

Topic Guide for Interviews

1. Preface

1.1 Summary

These structured interviews will be conducted following two training sessions provided by the Jean Golding Institute (JGI). **These workshops aim to increase the programming knowledge and understanding of AI in undergraduate student attendees.** They will be recruited to the workshops on a first-come, first-served basis; all attendees will be contacted to ask whether they wish to participate in pre- and post-training surveys. These respondents will be asked for their interest in an interview, and the first 10 who express an interest will be invited to attend.

These interviews are shaped to answer the following research questions. The first underpins this project, so in part informs each of the interview questions provided in Section 2.2.

RQ1) What do participants perceive as barriers and enablers for them to study AI following attendance of the training programme?

RQ2) How do career expectations influence their choices around postgraduate study after attending the training programme?

RQ3) How does institutional policy impact interest in AI studies after attending the training programme?

The interviews will take place on 12th, 13th, 16th and 17th of March 2026 (all weekdays). They will be conducted individually via a Microsoft Teams call with participants, recorded through Teams itself. These will be held during working hours (9am – 5pm BST). They will each last 45-60 minutes. In each interview, there will be two members of the project team present – one interviewer, asking the questions, and the other an observer who is responsible for taking field notes on the participant's responses and ensuring good consistency across the interviews (since 2-3 members of the project team will conduct the interviews across the study period).

1.2 Observer Responsibilities during Interview:

1. Keep track of the interruptions in recording and transcription so we can understand the transcribed data later.
2. Take notes about what is not obvious through recordings and transcription (ex: gestures, hesitation, discomfort).
3. Reflection for further learning (ex: what questions were confusing, what shall be done differently to have a more productive interview, are there any themes that they have observed while listening).

Note: the observer should be ready to conduct the interview in case of emergencies with the interviewers.

2. Interview Schedule

2.1 Introduction (5mins)

1. Before starting with the introduction (below), it is important to let the participant know that the interview is being recorded and transcribed on Teams (e.g., Hello and thank you for being here today. Before we start with the introduction, we just wanted to let you know that this interview is being recorded and transcribed on Teams, is that okay with you? Can we proceed?').
2. **START RECORDING**
3. The interviewer will introduce themselves and the observer to the participant including clarifying tasks (the interview will share a few questions to think about with the participants while the observer will take some notes about the interview which will help us further understand the context of the interview to be more accurate when analysing the data).
4. They will briefly describe the interview procedure (The interview will include a conversation about 7 to 10 questions that we will use to further understand how undergraduate students think about postgraduate studies in AI with the aim of making AI studies more accessible).
5. They will ask the participant to confirm commencement of the interview, confirming that they have read and understood the PIS and confidentiality protocol and they do not have any questions and/or concerns (the interviewer should mention the following points:
 - That the participant can withdraw from the interview at any time with no consequences.
 - That the participant can choose not to answer one or more questions.
 - That the participant can ask us to stop recording and transcribing if they wish to share something that they wish not to be recorded and used as data.
 - That all the data transcribed will be anonymised).

2.2 Questions (30-45mins)

The interviewer will ask the participants the following questions:

No.	Question	Probe / Follow-up	Research Questions
1	What were the main factors in you deciding to study your current course / choose your current job?	Has the AI training affected which careers now interest you for the future?	RQ2 - primary RQ1 – secondary
2	What's influencing your decision to pursue/not pursue studies in AI?	What are your thoughts about doing a postgraduate degree in AI? Have these changed as a result of the training?	RQ1 - primary RQ2 – secondary
3	What type of support do you think you would want or need for studying AI?	Do you think you are likely to receive that support easily? Why or why not?	RQ1 - primary RQ2 – secondary

4	From your point of view, do you think that studying AI (courses undergraduate, postgraduate, trainings) seems accessible?	Why or why not?	RQ1 – primary RQ2 – secondary
5	How clear are the university's AI policies to you?	What effect would you say the university's AI policies have had on your interest and use of it? What would you change about the policy, if anything?	RQ3 – primary RQ1 – secondary
6	How has the AI training programme changed the way you think about studying AI?	Is there anything you hoped to get out of it but didn't?	RQ1 – primary RQ2 – secondary
7	Is there anything else you would like to add?		All RQs.

A larger version of the question table is also included on the next page to facilitate printing.

2.3 Wrap-Up (5-10mins)

The interviewer will conclude the interview:

1. They will confirm that the participant assents to their data being used for this research.
2. They will inform the participant that they will receive a £20 Love2Shop voucher to the email address provided to thank them for their participation in the interview.
3. They will thank the participant for attending the interview.
4. Remind participant they can withdraw up to the 31st March, which is when the data will be anonymised.
5. If the participant asks about study results, provide in the email with the thank-you voucher a link to the research website where they will be able to access updates.

FINISH RECORDING

No.	Question	Probe / Follow-up
1	What were the main factors in you deciding to study your current course / choose your current job?	Has the AI training affected which careers now interest you for the future?
2	What's influencing your decision to pursue/not pursue studies in AI?	What are your thoughts about doing a postgraduate degree in AI? Have these changed as a result of the training?
3	What type of support do you think you would want or need for studying AI?	Do you think you are likely to receive that support easily? Why or why not?
4	From your point of view, do you think that studying AI (courses undergraduate, postgraduate, trainings) seems accessible?	Why or why not?
5	How clear are the university's AI policies to you?	What effect would you say the university's AI policies have had on your interest and use of it? What would you change about the policy, if anything?
6	How has the AI training programme changed the way you think about studying AI?	Is there anything you hoped to get out of it but didn't?
7	Is there anything else you would like to add?	