

Top Tips for Interviews

Prepare to market yourself – You’ll probably be asked questions such as “What are your strengths?”, “What can you bring to this team?” or even “Why are you the best candidate for the job?”. Think about the key points you want to make during the interview. Know your strengths and achievements and be prepared to provide examples or other evidence.

Anticipate questions – Use the job description, person specification or Careers section of the company’s website to identify the key **skills** and **experience** they are looking for. Interview questions will be based on these so think about how you would provide examples to show you meet their criteria.

Prepare for competence based questions – These are questions about specific skills such as communication, problem solving, team work and leadership. Think about situations from work/placements, education or volunteering to show how you used these skills. Structure your answer using STARR – **S**ituation, **T**ask, **A**ction, **R**esult, **R**eflection.

Research the company/organisation – Use the information in the Careers, About Us and News sections of their website so you understand the company’s ethos, what they do and who their clients are. It can also impress if you’ve done research beyond their website so try to find out more about them, their competitors and the key issues in their industry.

Prepare some questions to ask them – Try to demonstrate interest and enthusiasm by asking questions about areas such as training, career progression, or work culture but it is often best to avoid questions about pay and other benefits.

Review your application – Your interviewers may refer to your CV or application form. Be ready to answer questions about it, particularly areas of weakness.

Make careful travel plans – Allow plenty of time to make sure you arrive a little early. If your interview is local you could try out the journey beforehand so that you know where you’re going on the day.

Make a good first impression – Think about what you are going to wear and be aware of the importance of body language and eye contact. Be friendly to receptionists and greet your interviewers with a smile and a handshake. Aim to come over as friendly, enthusiastic, positive and professional.

Listen carefully to the questions – If you don’t understand a question ask for clarification before you answer. If you lose track during your answer don’t be afraid to ask them to repeat all or part of the question.

Seek Advice – You can also see a Careers Adviser to discuss your interview preparation or arrange a mock interview. The following resources will also help you prepare:
Careers Website - Interview Preparation including ‘First Impressions Count’ video
E-Learning@tees – In the Careers section you can watch ‘Making an Impact’.

July 2014