

I've never done an interview before, Help!

Congratulations! When you are invited to do a job interview it means that somebody is interested in what you have to offer their organisation.

The potential employer has found enough evidence from your written application that you may be a good fit for what they need.

Every interview you do is important, it is a wonderful opportunity to network and let employers know about the knowledge, skills and abilities you have.

Preparing for the Interview

Do some self-evaluation

- Develop a clear understanding of your education and experience
- Identify the key skills, abilities and interests, you have developed over the past few years. Assess your team skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills, leadership qualities, technical skills, etc...
- Be prepared to give examples that will bring these qualities to light
- Analyse your strengths, weaknesses, personal aspirations, work values, attitude and expectations

Research the job and the organisation. Learn as much as you can about the nature of the job and the company itself - size, products, structure, sales, clients, etc. Check out their company website if you can.

The Interview Itself

Familiarise yourself with the typical questions;

- Be sure you answer the question. If the question isn't clear, ask for clarification. Take the time to think about your answer.
- When practical, elaborate on your responses.
- Don't hesitate to be the initiator. Introduce information you think is important. Don't be afraid to ask pertinent questions relating to the position and the organisation.
- Consistently emphasise your positive, strong points.

Typical Interview Format

- **Introduction phase** that usually sets the tone of the interview
- **The formal interview** - this is usually some direct questioning about your background and qualifications. Sometimes you are asked to respond to an open-ended question such as "Tell me about yourself" - use your CV as a mental guide.
- Interviewer presents information about the organisation - during this time there may be an opportunity to ask questions. Try to relate this information to your background, skills and goals.
- **Summing up time** - add any information you might have omitted earlier. Ask questions if there had been no previous opportunity to do so. Find out the next step - will there be another interview? When? How soon could you expect to hear from them?

Behavioural Characteristics

- Remain calm
- Remember the importance of body language
- Speak clearly and appear interested and enthusiastic
- Be yourself - without boasting, try to sound confident and capable of doing the work
- Dress in good taste - appearance does count, particularly in first impressions

What Are Employers Looking For

To be successful in the workplace today, most employers will evaluate you on the following:

- Interview and CV
- Technical, hands-on expertise
- Computer skills
- Communication skills - verbal and written
- Interpersonal skills
- Ability to contribute and succeed as a team member
- Open to change
- How mentally alert and responsive is the candidate?
- Is the applicant able to draw proper inferences and conclusions during the course of the interview?
- Has the candidate used good judgment and common sense regarding life planning up to this point?
- What is the applicant's capacity for problem-solving activities?
- How well does the candidate respond to stress and pressure?

Preparation for an Effective Interview

This is a self-help exercise to help you organise your thoughts in preparation for a successful interview. Elaborate as much as you can, but be specific. The questions in brackets can guide you in responding to the primary question.

- **Why did you decide to study (Your Degree Course)?**
- **Tell us about your significant projects.** What did you do? How did you do it?
- **What information do you have concerning the company, organization, and/or job?** (Where did I obtain this knowledge? Why am I interested in this position?)
- **What is my educational background?** (How is my background relevant to the job? Classes? Degree?)
- **What technical skills have you gained?**
- **What experience do you have of working as part of a team?**
- **What is my work experience background?** (How are my experiences relevant to the job? What skills did I use in previous experiences that are relevant to this job? What did I contribute in my past jobs?)
- **What are my career goals?** (How are my goals related to the organisation?)
- **What are my personal skills and abilities?** (How do these skills relate to the future job? What are specific examples of how I used these skills?)
- **What interested me in seeking this job, organisation?** (How are my career goals related to my interest in the position?)(What knowledge do I have concerning the job, organisation?) (How does my background relate to the skills in this position?)
- **My strengths are...** (How did they develop? In what activities? How are they maintained?)
- **My weaknesses are** (How am I improving them?)
- **What additional information would I want the interviewer to be aware of?** (Summaries if appropriate or add information that seems essential)
- Questions that I may want to ask the interviewer, i.e. (what are the opportunities for promotion? (What kind of training is provided?)

Some useful videos

<https://www.youtube.com/user/NegotiationTips1/videos>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDxZPKR_OLE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6U7kLrWZU-c>