The job interview

Prepare for the Interview

When an appointment is made for an interview it is good to be fully prepared for it. It is a first sign that you have been evaluated as a potential candidate. The interview will determine how well you will match the position, and the organization. Remind yourself of the impression that you have given the employer on your CV, and application. Go through your application documents, and make sure you can explain those personal skills you have advertised. Think, why are you a suitable candidate? What are your strengths, weaknesses, ambitions and interests?

Know the organization and the position you have applied for. This is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your research skills. Find out how the position you have applied for relates the whole organization. Remember that you will have to convince the employer of your skills and match with the position. If you are unable to communicate your knowledge clearly and concisely, your interview will not be impressive. The best way to improve your communication skills is to practice it role-playing before the interview.

It is always good to prepare two or three questions for the employer that you would really like an answer to. This demonstrates confidence, and interest towards the company and the job you have applied for.

Attending to the Interview

Few simple tips are: be on time, dress appropriately and focus on good first impression. Anticipate the situation. Find out, if possible, for how long it is going to take? Are there any other selection methods like tests or group work? Knowing as much as possible beforehand will not only help, but it will put your mind more at ease. Mistakes are expected; the employer is looking for the way you handle yourself. One final tip is to practice saying good things about you loud.

Recent graduates and students may have very little professional work experience from their own field. Professional experience will build up later. Any work experience like summer job, volunteer work etc...will add value to you when you apply for a job. There are ways to impress the employer when you have less experience. Focus on your motivation, eagerness, and ability to learn quickly. Think of the skills and knowledge you have gained through your studies and any success stories you have in your life!

Interview Questions:

Personal Questions:

- Why do you want this job?
- What qualities do you think this job requires?
- Give an example of a situation where you gained skills relevant to this position?
- What did you gain from academic/social/employment/Student Union activities?
- How long have you been looking for a new job?
- What are you looking for in a new job?
- What would be your ideal job?
- What sort of jobs are you considering at the moment?
- What did you do on a day to day basis?
- How did you make a difference to your last organisation?
- How successful are you?
- What was your greatest success and how did you achieve it?
- What has been your biggest failure?
- How could you improve yourself?
- How did you progress in your last job?
- What initiatives do you take to make the work place more efficient?

- How do you handle criticism?
- How do you work with others?
- How do you deal with different people at work?
- How did you get on with your last manager/colleagues?
- Are you a self-starter, able to work without constant supervision?
- Can you be depended upon in critical situations and follow work through to completion?
- Are you objective in evaluating yourself and others?
- How do you express yourself in situations where you have to be tactful?

- What motivates you?
- Are you competitive?
- What problems did you encounter and how did you overcome them?
- Do you feel you are ready to take on greater responsibilities?
- Are you enthusiastic and easy to work with?
- Can you work under pressure?
- How did you handle sudden unplanned work or crisis?
- How do you behave when being under pressure?
- What makes a good leader/ team player/ etc.?

- Can you manage your time effectively?
- How do you structure your daily duties?
- How do you plan your day and week?
- How many hours are you prepared to work?

- What are your career goals?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?

You may have to answer questions related to you personal life, like how does your family like you travelling, or how will you organize child care? You should not be asked any questions related to your family planning or sexual preference.

**Organizational questions:**

- Why are you interested in this company?
- Why are you interested in this position?
- Why do you want to work for this organisation?
- What have you got to contribute?
- What can we offer you that your present employer cannot offer?

- What do you know about this organisation?
- What interests you about this organisation?
- Tell me about any relevant work experience/ research projects/ degree modules?
- What experience you have of team work/ technical skills etc…
**Do you have any questions?**

Towards the end of the interview interviewer/s may ask you if you have any questions for them. This can be used to test how much you know about their company, and how motivated and prepared you are for the interview. Good questions to ask are (if not discussed during the interview):

- How many people work for the company and in this department?
- Can you describe your organizational culture?
- Why is this position open?
- What specific skills are necessary to be successful in this position?
- What would a typical working day in this job look like?

You can also ask for specific question from their annual report, newspaper article etc., if that is discussed at the interview, or any relevant question on the information you have been given in the interview. Avoid talking about the salary, benefits etc. at this point, unless it is brought to the table by the interviewer.

Recruiters need to know what drives you to want the job and why you want to work for the organisation in particular.

These interview questions are a guide. You will also be asked specific questions related to the industry and the particular job area you are applying for.