theoretical preparedness of the participant and his/her research aspirations. It is important to ensure that the research interests of the potential research supervisor align with those of the participant;
- the proficiency of English/Russian in a conversation on a professional topic using the necessary professional terminology.

The interview

The interview is designed to evaluate the participant's motivation for enrolling in a doctoral program and his/her understanding of the main goal and objectives of doctoral studies. The interview is based on the portfolio provided by the participant during the first round. The portfolio contains the documents confirming the participant's academic qualification and achievements, which will be discussed during the interview. By prior agreement with the participant, the interview can be conducted in Russian or English.

Structure of the interview

The interview consists of two parts. Each part lasts up to 15 minutes.

During the first part, the participant is asked to introduce himself/herself, speak about the reasons for taking part in the International Olympiad, the motivation behind his/her choice of the branch of science, as well as further post-PhD professional plans.

The first part of the interview covers much of the information provided in the participant's portfolio but in more detail. The portfolio documents demonstrate the quality of what has been done so far:

1. Publication experience;
2. Independent research or working in a research team;
3. Motivation behind choosing this particular doctoral program;
4. Language proficiency and the ability to discuss professional topics using relevant terminology;
5. Internships or participation in academic mobility programs;
6. Work experience in the chosen area of study;
7. Participation in research projects;
8. Motivation for success and academic achievements.

During the second part of the interview, a prospective research supervisor assesses the participant's theoretical preparedness for doing research (doctoral thesis) in the chosen area of study. The participant is expected to answer theory and research related questions to determine his/her knowledge required for writing a doctoral thesis, as well as general erudition and the awareness of modern trends in the chosen professional field.

Sample questions

1. Which of your previous research results do you consider to be particularly important?
2. How independent were you in doing your previous research?
3. Tell us about one of your previous research projects in more detail: goals, objectives, methodology and the results obtained
4. What were the strengths and weaknesses of your previous research? What problems did you have to overcome?
5. Tell us about your future research in more detail: goals, objectives and research methodology. What results do you expect to achieve?
6. What research methods do you know? What methods are you planning to employ in your future research project?
7. What additional professional training will you need?

Assessment Criteria

1. Assessment "**Ready to supervise**"
– the answers to the questions given by the participant were detailed enough and demonstrated his/her scientific competency, broad erudition, and the ability to discuss professional research-related topics;

- the answers were consistent, logical and convincing; the participant used modern and relevant research terminology and demonstrated a clear understanding of the theoretical essence of the chosen research problem;
- the participant’s previous research was sufficiently independent and demonstrated original approaches to the analysis of the material studied; the participant can identify the phenomena and facts which have been insufficiently studied and require further research. Previous research works were relevant and novel to the required degree;
- research results have been presented at scientific conferences and/or published;
- a clear explanation was given for the personal motivation behind the decision to conduct doctoral studies.

2. Assessment **“The participant has the required level of competence and can be referred for post-graduate (PhD) studies to one of the universities - organizers of the Olympiad”**

The assessment is similar to #1, but the potential research supervisor does not confirm his/her scientific supervision for the reason of discrepancy of scientific research areas with the participant or other reasons.

3. Assessment **“The participant does not have a required level of competence defined for an Olympiad’s winner”**

- the answers to the questions were unconvincing and demonstrated a lack of awareness of the chosen research problem; the answers were not logically structured or clear answers were not given;
- previous research lacked independence to a considerable degree or was not independent at all; the participant’s thesis was either mainly descriptive and/or abstract in character or was a compilation of other scholars' research results;
- research results have not been published, are of poor quality or have not been presented at scientific conferences.