

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).
- Read over your CV. Refresh your memory about your skills, experience, and education.
- Review your research the organisation by reading their website and finding any other information.
- The mission and values of the organisation.
- 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.
- 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 onboarding and development programme?
 - Can you describe a typical day in this role?
 - How many people would the successful applicant be working with?
 - What would be your expectations of this role in the first 90 days?
- 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, if unsure you can ask the recruiter about what is appropriate for that organisation.
- 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 and smile.
- There may be some small talk – e.g., chat about the weather, the traffic, finding the place.
- Wait until you are offered a chair before sitting.
- Do not chew gum, eat, or drink.

Main questions

- Be confident and positive. Show you are interested in the job.
- Use every question as an opportunity to relate your background and skills to the position.
- It's okay to hesitate briefly to think about your answers before you speak.
- If you don't understand a question, ask for it to be repeated or clarified.

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 tell your story/career journey while briefly adding your skills and experience gained along the way briefly. Keep this to 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.
- If you are asked if you have any questions, – this is your opportunity to ask about other things that may not have been covered in the interview.
 - Could include professional development 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.

- Tell me about your background/yourself?
- What skills can you offer us?
- What knowledge from your study or previous work experience can you transfer to this role?
- Why would you like to work for our organisation/company?
- What do you know about our organisation/company?
- Why did you choose this 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 do you want to be doing in your career five/ten years from now?
- What have been your achievements in life? What are you most proud of?
- 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 reacted in certain 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. How was it resolved?
- 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 **STAR** process to break down your example, keep it concise and on track.

Situation – a summary of the situation/context of your example.

Task – what was the task you had to perform.

Action – what action 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 given a glass of water, offer to take glass back to the kitchen.

After the interview

- We recommend sending a thank you email which also restates your suitability for the job.
- You could phone the organisation 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 e.g. "What could I do in the future to improve my chances of getting a position in this type of work".