

TRANSCRIPT OF LECTURE DELIVERED ON JANUARY 8, 2019. (FORUM 2)

THEME » **GETTING INTO SKOLTECH – HOW IT WORKS**

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Background

Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology (**SKOLTECH**) is a private research institution located in the silicon valley of Russia (Skolkovo, Moscow). It's a graduate only institute that's offers **only** MSc and PhD degrees. Skoltech started as collaboration with Massachusetts Institute Technology (MIT) in 2011 and it's to serve as an incubation center for the best brains in Russia and some other parts of the world to develop useful skills to help change the world positively.

What Skoltech offers

Averagely, 250 MSc students are admitted each year from specific countries (**and Nigeria happens to be a part**). The list of courses can be found on the Skoltech website – www.skoltech.ru

The largest intake is in Data Science (with students who major in Mathematics and/or Computer Science) with the students taking a whopping 30% of the school's population. All MSc programs take 2 years while PhD programs are 4 years in duration.

What happens in Skoltech

Interestingly, high performing students (students with a grade of B and higher) have opportunities for Academic Mobility of duration 2-4 month research study in any of the top 200 schools in the world during the MSc program.

As part of your study in Skoltech in the first month, unlike other schools where you start classes as soon as you resume, here is different.

Skoltech also offer two months internship after the first year of the MSc in the top Russian companies or in other parts of Europe.

Why choose Skoltech

Are you passionate about seeing Science come alive, understanding the principles of Science and using the knowledge gained to create something useful?... Are you passionate about having your own start up?.....**Then Skoltech is preferable.**

Interestingly, September is known to be meant for Innovation Workshop. Entrepreneurs and Venture capitalists from all over the world come to Skoltech to give ears to your ideas, help you put them together and whoop....you may boomingly have a chance to get grants to develop those ideas. Personally, I resumed in September, 2018 and in less than 2 weeks came into contact with the VP of Chrysler and major business leaders from India, Finland, Israel and the US.

Skoltech best suited level of research also provides a good reason to join us. Even though everything has its price (like the pretty rigorous MIT curriculum which we run and the high demand from the school) but it's worth it at the end of the course.

As mentioned earlier, this is the silicon valley of Russia. Thus, in Skolkovo where the school is located, there are hundreds of startup hubs with new technology being pushed out daily, there is the Boeing research complex right next to Skoltech building, Hydrocarbon Recovery Center, an International Medical Diagnostic Center, Center for Neurosurgery, etc.

How to apply Skoltech

Applying to Skoltech was the most stress-free application I ever did. There are five (5) application rounds each starting from November of the preceeding year. **The following stages will be considered when applying:**

Stage 1:

Fill an online form and upload your CV, Motivation letter, two reference letters, degree certificate and test of English certificate (TOEFL/IELTS)

Stage 2:

Luckily, if your application is found acceptable, you will then be invited for an online test which is in line with your chosen program (**monitored by a browser ad-in**). Surprisingly, the browser add-in is a start-up co-founded by one of the first set of Nigerians admitted in SKoltech.

Stage 3:

If you pass the test, you will be invited for a Skype interview to confidentially swim through to the last stage provided you are miles away from Moscow. (It's a two day Assessment centered if you are in Russia or close enough to be in Russia).

Stage 4:

You get a Yes/No. Getting a **Yes** is an easy ride all the way. You only need to pay for your Visa (which you will get the second day after visa application), your flight ticket is taken care of, plus settling down etc.

Generic Questions and Answers

Q1. Is there any application fee?

A. No

Q2. Is the scholarship fully funded?

A. Yes. It is right from your flight ticket to accommodation and monthly stipend

Q3. What is the nature of the test.....is it theoretical or multiple choice type of question? Also, what should be expected during the Skype interview?

A. The nature of the questions depends on your chosen program. For my program (Energy Systems), it was an objective test including Linear Algebra, Calculus, Thermodynamics and Power Engineering questions. Another program like Photonics/Quantum materials has theoretical questions. Material Science was objective test (mathematics and probabilistic physics) last year. Also, for the Skype interview, you will be required to prepare a 5 minutes presentation about yourself and the expectation of the panel (Professors) is to be really confident about yourself and what you have done. You must be able to state your strengths in convincing terms. That's what sets you apart from the 9/10 other people who will be bounced off if you are admitted.

Q4. Is it compulsory to provide the English proficiency Test?

A. English test isn't compulsory during application. You can wait until you're admitted before taking the test.

Q5. Does the program include M.Ed. too?

A. No to M.Ed.

Q6. What's the advisable minimum CGPA to apply for it?

A. Your strength matters a lot here (starting from a beautiful crafted motivation letter, perfect application test scores and dazzling performance at the interview) not forgetting your providence.

Q7. Is it appropriate to apply for material science as a chemistry graduate?

A. Yes, you can. Material Science is tied to the Center of Energy Systems in Skoltech and one of the various options in Material Science is Energy Materials..... I met a visiting professor from Oxford (in Material Science) with research in: “Multi-Modal Macroscopy Analysis for Li-ion battery cathodes”.

Q8. Which of the section criteria carry the highest weight?

A. All of them

Q9. How much worth the scholarship stipend?

A. 40k Rubles increased to 50k Rubles after 4 months if you have a B and above grade. 55k Rubles after internship and gets doubled during academic mobility.

Michael Frimpong
For International Scholarship Forum

Cc: Admins