

Preparing for an interview

How to make interviews a success

You rarely get a second chance to make a good impression on a prospective employer, so at your interview it is important that you get right first time.

Below is some advice on how to prepare for that all-important first meeting.

Preparation

The interview

- Interviews are two-way meetings. They are both an opportunity for the interviewer to find out about you and whether you are a suitable candidate, and also for you to find out more about the organisation and the position. Will it provide you with the challenge and job satisfaction you are looking for?
- Prepare some questions to ask at the interview. At the first interview it is best to restrict your questions to the details of the job and the organisation. Salary and benefit discussions are best left for a second interview or until you are offered the job.
- Think about your skills, qualifications and experience, and ensure that you can talk confidently about what is written on your CV. Most important is to be able to talk about the skills relevant to the position you are applying for.
- Try to conduct some mock interviews with a friend or family member. This will give you practice at speaking clearly and answering questions fluently.

Do your homework

- Find out as much as possible about the company prior to the interview. A good starting point is to look at their website and research the products and/or services they offer, the location of their office(s) and the number of employees. You could also telephone the company and ask them to send you any marketing material to read.
- Familiarise yourself with the job specification, and practice ways to explain how you meet each requirement.

Dress code and appearance

- Find out what the company's dress code is. For office work, smart business dress is essential.
- Ensure that you are well-groomed, with tidy hair, clean shoes and neat clothing.
- Do not wear too much perfume or aftershave and keep make-up, jewellery and nail polish to a minimum.

Travel and timing

- Plan your journey beforehand to ensure that you arrive several minutes early.
- Allow for possible travel delays. Be prepared for an unexpected hold-up.
- Make sure you have a contact telephone number so that you can call ahead if you are delayed.