



Commonwealth Government

Interviews

future directions

Interviews can be a very nerve-racking process for some people. These tips will help you to be prepared and improve your likelihood of success.

Preparation

By being prepared, you will be able to:

- predict possible questions
- show you want the job
- show you are enthusiastic about what you have done and what you want to do
- communicate your skills and abilities clearly
- focus on the person(s) interviewing you
- present yourself as being confident.

There are tasks you can do to be ready for an interview.

Preparation Tasks Checklist

- Research the structure, history, personnel and goals of the company.
- Know the contents of your resume very well.
- Prepare questions you want to ask the interviewer.
- Practise your interview skills.
- Practise how you will answer particular questions (especially ones which deal with possible barriers to getting the job).
- Know the time and place of the interview.
- Know the name of the person who will interview you (sometimes interviews are conducted by more than one person—find out who they are).
- Prepare an interview portfolio and know the contents very well.

First impressions count, so spend time on how you look and make sure that you are neat and well groomed. Imagine how the people who work there would dress if they were representing their company at a public function.

Practice

Your performance at interviews will improve by practising the skills.

- Learn from each interview and improve your shortcomings for the next.
- Rehearse interviews with supportive friends and relatives.
- Hire or borrow a video camera and set up a role-play with a friend.
- Access government programs that may provide assistance.

The interview process

The description below outlines the usual stages of an interview.

Introduction

The first five minutes of the interview is your opportunity to establish a link or rapport between yourself and the interviewer. You can do this by:

- smiling and shaking hands
- following their lead: if they start a casual conversation (about hobbies or the weather) join in, but keep your answers short and positive.

Exchange information

During this time you need to let the interviewer know what you have to offer. Be positive about your skills and abilities and show the interviewer that you:

- can do the job—describe your skills, abilities, knowledge, experience and qualifications
- will do the job well—show that you are motivated, dependable and enthusiastic
- will fit into the organisation—demonstrate that you match the company's image, values and goals and will get along well with clients and co-workers.



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Close

When the interviewer has finished collecting information they will ask you if you have anything to add or any questions. When you have said everything and have asked your questions you should:

- thank the interviewer for their time and consideration
- ask when you can expect to hear from them.

Questions to expect

Employers usually have issues they look at when selecting a person for the job. Not all issues will be covered in one interview but you need to be prepared. They can be divided into the following categories:

- job qualifications, job related interests and career goals (including previous experience)
- abilities, skills, talents and experience
- listening skills
- written and oral communication skills
- ability to work in teams or without management
- goal orientation and leadership potential
- ability to work and learn.

There could also be hypothetical questions which ask you to imagine a situation and provide a solution. Answer as best you can and point out that the people involved and the place would affect the outcome in different situations. Take your time and ask for clarification if you need it. Your research into the company or organisation could help you with your answer.

Always answer the questions in a positive way that shows you are the best person for the job.

Look at the examples of questions on the next page and write out your answers in note form. There might be other questions that you would like to add.

Handy hints

- Talk to friends who have been interviewed and got jobs. Ask them what they did, or to people employed in industries that interest you about how they got their job.
- Get a good night's sleep before your interview so that you can think clearly.
- Arrive 10 minutes early at the interview so that you can gather your thoughts and relax.
- Read any company literature that may be in the waiting area.
- Be polite to any staff you meet on the way to, or while you are waiting for, your interview.
- Make sure you can explain everything on your resume.
- The interview is not the time for:
 - true confessions
 - discussing politics, religion, race or marital status
 - expressing anger over previous employment
 - talking about family problems
 - complaining about looking for work or the number of interviews that you have had.
- If you're not sure about a question the interviewer is asking, ask them to explain or clarify that question. Take notes if you need to.
- Asking your own questions shows you are prepared and interested. Things you might want to know more about include:
 - more details about what the job involves, including the hours of work
 - prospects for advancement and training
 - the pay, but don't overemphasise its importance.
- Have a short concluding statement prepared for the end of the interview so you can restate your claims. Illustrate them with items from your interview portfolio.
- Afterwards, if you do not get the job you have been interviewed for, ask for feedback to improve your next interview performance. You could ask questions like:
 - Do you have any suggestions or feedback regarding my approach or attitude?
 - Do you have any hints on how I could improve my interview skills?

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INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
Why do you think you are suitable for this position?	<p>Tip: Keep your answer to one or two minutes. Use your resume summary as a base to start from.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
Why would you like this job?	<p>Tip: Don't talk about what you want; first, talk about their needs; for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ being part of a specific company project■ solving a company problem■ making a contribution to company goals. <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
What qualifications do you have for this job?	<p>Tip: Describe your education and skills. Use your resume and interview portfolio as a base.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
What are your strengths/weaknesses/faults?	<p>Tips: Emphasise your skills. Don't say you have no weak points. If you have a lack of skill in an area refer to it as 'an area for improvement'.</p> <p>Turn a negative into a positive; for example, if you find it hard to say 'no' to people say that you 'tend to take on too much work'.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
Do you work well with others, as part of a team?	<p>Tip: Give examples of positive experiences of how you work well with a 'group' of people.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
Does future study appeal to you?	<p>Tip: Say how you would use your skills to perform in the job and if future study would help you then you would be interested in studying. If you have looked at courses of study that relate to the position, then mention your investigations.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

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QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
Do you have any career plans?	<p>Tip: Don't just answer yes or no. In your reply relate your career interests to the position and industry.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
Why do you think we should employ you?	<p>Tip: Relate your knowledge, experience, abilities and skills to the employer's needs. Be specific.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
What have you got to offer us?	<p>Tip: Present at least three points and relate them to the company and job you are being interviewed for.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
What do you know about this organisation?	<p>Tip: Spend time before the interview researching the company. Find out about its products, size, reputation, image, skills, history and philosophy. Also, show an informed interest and let the interviewer tell you about the company.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
Are you a member of any clubs or organisations?	<p>Tip: Again, don't stop at just yes or no. Mention your role in or association with any clubs or organisations. This could include associations you have researched with a view to joining.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

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This worksheet is one of a series which supplements the booklet, *Getting A Job – future directions*.
The worksheets and the booklet can be downloaded from the DEST website at www.dest.gov.au/schools/careers/cjproducts.htm.
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