

Preparing for interviews

What is a job interview?

A job interview is an opportunity for an employer to evaluate an applicant's suitability for employment at their organisation. The employer will expand on the applicant's job application and ask questions based on the position description. It is also an opportunity for the applicant to learn more about the role and evaluate their suitability in the organisation.

Top 5 tips for acing a job interview:

1. Do your research
2. Practice your answers
3. Look the part
4. Ask questions
5. Smile

Preparation

Preparation is essential to maximise your chance of success. The more prepared you are, the easier it will be to cope with your nerves and the easier it will be for you to be able to answer the questions.

Research

Employers will expect you to know something about them before you come to the interview. So make sure you do some research on the organisation before attending the interview. Do this by:

- Looking at their website
- Talking to people who work in the industry or similar organisations

Ensure you have read and understand the job description so that you understand the:

- Roles and responsibilities of the job
- Skills and qualifications needed
- Experience required.

Practice

Think about the questions you might be asked and how you would answer the questions.

Choose a few key questions and try answering them aloud, as if you were in an interview.

Five common interview questions:

1. What attracted you to this role?
2. What skills & abilities do you bring to this role?
3. Do you believe you have any weaknesses you need to work on?
4. What do you know about our organisation?
5. What is your proudest achievement?

Attending the interview

Bring all relevant documents with you. For example:

- A copy of your resume
- A copy of the job description
- A copy of the job advertisement
- Academic transcripts
- Written references

Dress appropriately. For casual jobs generally enclosed shoes, black pants and a smart top/shirt is appropriate.

Aim to get to the interview about 10 minutes early. Plan your route and take into account any delays you could encounter.

Make sure your mobile is switched off.

Use your chance to ask questions. Asking questions show you are interested and have confidence. Prepare a list beforehand. Below are examples of questions you could ask:

1. Why is the position open?
2. How is performance measured?
3. What are the company's plans for the future?

End the interview on a positive note. Thank the interviewers for their time and don't forget to smile!

Answering interview questions

Interview questions are designed by the employer to obtain as much information from you as possible about your suitability for the position. It is important when answering questions to give fairly detailed responses and to include examples where possible.

A good way of structuring your response is to use the STAR method. This stands for situation, task, action and result. This is a good method to use to show what you have learnt from past experiences.

S (situation)	Briefly describe the situation.	I was working for a small retail store as a shop assistant.
T (task)	Say what needed to be done to address the situation and what your role was.	I noticed that the store room didn't comply with OHS requirements.
A (action)	Say what you did and how you did it.	Using my skills from my architecture studies I drew up a plan to increase the space in the store room and presented it to the store manager.
R (results)	Say what happened as a result of your action.	The store manager got a quote from a building company and implemented my design.