

Learning Guide Interviews

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For more resources

Prospects

prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/interview-tips

Competency Based Interview

theguardian.com/careers/careers-blog/star-technique-competency-based-interview

Academics

jobs.ac.uk/careers-advice/interview-tips

Researchers

vitae.ac.uk/researcher-careers/pursuing-an-academic-career/applying-for-academic-jobs/commonly-asked-questions-in-academic-interviews

If you have a disability

citydisabilities.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Interviewing-well.pdf

Creative Attributes Framework

This learning guide supports Storytelling.
Search Creative Attributes to find out more.



All information is correct at time of publication Nov 2018

What are Interviews?

An interview can take a range of formats and is usually a formal, structured conversation. An interview gives the employer the opportunity to assess your suitability for a job through a series of questions. Being invited to an interview means you have made it to the later stages of the selection process.

Do:

- Make sure you understand the format of the interview, e.g. will you be in a group of other candidates; at an assessment centre or even via Skype/phone?
- Be clear on what to prepare e.g. portfolio/presentation.
- Research the organisation, company and or panel.
- Prepare and practice answers to common questions.
- Dress appropriately and plan your journey in advance.

On the day

- Know your route and arrive early.
- Switch off your phone.
- Acknowledge and be courteous to everyone you meet.
- If you are feeling nervous, it's ok to say so.
- Listen actively. Politely ask the interviewer to repeat or rephrase if you are unsure of the question.
- Speak confidently (but not arrogantly) about your skills, experience and positive attributes.
- Give evidence and examples of your skills and knowledge.
- Be professional, enthusiastic, and show your motivation.

Top Tips

Do your research

Research the organisation's structure, culture, size, and location(s). Look at its products, services, customers and its position within the industry. Research the people who are interviewing you. What are their professional interests?

Study the job specification

Think of how you fulfil the criteria and practice describing this using examples from your CV. Prepare for difficult questions that the interviewer(s) may ask you and plan how you might reply. Work out how you can include your best attributes/examples in the answer. Give evidence based examples using the STAR method (see overleaf).

Prepare questions for them

Demonstrate that you have done your research on the company and role and are keen to join the organisation. You are likely to be asked if you have any questions at the end of the interview; be prepared with appropriate questions.

Bring

Your portfolio (if relevant) in several formats. Bring a hard copy of your CV and Cover Letter or application form.

At the end

Ask what the next steps are - when you will hear from them about their decision?

Types of interview questions

Biographical: Prepare to summarise your CV.
E.g. Tell us about yourself.

Competency: Tests specific skills.
E.g. Describe a situation in which you solved a problem.

Strength based: Focus on what you enjoy doing.
E.g. How do you deal with adversity?

Technical: Focus on your knowledge of process/skills.
E.g. What software packages can you use?

Hypothetical: Highlight your skills with examples.
E.g. How could we improve our department?

Motivation: Assesses your match to the role/company.
E.g. Why should we hire you?

Wild card: There's no correct answer so think about the question's intention and answer creatively.

Questions for the panel: A chance for you to find out more about the role and organisation.
E.g. What could I do to exceed your expectations in the first six months? E.g. How did this role come about? (avoid questions about pay, holidays etc)

Steps following an interview

1. Thank the interviewers for their time by writing to the organisation on the same day letting them know that you enjoyed the interview and are interested in the role.

Interviews are a learning experience. If you are unsuccessful, remember getting to interview stage means you have already come quite far so try not to be too downhearted.

2. Review

After your interview make a note of the questions.

What did I say and do that worked well?

What did I forget to say?

3. Ask for feedback

Follow up your request with a polite reminder. If your interviewer is willing to give feedback be courteous and open to the interviewer's assessment. Use their comments to improve future interviews.

Answering questions with evidence: The STAR Technique

The STAR technique structures your storytelling. A well prepared answer will focus on your actions and communicate how you achieved good results. Effective answers show your potential using past examples relevant to the job.

S - Situation
T - Task
A - Action
R - Result

Explain the situation or event.

What was your task? What needed to be done and why?

What specific actions did you take to overcome the difficulty or achieve the goal?

What was the result? What did you learn? How was this evidenced?

Question: Describe a situation in which you solved a problem.

Practice structuring an answer using the STAR arrangement below.

Situation and Task

Action

Result