Interviewing skills support:
Focus on funding applications and the job search

Dr. Julia Staykova-McKinnon
for Scriptorium

Target groups: (1) applicants to national or EU funding agencies which require an oral interview; **(2)** applicants for competitive research jobs; **(3)** anyone who wishes to upgrade their presentation skills in preparation for conference talks or the doctoral defence.

Duration and format: Day 1, Introductory workshop: 13:30-17:30; Day 2, Practice sessions: 9:00-17:00, with 2-hour mock interview sessions held in a mini-group of 3-5 participants.

Mock interviews format: 5-min talk, 5-7 min Q&A, and 10 min for debriefing, including (1) brief self-assessment; (2) feedback from the group; (3) final comments from the instructor. The small group reduces time spent watching other talks while providing optimal peer feedback.

What to prepare: 5-min talk about your current research or next proposal, with 5-6 slides max.

Many scientists worry that they lack charisma for public speaking. After an interview for a competitive position, researchers reflect that their presentation was too nervous and their responses in the Q&A session sabotaged their chances of success. Yet if handled correctly the interview can be a life-long memory of triumph. In this course, you will learn how to:

1. Highlight the advantages of your work and make your messages more memorable.
2. Target both experts and non-experts, and help distracted, tired listeners.
3. Anticipate the typical questions you are likely to be asked and prepare strategic answers.
4. Learn how to neutralize unpleasant remarks and aggressive behaviour from panel members.
5. Use technology, body language, your posture, and your voice effectively.

Note: you will be expected to contribute by asking questions following the presentations of several colleagues, and to offer a constrictive critique of their performance.

Interviewing Skills: Workshop Programme

<u>Day 1. 13:30-17:30</u> + coffee break

13:30-14:30. Define your key messages for an oral interview. Shape your talk in response to the evaluation criteria.

COFFEE BREAK 15 mins

14:45-15:45. The mechanics of public speaking: body language, voice control, and technology use. Establishing audience rapport.

BREAK 5 mins

15:50-16:30. The Q&A session in an interview: key questions to expect.
Strategies for dealing with negative behavior.

BREAK 5 mins

16:20-17:20. Exercise: "The Elevator Pitch." You will give a 2-min presentation of your research, focusing on key advantages to help people remember you.

17:20-17:30. Assignments for the mock interviews on day 2.
Schedule for mock interview sessions.

<u>Day 2. 9:00-17:00</u>

You will be split into groups of 3-5 for a 2-hour mock interview.

In the "mock interview" you will:
> **Perform:**
> - Give a 5-min talk about your research
> - Respond to questions for 5-7 min
>
> **Debrief:**
> - Briefly reflect on your own performance
> - Receive feedback from the group with focus on the messages in your talk and your public speaking skills.

<u>This will take roughly 20-25 mins per person.</u>

Julia Staykova-McKinnon, Ph.D.
Scriptorium Founder

Profile

Julia has over fifteen years of experience as a lecturer and consultant in grant writing, business proposal development for private investors, research writing and communication, and public speaking. She consults on proposals submitted to H2020 and national funding agencies, including ERC (AdG, SyG, CoG, StG), Erasmus+, Marie Sklodowska Curie Actions (ITN, IF), FET-RIA, as well as national agencies such as DFG (Germany), ANR & PIA3 (France), FWO/FNRS (Belgium).

Academia: Julia teaches workshops at research institutes and doctoral schools across Europe. She works mainly in life sciences, sciences, technology, and engineering. A selection of her clients includes Charité-Berlin, German Cancer Research Centre-Heidelberg (dkfz), University of Bordeaux, Institut Curie-Paris, Institute of Clinical and Experimental Research (IREC) - Brussels, University of Grenoble-Alpes, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine (MDC) - Berlin, Max Planck-Potsdam, and Swiss Federal Institute of Technology-Zurich.

Consortia and clusters of excellence she has assisted: AgileWorld (Grenoble), Image Processing and Computer Vision (IPCV-Bordeaux), MoveAge (Leuven), Neurasmus (Bordeaux), NeuroCure (Berlin), Immunoshape (Potsdam), among others.

Industry: Julia has consulted and taught at Eli Lilly Pharmaceuticals, Hengeler Mueller Partners in Law, HVB Banking Group, KPMG, and Servier Laboratories. With Janssen Pharmaceutica, she developed an innovative training programme implemented at KULeuven's Doctoral School.

Academic Background

Visiting Assistant Professor, University of Amsterdam (2010-11)

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellow, Los Angeles, California (2009-10)

Post-Doctoral Fellow, University of British Columbia, Vancouver (2007-09)

Ph.D. in Shakespeare and Renaissance culture, Oxford and Sofia (2007)