

Before the interview

Do your research

Research the employer - What do they do? Where are they based? What are their vision and values?

Research the role - What skills are needed? Who will you work with? Where will you work?

Research the Sector - How well is it performing? What options are there for progression?

Plan your journey

How will you get there? What are the timings? Can you do a test journey? Consider things that might impact on your journey time. What time of day is the interview? Will it be during rush hour? Are there any local roadworks? Plan to arrive early, find a nearby cafe where you can take time to relax and focus beforehand.

Plan your outfit

Make sure you wear clothes that are comfortable. You should dress smartly. Get your outfit ready the night before, make sure that it fits.

First impressions count! You only have one chance to impress.

Be Prepared

Rest well the night before. Have a copy of your CV and Certificates and Notes with you. Think of questions you can ask. Interviewers often end with 'Have you got any questions?' Make sure your employer know of any reasonable adjustments you require (i.e. disability access or forward sight of questions). Refresh your memory of the job description and personal specification.

On the Day

Do



- ➔ Set an alarm, aim to arrive early
- ➔ Take (CV, Notes, Certificates)
- ➔ Enter room with confidence
- ➔ Dress appropriately
- ➔ Be polite
- ➔ Maintain eye contact
- ➔ Shake hands (if appropriate)
- ➔ Show a genuine interest in the role/organisation
- ➔ Pause to think when you need to
- ➔ Give full answers and avoid simple yes/ no answers
- ➔ Seek clarification, if needed
- ➔ Be truthful
- ➔ Speak clearly and be positive
- ➔ Provide examples, use 'I did...' examples
- ➔ Have questions prepared

Don't



- ➔ Fidget or slouch, try to sit up straight
- ➔ Fold your arms, remember body language is key
- ➔ Swear or say anything rude, keep positive
- ➔ Over criticise past employers, keep focus on new role
- ➔ Interrupt the interviewers, wait to be asked a question
- ➔ Over emphasise your weaknesses, focus on the positives
- ➔ Lie or exaggerate, you may be tested
- ➔ Worry (They are showing a potential interest in you)

COVID 19 - Changes to Interviews

The pandemic has meant that some organisations are splitting their work between in-person and at home. Depending on the situation at the time of your interview, it may be by video call. Many of these tips still apply, additional steps would be to test your internet connection, do a trial run and have a practice session with someone.

Consider where you have the interview. You want somewhere quiet and tidy (or a sensible virtual background).

After the Interview

Personal reflection

Reflect on how you think the interview went. Are there any questions you struggled with? Are you happy with your answers and how you delivered them? Did you have to do a task? If so, how did it go? Are there any questions you didn't ask or get an answer to? Make a note of any area. You were uncomfortable with. Looking at ways to improve could help you feel more relaxed in future interviews.

Ask for Feedback

If you have not been successful, ask for feedback. There may be answers you gave that didn't give the right level of detail or there may be feedback about how you presented yourself. The feedback can be useful for future interviews. Sometimes the feedback is that you came across really well, but another candidate was chosen, this can be difficult feedback, but if possible try to find out what set the other candidate ahead to see if there are any learning opportunities.

Common Questions and potential answers

Why do you want to work here?

Reputation of company? Opportunity to progress? Positive research / feedback from existing staff etc. You want your answer to make it clear that you are interested in them not just the role

Why are you leaving your current job?

Be positive! Focus on your desire to progress and grow. Avoid being negative about your current employer or being unprofessional in your language. If you have left on negative terms, focus on the learning opportunity it gave you.

What skills and attributes can you bring?

Focus on the ones most relevant to the role you have applied to first. Show enthusiasm. Include transferrable skills. Mention any areas you need to work on. Show you are willing to learn/improve.

Have you done this kind of work before?

If you have, explain skills and experiences and how it is relevant to the current role advertised. If not, refer to other work that has similarities or uses similar skills. Be enthusiastic. Be positive and show a willingness to learn.

What do you do in your current/last job?

Describe your duties (try to keep relevant to this role). How did you work to deadlines? What are your key achievements? Are there any times you went above and beyond. Detail any promotions or role changes.

What makes you the right person for this job?

This is a chance to sell yourself. Emphasise the skills and experience you will bring. show enthusiasm. Avoid being negative to other candidates. Keep the focus on you, not others.

Are you a good team player?

Give examples of being a team player. Are you able to take instruction as well as give it? Describe the skills you use when working with others.

Where do you see yourself in [x] years time?

There is no right or wrong answer here. Be mindful of the job you are applying for, if it mentions wanting someone long term, depict where you would like to be within that company. Be ambitious but realistic too. Describe how you would get there. Are there any qualifications you need?

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Emphasise your strong points. Be relevant to the role you are applying for. Be open about your weaknesses, but be positive. e.g. I find it hard to say 'no' which can lead to a big workload. To combat this, I keep a to-do list and prioritise. If I have too much to do I look to identify tasks I can delegate or pause.

How do you cope with pressure?

Give examples of deadlines in current / previous roles and how you coped. Do you plan your own time? Do you speak to others i.e. line manager etc.

Do you have any questions?

At the end of an interview, it is common for the interviewer to ask you if you have any questions. This is a great chance to show that you are interested. Be prepared. Here are some suggested questions.

Do you offer training ?

Dress Code / PPE required?

How big is the team / area that I will work with?

What systems and software do you use?

Are there opportunities to progress within the team and organisation?

How long will it be till I hear about the result of my application and do you offer full feedback?

Types of Interview



One to One

Most common interview. Often with someone you would work with directly. Be mindful of the type of job you are applying for and dress appropriately. Maintain good eye contact and be polite. Give full answers. Do not be afraid to pause and think. Take notes if there is information you want to convey. Consider your body language, you only get one chance to make an impression. This could be formal or informal depending on the role applied for.



Panel

Similar in format to a one-to-one interview, with more people in the room. There might be one or more from the team you would work in and a HR representative etc. Be prepared, treat as a one-to-one. Only one person can speak at a time so address the questioner and be consistent. Listen to the questions carefully, some may be the same question, but asked in a different way. More likely to be formal, but if it's a small organisation it could be informal and a way to introduce to the wider team.



Competency-based

This interview focusses on your work related skills and abilities. Can be trickier to answer, but do your research. The job advert will mention their competencies. Be mindful of your answers and tailor them to the attribute(s) that they are looking for. Consider the STAR technique (**S**ituation, **T**ask, **A**ction, **R**esult). Questions are likely to be 'Describe a time when you solved a problem' or 'Describe a time you lead a team'. Plan your answers around showing what you have to offer. Keep it relevant.



Phone

Often done ahead of a face-to-face interview. Be polite. Communicate clearly and treat it as important as a formal interview. Show enthusiasm and interest. Remember the purpose of a phone interview is to shorten down the list of people to see face to face. Be personable. Don't be afraid to seek clarification. Keep positive. If you can successfully undergo a phone interview and are invited to the face-to-face one, you can be sure that you have something that they are interested in.



Video Call

Increasingly popular. Treat like a face-to-face interview. Do a test run to check your technology. Remember first impressions count. Try to look into the camera and treat that as a person in the room. If you are expected to use any of the functionality such as sharing your screen or a document. Do a trial run. Consider your camera angle and lighting. This may be an indication that the organisation make use of video call software on a regular basis, so take time to learn how it works.

Other

Work Trial

Spending hours, days or weeks in the role to see if it's a good fit. You may be asked question during your trial.

Presentation based interview

Given a topic to present ahead of questions.

Group / Competitive

Invited attendees take part in activities with others and highest performers chosen for interview.

Puzzle based

The puzzles are used to test your thought process. They often have no right or wrong answer.

Technical

Focusses on your knowledge of the systems or coding used within the role.

Further Help

- ➔ <https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/employment-help-young-people/>
- ➔ <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/interview-advice>
- ➔ <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/interview-tips>
- ➔ <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/job-interview-tips-how-to-make-a-great-impression>
- ➔ <https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/interviews-0>