

## Interview Preparation

### What are employers looking for at the interview?

- The skills you can offer and whether you can do the job and/or develop in the job
- Your ability to clearly communicate examples to verify the information in your CV
- Your genuine interest in the job and the organization
- Your potential to fit into the organisation/team

### Before the interview

- **Know the date, place and time of the interview**
- **Find out the interviewer's name(s)**, the correct pronunciation and their title(s).
- **Find out the main requirements/skill set of the job** and how well your skills match. You may want to ask if there is a job description and/or have a conversation with staff of the organisation.
- **Read over your CV.** Refresh your memory about your skills, experience and education.
- **Research the organization** by reading their website and finding any other information available on the internet and in libraries. Annual reports, company brochures and magazine/newspaper articles may be helpful. This shows you have a keen interest in what they do and promotes your involvement in their future. Research such things as:
  - The mission and values of the organization.
  - The services and/or products it offers, future plans.
  - The location of its offices, outlets, plants and branches.
- **Practice your answers to possible questions** you are likely to be asked. (See list of possible questions on page 2) You can write your answers, speak them aloud to yourself or (the best option) practice them out loud with someone who acts as the interviewer. Practicing your answers aloud is one of the most effective ways to prepare and build confidence!
- **Prepare a few questions you will ask** at the interview. It is okay to take a brief note of your questions to the interview. Questions could include:
  - Is there an induction and training programme?
  - Can you describe a typical day in this role?
  - How many people would the successful applicant be working with?
  - Are there any possible professional development opportunities?
- **Plan your interview clothing** well in advance, so you know you have an outfit ready which you look and feel good in. Dress appropriately for the environment, e.g. wearing a suit for an interview on a building site may not be appropriate. On the day, make sure you have showered, washed your hair and brushed your teeth.
- **Visualise positive images of how the interview will go.** Your own expectations are an important part of the preparation process. Know that your confidence increases with good preparation and practice and that every interview is a chance to learn from experience.

### The Introduction

- Your attitude speaks louder than anything you say; first impressions are important.
- Greet the interviewer warmly and smile! You could say "Hi I'm.....It's nice to meet you".
- Shake their hand firmly, smile and make eye contact.
- There may be some small talk – eg. chat about the weather, the traffic, finding the place
- Wait until you are offered a chair before sitting.
- Do not smoke, chew gum, eat or drink.



## Main Questions

Be confident and positive. Show you are interested in the job.

Use eye contact – it is a sign that you are prepared to be honest.

Use every question as an opportunity to relate your background and skills to the position.

It's ok to hesitate briefly to think about your answers before you speak.

If you don't understand a question, ask for it to be repeated.

## Types of questions

Questions may be loosely divided into these categories during your interview:

- *“Tell us about yourself”* – this question aims at helping you relax and give you the opportunity to introduce yourself briefly. Eg. I am a recent Computer Software graduate and throughout my studies have developed skills in XX. I've had some recent work experience in this field and see my future career focusing on the growing area of Cybersecurity. Keep this to no more than 2 or 3 mins.
- *What attracted you to the role?* – this question is geared towards your purpose for applying and a chance to demonstrate that your values align with the organisation.
- *Competency/ Behaviour questions* – see below
- *Weakness question* – we all have them! Identify something that isn't a deal breaker, and demonstrate how you are working on this to strengthen this area.
- *Any Questions, Question!!!* – see below – this is your opportunity to ask about other things that may not have been covered in the interview. Could include professional develop opportunities, on the job learning opportunities, team culture, dress codes... Although it may be top of mind, its generally best not to ask about pay or salary at this stage. Wait until you have been offered the role, which is a better time to negotiate.

## Prepare replies to possible questions

Preparing for an interview gives you confidence and this leads to positive communication. As well as general questions you should expect questions about the type of work you would be expected to carry out in this role.

- Tell me about your background/yourself?
- What skills can you offer us?
- What knowledge from your study can you transfer to this role?
- Why would you like to work for our organisation/company?
- What do you know about our organisation/company?
- What interests you about our product or service?
- Why did you choose this particular career?
- Why do you think you'd like this job?
- What have you learned from some of the jobs you have held? Which did you enjoy most?
- What have you done which shows initiative in your career?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- How do you spend your spare time? What types of books do you read?
- What do you want to be doing in your career five/ten years from now?
- What have been your achievements in life?
- What do you think determines a person's progress in a good company?
- How would your colleagues/ best friend describe you?
- Why should we hire you for this position?



## Behavioural questions

A popular style of interview questioning is using behavioural questions, to see how you have responded to specific situations in the past. For example:

- Tell me about a high-pressure situation you've been in. How did you deal with it?
- Tell me about a time when you had a disagreement with someone when working on a project. What steps did you take to resolve it?
- Tell me about a time when you needed to gain support for a new idea. How did you do it?
- How have you organised your time in your study/in your work/in your daily life?

One good technique to use when demonstrating your skill/attribute/attitude to the employer, is to use the **S.T.A.R** process to break down your example, keep it concise and on track.

**Situation** – a brief summary of the situation/context of your example

**Task** – what was the task you had to perform

**Action** – what action and steps did you take to perform your task

**Result** – what was the result of your action

## Closing the interview

- Smile, thank the interviewer for their time and that you look forward to hearing from them.
- If the position is offered to you and you would like to take it, you can accept it, depending on reading and accepting a contract first if there is one. If you need some time to think it over, be courteous and tactful in asking for that time. Set a date to provide an answer.

## After the interview

- You can send a thank you note/email which also restates your suitability for the job.
- You could phone the organization after 2 weeks if you haven't heard from them,
- If you are not chosen for the job it is a good idea to ask for feedback eg. "What could I do in the future to improve my chances to get a position in this type of work".

