

Resources

A series of useful information to help you

Interview Advice



Getting invited to an interview means you've passed the first test: your application must have made a good impression.

Before the interview

Research the company:

It is important that you spend some time researching the company as this will give you confidence should you be asked a question on what the company does. It will also allow you to ask the employer questions.

- Looking at the company's website is always a good place to start. Another option is to get in touch and ask if they have an information pack they could send you, by post or electronically.

Here are some hints to guide your research on the employer:

- What do they do, make or sell - try the 'About us' section of their website
- Who their customers are
- The sort of organisation it is
- What the job you're applying for is likely to involve
- How you and your skills match the job and the company as a whole

Prepare for the interview:

Find out what the interview will involve to make sure you're prepared.

If you have a disability, all employers must make reasonable adjustments for you to have an interview. If you need the employer to make particular arrangements (for example, to help you get into the building) contact them beforehand to make sure they can make these arrangements.

Find out how many people will be interviewing you and their positions in the company. This will help you prepare for the kinds of questions they may ask.

Finding out how long the interview is likely to last will give you an idea of how detailed the interview will be. You should also find out if you will have to take a test or make a presentation. Just getting an interview is a big achievement and will give you valuable experience. Your next step is to prepare yourself for the interview to make sure you have the best chance of success and get the job.

Dress for success:

- Ditch the denim
- Make an impression
- Keep it simple
- Be well presented

Plan your journey:

Make a note of the date, time and location of the interview, plan how you will get there and consider traveling to the company the day before the interview to check how long the journey will take. If necessary, ask the employer for directions, bus routes or details of where you can park your car. You should plan another way of getting there in case something unexpected happens (such as an accident blocking the road, or if your train is cancelled).

Creating the right image:

Deciding what to wear for the interview will depend on what sort of work you will be doing, but usually it's a good idea to dress smartly. Once you decide what to wear, get your clothes ready the day before. You don't have to buy a new outfit, just aim for a neat, clean and tidy appearance - if you look good it will help you feel confident.

Make sure you've got the information you need:

- A copy of your CV or application form to refer to
- Notes or cue-cards to help if you think you might need a prompt during the interview
- Any items the employer has asked you to bring along, for example, references, certificates or your driving licence
- Read the job advert or information you have again before the interview to refresh your memory, and make sure you haven't missed anything out, take it with you in case you want to remind yourself on the day

Prepare for the questions you might be asked:

You may be asked to discuss examples of your previous work and achievements. The examples you give should expand on or be different from those on your original application form. Before the interview, list the skills and experience needed for the job and think what you have done that you could use as an example for each one.

Remember that the interview is there both for the employer to see what you're like and for you to find out what they're like.

On the day:

- Give yourself time
- Arrive early
- First impressions count
- Don't forget to eat

Interview tips:

- Enter the room confidently
- Shake hands firmly
- Smile
- Be polite and friendly
- Try to maintain eye contact with the person you're talking to
- Look interested, and ask questions as well as answering
- Answer questions as fully as you can, avoid just saying 'yes' and 'no'
- Tell the truth
- Ask if you don't understand a question
- Speak clearly
- Sell yourself - get your good points across and be positive
- What do you like/dislike about your current job role

- Why are you looking for a new position?
- What has been your greatest achievement to date?
- How would you describe yourself?
- How would your friends and colleagues describe you?
- What are your future aspirations?
- What can you offer to your new team/company?

Proper preparation will help reduce some of the stress involved in job interviews. For instance prepare a response so you are ready for the questions “what do you know about our company?”

Do you have any questions?

- Research the company
- Preparation is key
- Be sincere

Preparing for a telephone interview:

Have your personal information and advert ready in front of you to make it easy for yourself and have a planned goal and reason for why you are calling. To get a feel of being interviewed over the phone, compile a list of probable questions and ask a friend to use them in a practice phone interview. Prepare your answers carefully, write them up in note form using key words and phrases from your personal statement. Do not attempt to write out your answers in full or they will sound scripted.

Responding to questions:

Listen to the interviewer’s questions and comments, responding appropriately. If you don’t understand a question, ask for it to be repeated. Try and provide examples when answering a question and avoid just yes and no replies and if you don’t know the answer to the question, say so.

- Keep your answers to questions to the point and never criticise previous employers or colleagues. Always be honest
- Prepare your answers carefully (write them up in note form) using key words and phrases from your personal statement. Do not write out your answers in full or they will sound scripted

Telephone tips:

- Take notes
- Speak clearly
- Practice beforehand
- Be positive

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