

Interviews

Preparation is the most important thing you do before an interview!

Four Easy Steps

1. Research the Company and the Position

- Find out as much as you can about the company, what they do, their relationships, their mandate, their goals and values.
- Review the job description and spend some time reflecting on how your skills relate.
- Use your research results to prepare a few relevant questions for when they ask, "Do you have any questions for us?"

2. Practice!

- Practice makes perfect! Well, no one can be perfect, but practicing can definitely build your confidence.
- Prepare scenarios from your previous experiences (work, education, placements, volunteering) where you've demonstrated the skills / knowledge required for the job you are applying to; when answering questions, use these examples as proof of your relevant skills and knowledge.

3. Plan the Day

- Know your route and get there at least 15 minutes early. Visit the location ahead of time if you can.
- Layout clothes, and anything else you might need, the night before.

4. Dress for Success

- Always look tidy and professional and, if possible, visit the workplace to see the dress code. Dress in a similar manner to the current staff, taking it one level up for the interview.

Types of Interviews

- **Phone** – remember to speak professionally and choose a quiet location to take the call
- **One-to-one** – the interviewer may still be taking down your answers when you have finished answering the question; be comfortable with the silence and don't try to fill it with chatter
- **Panel** – two or more interviewers; could be from a variety of positions within the company
- **Group** – make your points without dominating the other job seekers in the room
- **Serial** – as you move on to each following interview, be consistent in your answers
- **Testing, presentation or assignment** – make sure you know the requirements ahead of time

Interview Questions

During the interview, employers are looking for the answers to three questions:

1. Does the job-seeker have the skills and abilities to perform the job?
2. Does the job-seeker possess enthusiasm and the right work ethic?
3. Will the job-seeker be a team player and fit into the organization?

Traditional interview questions are direct and relate to your education, work experience, skills and strengths, career goals, etc. Behavioural-based questions are common in interviews. These types of questions are based on the theory that past performance is the best indicator of future behaviour, and therefore probe specific past behaviours.

More on Behavioural-Based Questions

Prepare for behavioural questions by considering what situations you may encounter on the job (refer to the job ad). Recall examples of how you dealt with similar situations in the past. If you have little related work experience, use examples from experiences with class projects, experiential learning, extra-curricular activities, and volunteer work.

When answering the behavioural question, it's important to keep in mind the point you are trying to make. Then formulate your response to include the following three parts:

1. Briefly describe the situation / problem.
2. Describe the action **you** took and **why** you did that.
3. Conclude by talking about the positive results, and tie it up with the point you want to make about your skills and abilities, as they relate to the question and the position.

Examples of Behavioural Questions:

Give me an example of a time...

1. ...when you were faced with a stressful situation that demonstrated your coping skills.
2. ...when you had to deal with conflict.
3. ...when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.
4. ...when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree.
5. ...when you had too many things to do and were required to prioritize tasks.
6. ...when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.

After the Interview

- Send a thank-you email to the interviewer, thanking them for their time and consideration – take the opportunity to mention your interest in the position and your fit to it.
- Reflect on how your interview went. Make notes on what went well and what you can improve upon.
- You may receive multiple offers.
 - Be honest about other offers and let the recruiters know you have multiple offers
 - Take your time deciding; inform the recruiters that you would like some time to make a decision
 - Take this time to think about what you want personally and financially from your job
 - Inform the recruiters as soon as you have made a decision, so you do not leave a negative impression.