

Job Interview Preparation

The following steps are essential in your preparation for any interview:

1. Find out as much as you can

Knowing what kind of interview you can expect can boost your confidence and help with your preparation. If the information has not been provided to you, you may wish request it from the employer. Some of the key things you would want to know are: What is the interview format? What type of questions will be asked - competency based, technical or strengths based? Who will be interviewing you? How long will the interview last?

2. Review your application

It is very common for interviewers to ask questions about the information on your application form or CV. Therefore you need to be ready to expand on the examples and experiences you have provided. Likewise you must also be prepared to give other examples.

3. Familiarise yourself with the role

Ensure you have read and understand the role profile, visualising what the team do and what the core responsibilities are. You will be presented with questions that will test your understanding and motivation for applying for the job.

4. Think about your strengths and suitability for the role

Once you have familiarised yourself with the Job Description you should then think about your key strengths and what makes you the best candidate for the job. The interviewer will be assessing you against a set list of criteria which you need to meet. Identify the key skills required for the post and then match your skills and experience by thinking of relevant examples from academic study, work experience or extra-curricular activities. Think of some possible question the interviewer may ask and prepare answers in advance. You may want to take part in a mock interview to practice your answers and receive feedback. Contact careers@ulster.ac.uk to arrange or alternative you can use Shortlister

5. Familiarise yourself with the company

Not only will you be asked why you have applied for the job you may also be asked why you want to work for that company. You will need to demonstrate your knowledge of their business or organisation. What do they do? Who are their clients? What sets them apart from their competitors? You should research the company using their website, social media and any recent press articles. Do you know anyone who already works within the company? Use your networks to your advantage.

6. Research the sector/industry

Potential employers will expect you to have a high level of commercial awareness and understand the industry/sector the work in. Be prepared to discuss current trends or issues. Again, use your networks - talk to people you already know within the sector/industry.

7. Plan your journey

This may sound silly but plan your journey in advance, leave extra time if travelling by public transport to allow for delays, cancellations or traffic jams. If you are unfamiliar with the area print off a map so you know where you are going. Take a contact name and number with you in case you encounter any delays and need to contact the employer.

ON THE DAY OF YOUR INTERVIEW

So you have done all of your interview preparation and are ready to interview. Here are a few tips for the day of your interview:

1. Dress to Impress

Interviews are formal occasions so you should dress in smart business attire. It shows you have made an effort and you can present yourself in a professional manner. Your clothes including jewellery, make-up, aftershave and perfume should not distract the employer.

2. Arrival

You should aim to arrive 10 minutes before your interview time to avoid any unnecessary stress. Report to the designated area and wait to be called for interview.

3. During the Interview

- Be confident without being over confident
- Think about your body language
- Keep eye contact with the interviewer as much as possible and don't forget to smile



- Listen to the questions – if you don't understand ask the interviewer to rephrase the question
- Make notes if you wish – in case there is anything you need to clarify later
- Be honest with your answers
- Ask the questions you prepared earlier
- Be enthusiastic even if it becomes clear this may not be the job for you – there may be something else in the company you could do
- Highlight any transferable skills you have

Remember here are some of the questions you will be asked around:

The reasons you are looking:

You should have sensible drivers when considering an organisation. Ideally, your motivations should not be purely monetary based and instead should represent a clear, well thought out strategy behind wanting to move on.

Your interest in the role:

You must understand the basics of the role and be able to demonstrate why this appeals to you. The key is to come across as passionate about the role and show how your skills and experience align to the role you are interviewing for.

Working for the company:

The hiring manager will be looking to assess your understanding of the company. Focus on the culture, training and the business area you want to work within. They want to see you have done your research and understand the business principles; The Hiring Manager also wants genuine reasons for you to want to work here. The role and the organisation have to appeal, not just one.

Your Career Goals:

Are you realistic and are your goals relevant to the team & area you are looking to join. They want to see you are committed to the role in question as well as a long-term career and that you are not using the role as a foot in the door to gain access to another / department. They will also be looking to see if they can offer you the career progression you desire.

The first part of the interview is likely to focus on you, your circumstances, why you are applying for the role and to gain an insight as to you as a person and whether you could fit into the team. The key is to be **confident, enthusiastic and passionate**.

4. *Closing the Interview*

Always close the interview on a positive note and consider the following;

- It is normal for an interviewer to ask if you have any questions. Keep questions relevant to the role and team initially and if the process advances you can ask more about the firm in general. The questions can impress the interviewers as much as anything else in the meeting, as you can display the extent of your business knowledge, understanding of the market you operate in and the key facets of the role
- Don't ask questions that can be answered on the company website or in any of the literature already provided to you
- Asking questions around salary and benefits should be avoided
- Ask the interviewers if there is anything else they would like to know
- Ask what the next steps are and when you can expect feedback
- Thank them for their time and smile



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