

Interviews

Purpose of a Job Interview

The purpose of a job interview is to build on the initial impression created by your written application and demonstrate why you are a suitable candidate for the role and what attracts you to the business or organisation. The content of your responses as well as your non-verbal communication, general demeanor and tone of voice are crucial elements to interview success.

Preparing for the Interview

Employers want to establish that the candidate meets three key areas during the interview, and will usually ask questions based around the following:

- Ability to do the job (e.g. skills, experience, attributes etc)
- An interest in the job and employer
- Fit with the team and organisational culture

In order to be able to respond effectively and confidently, you will need to consider:

- How your skills, knowledge, qualifications and personality match with the job description and person specification for the role. Prepare some example and evidence to demonstrate this.
- Why you want to work for that particular employer, ideally going beyond what is universally available online and thinking about how you personally align with the organisation's values, mission or activities.
- Review and practice some common/anticipated interview questions.
- Prepare some questions to ask the interviewer(s).

As graduates have not yet had an opportunity to build up significant professional experience, interviewers focus very much on the candidate's soft skills e.g. communication, working with others, flexibility, resilience and general attitude.

Types of Interview

In- person Interview: focus on building rapport with the interviewer (s) using non-verbal communication such as eye contact and smiling. Make sure your style of dress is appropriate for the organisation.

Group Interview: Strike the right balance between standing out from the crowd and dominating the group. Prepare an introduction about yourself, listen to what is being said by everyone and take the opportunity to build on others' responses. Remember to keep your body language and tone positive.

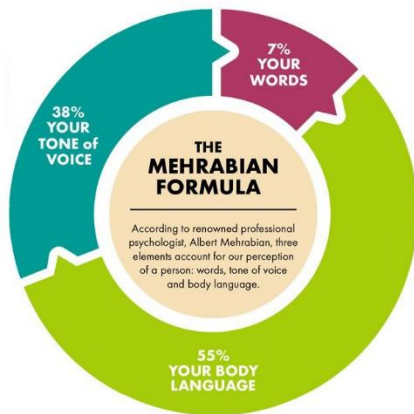
Video Interview with an interviewer: Have a clean, non-distracting background and good internet. You will need to work harder to demonstrate enthusiasm and build a connection with an interviewer through a screen so use facial expressions and tone of voice effectively.

Video Interview without an interviewer(e.g.HireVue): Prepare as you would for any interview and then practice to familiarise yourself with the technology. Make sure your answers are within the time limit and have a clear structure.

Non-verbal Communication and Tone of Voice



Professor Mehrabian's 55-38-7 communication model is highly insightful in demonstrating the impact of body language and tone at an interview as well as any other interpersonal situation.



Common Questions

Here are some common interview questions and a suggested approach of how to respond.

Tell us a bit about yourself

- No set format but the goal is to give the interviewer overall introduction as to why you are interested and suitable for the job.
- Stick to professional rather than personal information
- Prepare your opening and closing sentence in advance so that you don't get stuck.

Why are you the right person for this role?

- Focus on your match to the criteria on the person specification using examples where you can to show that you've applied for the job because you have the experience and skills to do it!
- Prior to the interview, familiarise yourself with the demands of the job and analyse how your skillset and background fits into this.
- Not necessary to cover all job criteria but the goal is to give a general explanation of how you will fit the job so that the employer can start to visualise you in the role.

Can you give an example of when you contributed to a team project? (Competency Question)

- Use the **STAR** model to respond to competency style questions (**S**ituation **T**ask **A**ction **R**esult)
- Choose ONE example only and be clear about what you did and the outcome.
- Examples can come from any environment- work, study, volunteering, hobbies etc.
- In a question about team work, make sure to clarify your personal role within the team.

What would you consider to be a weakness/challenge ?

- Approach this question as a weakness/challenge in relation to your suitability for the job, not a personal weakness.
- Ideal to pick something which the interviewer already knows or could infer from your application e.g. lack of experience in the sector



- Minimise risk- it is not a good idea to cite personality traits as weaknesses- remember that the interviewer is looking for someone who will fit into their team and work well with clients.

Practice makes Perfect

Join the next interview skills workshop at Work Avenue or book a one to one interview preparation session with one of our experienced advisers before your next interview. Contact yael@theworkavenue.org.uk to find out more.

