

PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

Whether this is your first-ever interview or your fiftieth, interviews can still feel daunting. Interviewing has also changed a little since the COVID pandemic, with some interviews now taking place virtually through Teams or Zoom, or even over the telephone. However, the principles remain the same. An important factor to remember is that the employer wants to hire someone; all you need to do is demonstrate that you are that person. Also, an interview is a two-way process, you need to make sure the role and organisation is right for you.

Appearance

It takes on average between 5 and 15 seconds for people to make an opinion on someone they are meeting for the first time, so you need to think about your appearance for an interview. It's always better to be overdressed than underdressed, even if the job isn't corporate. Smart trousers, a skirt, a shirt, or even a tidy top and jacket are all good options. The best choice of footwear would be smart shoes or boots (trainers are too casual for an interview). Also, make sure you are well groomed, with tidy hair and facial hair and any make-up is appropriate for a work environment.

Do your research

Most businesses have a website and social media accounts, so use these to your advantage and do your research. Try to grab a few basic facts which are easy to remember such as when they were formed, what their core business is, how many sites they might have. Also, look at the company's mission statement and values to understand them more deeply:

- A mission statement is a short explanation of why the company exists, what its overall goal is, what product, good or service it provides, who its main customers or service users are, and geographically where they operate
- Company values are the beliefs, philosophies and principles that drive the company. They help individuals and teams work together to achieve the company goals. They are usually linked to how relationships with colleagues, customers and other stakeholders operate and include things like honesty, respect, passion, teamwork, innovation and creativity
- If you know who you are meeting research the people too, this can be done generally via the 'About Us' section of their website or LinkedIn - the great thing about LinkedIn is they will get a notification if you view their profile, this demonstrates you have done your research.



Your mindset

Get your mindset ready: Most people go into an interview thinking, 'I hope I get it', but an interview is a two-way process. Go in wanting to find out what the position will offer you, as much as the other way around. It will increase your confidence and make you seem more interested in the role and the company.

Your achievements

One of the most commonly asked questions in an interview is "tell me about an achievement you are most proud of". It is worth preparing an answer for this in advance so think about examples. Perhaps you were predicted to get a Grade 3 in your least favourite subject at school so you put extra effort in and achieved a Grade 5. Or maybe you arranged or took part in a fundraising activity for Red Nose Day or a local charity

Make yourself heard

Speak clearly: Remember you're not talking to your friends or family, so you need to present the best version of yourself. Speak professionally and clearly, avoid using slang and definitely don't swear. Employers want to believe they can trust you to act and deal with customers professionally

Prepare your questions

At the end of the interview, you will be asked if you have any questions, don't underestimate how important this is. By saying 'No' you look under prepared and uninterested. See our Interview Questions Guidance for some example questions you might consider.

See our **Interview Questions** document for more details.

