

Guide to interview

From the start

Here you will find some useful information that should help prepare you for a successful interview, most are common sense but practice makes perfect.

Before the Interview

When attending an interview you need to present yourself in the best light possible, get prepared this is essential for a job winning interview and will often be the difference between the success and failure for applicants. Solid preparation will give you an idea of what to expect and will give you an important confidence boost.

Company Research:

There are various reasons to research the hiring company, including to find out exactly what they do, how big the company is and potential news that can be a talking point, employers respond well to candidates who have taken time to research, with relevant talking points at your disposal it makes it easier to establish that all important rapport.

Role Research:

The idea is to get clear in your mind how the role works within the company and exactly what the company require, a full job description is essential as you can tailor your answers to fit and give relevant examples when you have used skills, what training you have done etc. Any questions that you cannot answer yourself through research do not be afraid to ask the interviewer as it shows your interest.

Interview format:

Interviews vary in format so try to establish what is planned; often hiring companies will add in role specific tests and or Psychometric tests, keep surprises to a minimum.

Presentation:

You need to present yourself in a professional way starting with your appearance, you will be expected to dress smartly and be well turned out, so pay close attention to clothes, and shoes, hair etc remember you only get one chance to make a good first impression.

Interview day:

Make sure you are punctual – try to arrive at least 15 minutes before your scheduled interview time. If you are going to be late for any reason then make sure you inform the interviewer as early as

possible. Make sure you take all the paperwork you may be asked for and any which can support your case for the job, this will include your CV, certificates, references and any examples of your work, try to organise these documents for ease of use.

What to expect:

During the interview the company will be assessing your ability to do what the job requires, your experiences, your skills and your personality, companies hire not only on your ability to do the job but how you will fit in with the rest of the team.

Make sure you are prepared to talk about all your previous positions, both related and none related and ensure you know what's in your CV.

What to do:

- find out where the venue is beforehand, how to get there and how long it takes
- examine the person specification and your CV/application form, and think about what type of questions they will ask you
- prepare answers for the main questions - for example, why do you want the job, what are your strengths and weaknesses, what are the main tasks in this job
- make about three or four points in each answer
- quote real examples of when you've used certain skills - just saying you've got a skill isn't enough
- when answering questions, make sure you understand the question and take your time if you need to think
- sell yourself and be positive about yourself and your experiences
- Prepare some questions to ask at the end - use it as an opportunity to find out more about the role and the company. But don't ask about money unless the interviewer brings this up.
- when discussing salary, know your market worth and start by quoting a little higher than this
- Turn off your mobile! Treat the interviewers with respect and give them your undivided attention
- Keep your answers focused on what you can do for the employer.
- Remember that the interview is a two way process. You are there to find out information about them as much as they are there to find out about you.

What not to do:

- Don't be late!
- Don't swear or use slang words
- Don't lie! The interviewer may see through you.
- Don't let your nerves get the better of you focus on the best outcome and remember that it is not a life and death situation.
- Don't discuss potentially volatile topics such as religion, politics etc
- Don't read from your CV or notes. Know your own history and be able to talk about it.
- Don't criticise former employers or colleagues, nobody likes a gossip or troublemaker.
- Don't argue with the interviewer, no matter what. Remember to keep things positive!

Interviews generally follow a set path:

- Tell you about the company and the job.
- Ask you questions to assess your abilities, personality and motivation.
- Ask if you have any questions.
- Inform you of the next stage of the process and when a final decision will be made.

Below are some questions that you could be asked at interview try to familiarize with them and think about possible answers.

Interview questions:

- Tell me about yourself?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- What is the most difficult situation you have had to face and how did you tackle it?
- What motivates you?
- What did you dislike about your previous job?
- What are your strengths?
- What did you like about your previous job?
- What is your greatest weakness?
- What do you enjoy about this industry?
- Give an example of when you have worked under pressure.
- Do you prefer to work alone or in a group? Why?
- What are you looking for in a company?
- Are you a self-starter? Give me examples to demonstrate this?
- Why have you applied for this particular job?
- How do you feel about working long hours and/or weekends?
- What can you bring to this organisation?

Potential questions for you to ask

- Can you tell me more about the company?
- Can you describe my area of responsibility?
- Is this post a new or existing one?
- Do you run any training schemes?
- What type of clients do you deal with?
- Will you be holding second interviews?

Good luck!