



Interview Tips

OK, you've made a good impression so far. The company like what they see on your CV or application form and have invited you for interview. Well done! Let's make sure you give it your best shot...

Preparation

- At least two days before the interview do some research. Find the company's website if they have one and read about the organization. Re-read the initial advertisement to remind yourself of what it is the company is looking for. If you have applied for the position through an agency they should be able to give you some background information. Doing this may generate some questions that you wish to ask. Jot them down.
- Look at the CV and covering letter you sent. If you were interviewing for this position which areas of the CV would you be most interested in and want to find out more about? This could give you an indication of what the interviewer will focus on.
- Questions you could be asked may include:
 - Why have you applied for this job?
 - What do you know about this company?
 - Why did you leave previous employment?
 - What do you believe are your strengths?
 - What do you believe are your weaknesses?
 - Why do you think you would suit this role?
 - What has been your biggest achievement so far?
 - What interests you most about this position?
 - What are your career goals?
 - What are your interests and hobbies?
- Work out what your responses would be to these and any other questions that you think could arise and write them down.
- You may also face the 'Tell me about yourself' question! Prepare a 30-second 'advert' introducing yourself, summarizing your current role and reasons for looking for a new position and highlight what you consider to be your strengths.
- Don't worry about not remembering the responses you would like to give. It is acceptable to make notes at interview so take in a folder with an A4 pad and list the key words that will assist your memory on the first page of the pad.
- List also the questions you want to ask the interviewer. These could include:
 - Why has the position become available?
 - Who would I report to and what is the structure of the department I would be in?
 - Would there be a probationary period?
 - Is there a specific training program?
 - Has the company any expansion plans?

Remember that, whilst you may want to know more about salary / pension / holiday, the main aim when asking questions is to show your genuine interest in the role. Details of remuneration can be clarified if an offer of employment is made.

The Interview

What to take:

- A copy of your CV and any relevant certificates.
- Any written references that you have from previous employers.
- An A4 pad (as mentioned above) for notes.
- Documentation showing that you are eligible to work in the UK (e.g. European Passport, Work Permit/Visa etc).
- You may not be asked for any of the above, in which case it is probably better not to force a folder full of paperwork upon the interviewer! However if you have everything you could possibly need you will feel more prepared and come across as being organised and efficient.

What to wear:

- It is difficult to generalise on what to wear for an interview as much depends on the type of role for which you are applying. Appearance is important though and dressing appropriately will show that you take pride in yourself and are taking the job interview seriously.
- As a general rule wear a plain suit and blouse/shirt & tie. Jewellery and make up should be understated and strong smelling perfume/aftershave should be avoided.

Getting there:

- Give yourself plenty of time. If possible arrive early and park down the road a little – taking a walk can help to relax your mind and may help calm your nerves.
- However, if you smoke resist a last minute cigarette. The smell will linger and follow you into the interview room!
- Report to reception 10 minutes early. Smile and be polite, you never know who is manning the reception desk.
- You may be nervous, the interviewer will expect this – it is human nature. Take some deep slow breaths whilst waiting to be seen and think positively.

Once you go in:

- Smile and offer a firm handshake to the interviewer as you first meet.
- Do not sit down until invited to do so. Don't slouch or fidget.
- If any other persons are brought in to meet you, stand up and offer your hand.
- Sit upright and lean forward slightly.
- Maintain good eye contact throughout the interview; if there is more than one interviewer, be sure to make good eye contact with each.
- Try to look and sound enthusiastic.
- Take your time when answering questions.
- Speak clearly.
- Defend your viewpoint in a friendly way. Don't argue.
- Try not to talk for the sake of it.
- Take notes if you wish. Doing so demonstrates that you are interested. Just beware of spending too much time writing, it may be off-putting to the interviewer and may challenge your focus.
- If you do not have an answer to a question, do not bluff – give an honest reply.
- Guard against boasting. There is a fine line between selling yourself and sounding as though you are showing off.

Leaving the interview

- At the end of the interview ensure that you understand when a decision will be made and when you are likely to hear if you've been successful or are required to attend a second interview.
- Thank the interviewer for his/her time, smile and shake their hand.
- Thank the receptionist on your way out.