

INTERVIEWS

Interviews are all about confirming information about you and getting a feel of you in person. Can you do the job? Will you do the job? Will you fit in?

Here are some tips on how to get ready for your interview.

Preparation

You must understand the position and the organisation's business and know how you meet the needs of both.

1. **Read through application** – one of the goals of the interview is fact checking.
2. **Prepare your answers** to the most predictable questions such as specific experiences in which you performed similar tasks to the job under application using the skills listed in the position selection criteria. You need to think broadly back to [what you have done](#) throughout university subjects, placements, work experience, study abroad, volunteering, student competitions, student clubs and part time work. Some sample predictable questions are listed at the bottom of this leaflet.
3. **Prepare a list of questions** that you want to ask the employer. [Questions](#) that will help you take your understanding of the position further and are not already answered on the organisation's website. (*They nearly always ask this at the end of the interview.*)
4. **Practice your interview answers** with friends or use [Big Interview](#), record and review your responses to interview questions. Many organisations use video interviewing as part of their recruitment process.
5. **Check the details of the interview** i.e. location, travelling time, road closures, public transport interruptions, parking, duration in the rush hour etc. Aim to arrive in the area early and take time to relax and review your application documents again.
6. **Have some strategies** in place to help you cope with any [nerves or anxiety](#) on the day e.g. [deep breathing](#), visualisation, releasing tension by tightening and releasing muscles in your feet or hands.



[Employability Edge](#) has a module on [Contemporary Recruitment Processes](#)

Understand Yourself

You must understand yourself in terms of your values, strengths, weaknesses, your technical and employability (or transferable) [skills employers want](#), such as teamwork, communication etc.

Types of Interviews

There are many types of interviews that employers can use to help them with their selection process. It is important to understand the purpose of different interview techniques so that you can deal with them confidently.

- **Individual** – Conducted by one person where it is important to build rapport with the interviewer
- **Panel** – A panel generally consists of two or three interviewers. With the panel interview simply address the person asking the question but maintain some eye contact with the panel
- **Group or Team Settings** – Organisations undertake group interviews to see your interactional and interpersonal skills in action.
- **Telephone/Video Conference/Skype** – Companies often use these methods as a first interview to deal with distance problems and minimise costs.
- **Screening** – Initial interviews for graduate positions are sometimes called screening interviews.

Dress to Impress

Before the interview choose [appropriate attire](#).

- Men should wear long trousers and a buttoned up long sleeve shirt and closed in shoes.
- Women should wear a blouse with trousers or knee length skirt, or a corporate knee length dress.

Avoid unnecessary jewellery, piercings and strong perfumes/deodorants. When in doubt, dressing more corporate than casual is best. If you are registered as a job seeker with a Jobactive provider, some financial assistance in purchasing work related outfits may be available so ask whether you qualify. Many Op Shops in [Townsville](#) and [Cairns](#) such as Vinnies and Salvos stock pre-loved outfits suitable for interviews and work. A number of online stores such as [Oxford](#) or [Iconic](#) sell heavily discounted quality outfits in their outlet section.

Your Arrival and Exit

When you enter an interview the focus is on developing a rapport with your interviewer/s. First and last impressions count most, so appear approachable, confident; be enthusiastic and thankful.

Make appropriate eye contact and shake hands firmly. Interviewers will often engage you in small talk to help ease your nerves and gauge your ability to mingle - be sure to participate in this process or even initiate it.

Take your cues from the interviewer/s, especially in relation to when they wish to start the interview. Be conscious of your body language, sit back in your chair with an attentive posture, and don't fidget.

Have 3-5 questions ready to ask the interviewer/s. Thank them for their time and consideration, shake hands firmly and leave confidently.

How to Form Your Answers

Always relate your experience and knowledge to the position and the organisation. Refer to your results and achievements and explain what and how you can contribute to the position and organisation. This shows your understanding of the job and your focus on the organisation's needs.

The **STAR (L) model** will assist you in telling a story about your past experience that is easy to follow and covers all the important information. This is particularly helpful for *behavioural type questions*, eg. Tell me about a time when you demonstrated (a skill)...

S: explain the **situation** you were in

T: describe the **task/problem** that arose from that situation

A: detail the **actions** you took to solve the problem

R: provide details on the **result** that was achieved

(L): explain what you **learnt** from this situation and what, if anything, you would do differently next time.

After the Interview

It's a good idea after the interview to take just a few minutes to reflect and review your performance and the interview process. Write down questions that surprised you. Take a few notes on what went well and what you would do differently in a similar situation next time. Write down what you learnt about this type of position, organisation and the industry in the course of the interview. Note any follow up/research items. This will be a valuable resource for the next interview(s).

Consider following up the interview with a brief thank-you email restating your strengths and commitment.

If you are unsuccessful, contact the employer for some feedback on your performance, then make a firm commitment to move on and concentrate your attention on your next job application.

Our Tips

1. Plan your journey to arrive 5-10 minutes earlier!
2. Turn off your mobile phone before the interview.
3. Be truthful but don't undersell yourself
4. Explain connections between the job and you.
5. Practice answers to the predictable questions.
6. Maintain eye contact and a positive and confident attitude throughout the interview, no matter what.
7. Listen carefully to questions and instructions and don't hesitate to ask for rephrasing if needed.
8. Use your own real experiences and insights to answer questions.
9. Show passion and enthusiasm for the position.
10. Have a list of prepared questions to ask about the company and position or risk showing no interest.

Sample Interview Questions

Below is a list of questions that an employer is likely to ask you in an interview. They may be phrased differently.

- Tell me about yourself. (This is an invitation to share your [elevator pitch](#).)
- Why did you choose to study ... (*your area of study*)?
- Why do you want this job? Why do you want to work for this organisation? (Show a good match with your career).
- What skills will you bring to this position? (Answer keeping in mind the selection criteria and your strengths).
- What would you consider your strengths and weaknesses? (Speak of weaknesses you have overcome).
- What have you learned from your previous experiences? How have they prepared you to work for this company?
- Outline an example of when you were unable to achieve your objective. What did you learn from this experience?
- What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishment?
- Give me an example of a problem you have encountered and how you solved it. (*behavioural question: STARL*)
- Describe a situation where you handled multiple tasks at the one time. (*behavioural question: STARL*).
- *More interview questions with sample answers and practice routines are available through [Big Interview](#).*