Plan of the interview for the participants of the third round: Biology & Biotechnology

The candidate is expected to:
- navigate easily through research themes related to the proposed topic of the doctoral thesis;
- be aware of the main veins of research in modern Biology;
- demonstrate proficiency in English/Russian and the appropriateness of style in a conversation on academic topics;
- demonstrate interest in pursuing postgraduate studies and motivation to improve his/her research and professional skills.

Interview form

The interview is conversational in style and is an overview of the candidate's motives for pursuing postgraduate studies. The candidate is expected to demonstrate a clear understanding of the main aim of postgraduate studies.

During the interview, the documents and a short essay provided by the candidate in advance will be reviewed.

The aim of the interview is to determine the candidate's motivation to do research in the chosen field of Biology, his/her theoretical background and research skills. Another important aim of the interview is to identify a potential research supervisor for the candidate taking into account the candidate's and the potential research supervisor's interests, preferences and resources.

Objectives of the interview:
- to identify the candidate's motivation for doing a PhD course in Russia;
- to assess his/her aptitude for research;
- to assess the knowledge of the theory and current trend within the chosen area of science;
- to assess the general level of the candidate's research culture and erudition;
- to assess the possibilities of the university and a potential research supervisor to provide academic guidance based on the level of academic training of the candidate and his/her wishes, as well as on the possibilities and research interests of the research supervisor.

Interview process

The interview consists of two parts.

During the first part of the interview, the candidate is asked to introduce himself/herself and speak about his/her motivation for taking a PhD course in a particular area of Biology as well as his/her future career prospects.

This part of the interview also includes a review of a short essay written by the candidate and submitted in advance. The essay contains the key points of the candidate's self-introduction and a description of his/her motivation for pursuing a career in research.

During this part of the interview, documents confirming the candidate's previous research and professional experience are assessed.

The documents are to confirm:

1. Experience in research and publication of its results (a list of publications is required)

2. Experience in conducting independent research or working in a research team (a letter of recommendation of the supervisor is to be provided);

4. Language proficiency (English or Russian language certificate is required);

5. Internships (internship certificates are required);

6. Work experience in the chosen research area (confirmation documents are required);

7. Participation in research projects (confirmation documents are required);

8. Motivation for success. Awards and diplomas (a list of awards is required)

During this part of the interview, the reasons and motivation for choosing this particular university and a PhD course are discussed.

The first part of the interview takes 20 minutes.

The second part of the interview is to assess the theoretical preparedness of the candidate for his/her future research work (dissertation). The candidate answers theoretical questions posed by the potential research supervisor. It is done to determine the theoretical background of the candidate, his/her general erudition and the knowledge of current trends in Biology and Biotechnology.

The second part of the interview takes 10 minutes.

By prior agreement with the candidate, the interview will be conducted in Russian or English.

Sample questions of a potential research supervisor:

ONE CLICK TO OPEN ALL DOORS

1. What do you consider to be your main achievements in the completed research projects?

2. How independent were you when doing your previous research?

3. Describe one of your research projects: aims, objectives, research methods and the obtained results.

4. What was easy to cope with, and what obstacles did you have to overcome in your previous research project or your work as a teacher?

5. What research project (thesis) are you planning to do in Russia: aims, objectives, research methods and the expected results?

6. What research methods can you employ?

7. What additional skills did you get during your previous degree programs?

Interview Evaluation Criteria
80-100 points = excellent

- answers are detailed and precise. They demonstrate the candidate's research competence and considerable erudition, the ability to maintain a dialogue on academic topics; the answers are logical, consistent and persuasive, rich in academic vocabulary, reflect a clear understanding of the theoretical background, and are supported by the candidate's experience of research work;

- research experience is largely independent, the candidate shows original approaches to the study of the chosen material, phenomena and facts. The candidate's completed research (thesis, projects) are relevant and contain elements of novelty;

- research results were presented at academic conferences and/or published;

- the candidate is strongly motivated to improve his/her research skills when doing the PhD course.

55-79 points = good

- answers are generally logical; they demonstrate the candidate's theoretical background and the relevance of the chosen problem for research; the answers are consistent and

convincing. The candidate uses the necessary terminology and demonstrates the ability to work with literature;

- research experience is characterized by a certain degree of independence, and the completed research (thesis, projects) is based on modern research methods;

- research results were presented at international academic conferences or published;

- the candidate is motivated to improve his/her research skills when doing the PhD course.

35-54 points = fair

- answers reveal only a superficial awareness of the theory required for research; they are generally logical but contain declarative and banal conclusions;

- research experience is characterized by a low degree of independence, and the completed research works (thesis, projects) are descriptive, but they were carried out using, at least, one modern research method;

- the research results were insufficiently presented at academic conferences, poorly presented in published works or not published at all.

1-34 points = poor

- answers reveal a superficial awareness of the chosen field of research; the answers lack logic or no clear answers are provided;

- research experience is not independent or the candidate has no research experience, and the completed research work (thesis) is a blend of the results of other people's research, i.e. it is of descriptive and/or abstractive;

- research results were insufficiently presented or not presented at academic conferences and poorly presented in published works or have not been published.