

## The interview

The main purpose of the interview is to find out a bit more about you as a person, your qualifications, your interests and whether you would fit into the organisation.

You may feel nervous, but the interviewer knows this and they should try and make you feel relaxed.

## Arrival

- ◆ Turn your mobile phone and MP3 player off (and don't smoke or chew gum).
- ◆ At reception, give your name and the name of the person you want to see.
- ◆ If you have to wait to be seen, read any literature about the company that may be in the reception area.

## Interview skills

- ◆ Be positive.
- ◆ First impressions count, so smile and try to relax.
- ◆ Don't sit down until the interviewer invites you to.
- ◆ Don't slouch in the chair.
- ◆ Let the interviewer ask the first question.
- ◆ Try to smile, and remember to make regular eye contact with all panel members.
- ◆ Don't interrupt the interviewer.
- ◆ Listen carefully to the questions.

- ◆ If you don't understand a question, ask for it to be explained.
- ◆ Keep calm and speak clearly.
- ◆ Try not to answer with just a yes or no, give an explanation.
- ◆ Be polite and always tell the truth.

When the interview has finished, thank them for their time and ask when you will hear if you've been successful.

## After the interview

- ◆ Decide what you think you did well and what you'd do differently next time.
- ◆ If you don't get the job, phone the company and ask for feedback (what did you do well, and what areas need to be worked on?). This information will help you at your next interview.

## Further applications

Carry on applying for jobs, even if you feel certain that you will get the job you have been interviewed for. But don't be put off if you're not offered it. You will become more confident as you apply for more jobs.

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# Interviews



If you apply for a job or a college or university course, you may be invited for an interview.

It is important to prepare right for the interview and give yourself the best opportunity to make a good first impression.

## Before the interview

### Find out more about the company

Look on the Internet. Most companies have a website. You may be able to get an idea of the company structure, how it operates and the latest company news. If any of your friends or family work for the company, speak to them about the company and what it's like to work there. Also keep an eye out for any news about the company in the newspapers or on TV.

### Practice your interview

Read the job description, your CV and the application form. Think about some of the questions you might be asked and how you will answer them. Identify your strengths and think about how you will discuss them. It's a good idea to have a practice interview with a friend or family member.

Remember that as you have progressed through education and life you have been gaining the key skills that employers are looking for. Connexions advisers can help you identify your key skills, and how best to present yourself.

You should also be prepared to explain any weaknesses. Don't volunteer them, but if you are asked, try and turn them into something positive. For example, you may not have had much experience using Excel, but perhaps you have started a course to improve your skills in this area (always tell the truth though).

Have a look on the Internet and in the library for examples of interview questions - including ones that you can ask the interviewer. It is important that you ask at least one question because it shows that you have prepared and are a serious candidate.

### Some questions you may be asked

- ◆ What are your strengths/weaknesses?
- ◆ Why do you think this is the job for you?
- ◆ What has been your greatest achievement so far?

### Examples of questions that you can ask

- ◆ Do you offer any accredited training?
- ◆ What opportunities are there for personal development?
- ◆ What are the best things about working here?

## Plan your route

Know where you are going and how long it will take to get there. You may need to allow more travelling time if your interview is at a time when the roads will be busy (for example, 9.00am).

Is parking available, or will you have to park in a public car park? Do you know where they are and how much it is likely to cost?

## Stay safe

Let someone know where you are going, how you are getting there, who you are meeting and what time you expect to be back.

## Check your wardrobe

Make sure the clothes and shoes you'll be wearing still fit you and are clean. You need to be smart but comfortable.

## Things to take with you

Checklist	Tick
The letter or interview request calling you for interview	<input type="checkbox"/>
All documents that you have been asked to bring to the interview (such as passport, full birth certificate, National Insurance card)	<input type="checkbox"/>
The name of the interviewer and a contact telephone number*	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mobile phone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exam certificates	<input type="checkbox"/>
Record of Achievement or Progress File if you have one	<input type="checkbox"/>
Examples of your work, if appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Directions or a map. Try Google Maps.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bus or train timetable, if appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Notebook and pen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Money for transport/parking, food and emergencies	<input type="checkbox"/>

\* always try to arrive on time, but call the company if you're going to be late.