

How to complete a Successful Interview



Overview

- Preparing for interviews
- The interview experience
- Questions to expect and to ask
- Different types of interview
- Assessment Centers
- Psychometric Tests
- Interview resources

Interviews

- Interview = A meeting with an objective
- Employer's objective is to find the best person for the job
 - *Can you do the job? (skills, abilities, qualifications)*
 - *Will you do the job? (interest, attitude & motivation)*
 - *How will you fit into the organisation? (personality)*
- You: impress employer and assess position on offer
 - *What does this position offer me?*
 - *How does it fit with my career plans?*

You must prove that you are the most suitable candidate
for this position

Preparation is the key to success

- Review own skills, experiences and qualities
 - Check CV
 - Anticipate questions and identify relevant examples
 - Prepare key selling points
- Research organisation
 - Websites, reports, company literature, etc
 - Contacts with knowledge of organisation or sector
 - Relevant articles on the web
 - Personal visit or telephone call
- Research job and occupational area
 - Job description
 - Current issues
- Prepare your questions
- Practice

Watch the Body Language

- First impressions very powerful
 - *Halo effect or Devil effect*
- Allow time to relax
- Dress appropriately
- Entrance, introductions & handshake
- Smile and make eye contact
- Be aware of own movements

Typical Questions

- **About you**
 - *Tell me about yourself - Bring me up to date with your CV?*
 - *Why did you choose that particular degree programme?*
 - *What experience have you had that is relevant to this post?*
 - *What would you consider your major achievements to date?*
- **About the job**
 - *What interests you about this job?*
 - *What do you know about this organisation?*
 - *What other options are you considering?*
 - *How do you see your career developing – 5 years?*
 - *If you were Head of Department, what would be your priorities?*
- **General knowledge**
 - *What do you think of the Government's policy on college fees?*
 - *What's your opinion of the Ryanair competition with Aer Lingus?*

Other Type of Questions

- “What if” Questions
 - No experience - how are you likely to respond to a situation
- Probing Questions
 - How exactly did you deal with the situation?
 - How did you know it worked?
 - How did you feel about the outcome?
 - Could you have handled it differently?

Competency-based Interviews

- Company identifies key skills required for job
- Designs questions to elicit evidence of skills
- Emphasis on past behaviour as predictor of future success

- **Teamwork:** *Describe a team project you worked on. What problems arose? How did you deal with them?*
- **Communication Skills:** *Describe situation when you had to persuade others to support your view. Give an example of any reports you've written which illustrate your writing skills*
- **Interpersonal skills:** *What kinds of people do you find it difficult to work with? How do you handle those situations?*
- **Taking Responsibility:** *Describe a time when you took responsibility to achieve a challenging goal*
- **Problem-solving:** *Tell about a time when you had several tasks to manage at one time with conflicting deadlines.*

Preparing for Competency Interview

- Identify the competencies required for job
 - Review job description or ask for information
- Identify past experience to illustrate how you demonstrated that behaviour
- Practice talking about your experience
- Try to give a complete answer - STAR

Responding to Competency Q

- *Q Give me an example of a problem you encountered. How did you approach it. What was the outcome?*
- STAR response
 - S: Describe the situation
 - T: Explain the task/problem that arose
 - A: What action did you take?
 - R: What was the result or outcome?

Matching Skills to Requirements

Employer needs

Communication

Team work

Leadership

Initiative

Customer Care

IT

Commercial awareness

Your evidence

Presentation to class

Football Team

Prefect, Committee

Fundraising for charity

Working in Super Valu

Designed website

Business pages in papers

Your Answers

- Listen carefully, seek clarification
- Illustrate answers with real examples and evidence
- Be positive – constructive criticism
- Keep answers specific and to the point
- Take time to respond
- Speak clearly, smile and show enthusiasm
- Know what you want to say, and find the opportunity

Qualities Employers Seek

- Good all-round intelligence
- Enthusiasm, commitment and motivation
- Good communication skills
- Team work ability
- Ability to solve problems
- Capacity to work hard
- Initiative and self-reliance
- Balanced personality

Competencies required by X Company

- Adaptability
- Integrity
- Innovation
- Teamwork
- Initiative
- Drive for Results
- Know the Business
- Open Exchange of Information
- Makes Difficult Decisions

Your Questions

- Training programmes
- Career development opportunities
- Types of projects & responsibilities
- Reporting structure
- Performance appraisal
- Profile of staff
- Questions about topics raised in interview
- What happens next?

Sample Interview Marking Sheet

Name	Mark-max 100
Communication Skills	Max 30
Problem Solving	Max 20
Team Fit	Max 20
Relevant Experience	Max 20
Project Management	Max 10
Total Marks	

Interview Rating Scale

- Rating: 0-5; 0=*no response*; 5=*excellent*
- Selection Criteria
 - Intelligence – Academic performance, Questions
 - Responsibility – Work roles, external activities
 - Appearance & poise – First impressions
 - Interpersonal relations – Interests, team-roles
 - Integrity – no inconsistencies
 - Self-confidence – Relaxed manner, responsible
 - Communication skills – Articulate, coherent, grammar, responsive
 - Interests – External interests, involvement
 - Leadership potential – Elective offices, initiative
 - Interviewing skills – Logical thinking, knows priorities

What creates a bad impression

- Poor personal appearance
- Negative attitude – evasive, using excuses
- Lack of interest and enthusiasm
- Lack of preparation
- Poor knowledge of role
- Failure to give concrete examples of skills
- Over emphasis on money/rewards
- Lack of career plan

After the Interview

Review own performance

- what went well

- what went badly

- what you wished you had said

- prepare for next stage

Invitation to second / final round interviews

- assessment centre

- psychometric testing

- panel interview

Rejection letter / email

- if you can request feedback - use it

Telephone Interviews

- Prepare as thoroughly as for 'real' interview
- Select comfortable, private, quiet place
- Advise flatmates re answering phone
- Have copy of CV and company information
- Have pen and paper at hand
- Prepare for usual interview questions
- Practice on phone
 - *Record answers*
 - *Try standing*
 - *Smile and use gestures*
 - *Avoid monotones*
- Be yourself

Other Types Of Interviews

- Rotating
 - Like one-to-one with different interviewers
- Group
 - 6-8 candidates
 - Group observed while discussing topic
 - Be aware of group interaction
- Panel
 - 2-5 interviewers, or as many as 13!!
 - Try to identify different roles
 - Respond to interviewer, include others through eye contact
 - May involve presentation

Assessment Centres

- Company premises or neutral venue
- Includes social or informal events
- Meeting with recent graduates or managers
- Activities include:
 - Group exercises
 - Practical tasks and exercises
 - Report writing
 - Oral Presentations
 - Psychometric assessments
 - Interviews
- Simulates real work environment

Psychometric Tests

- **Aptitude Tests** - measure skills relevant to position
 - Verbal comprehension - evaluate logic of text
 - Numerical reasoning - interpret statistical data
 - Diagrammatic reasoning - recognise patterns
 - Watch timing – complete as many as possible
- **Personality Questionnaires**
 - Look at personality style
 - No right or wrong answers
 - Be spontaneous, don't try to second-guess
 - Tests include built-in checks
 - Employers may be looking for different personality profiles

Web Resources for Interviews

- UL Careers website: www.ul.ie/careers
- Gradireland website: www.gradireland.com
- Careers4graduates: www.careers4graduates.org
- Doctor Job: www.doctorjob.com (Virtual Interview)
- Prospects: www.prospects.ac.uk
- Realworld: www.realworldmagazine.com
- Virtual Career Coach: www.windmillsprogramme.com
- BBC: www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/onelife/work