



Careers and Employability Service

How to Prepare for an Interview for a Work Experience Opportunity

Interviews are a crucial part of the work experience recruitment process for all organisations. Their purpose is to give the interviewer a chance to assess your suitability for the role and for you to demonstrate your abilities and personality. It is also a good opportunity for you to ask questions and to make sure the organisation and position are right for you.

Interview

The first step in your preparation should be to confirm your attendance at interview. Find out how to get to the interview and how long it will take to get there. Make your travel arrangements well in advance and allow plenty of time for delays.

Check the details:

How long is it likely to last? How many people are interviewing you? Will it incorporate any other tests or activities?

Prepare to succeed:

- Re-read the job description/person specification and your application/CV –be prepared to elaborate on any examples of experience which you provided.
- Remind yourself of the skills, abilities and aptitudes required for the role.
- Be clear about why you are interested in the placement and suited to the area of work.
- Ensure you have researched the host employer and where applicable, visited their website.

What will you be asked?

Every question will have a purpose and most will fall into one of three basic categories:

1. **Can this person do the job?** This is about your skills and experience and what you have done in the past.
2. **Will this person do the job?** This is about your personality/temperament, your working styles and motivation.
3. **Will this person fit in?** This is about your values and attitude – will they match up against those of the organisation?

Prepare to answer

The interviewer will be interested in what you can do for them. Prepare possible questions and map out several evidence-based answers. Practise these responses out loud so that you will feel comfortable providing examples of experience on the spot at interview.

On the day

- First impressions matter. Always arrive early with time to organise your thoughts.
- Bring a copy of your CV and Application, for your own review ahead of the interview and / or to have to hand if needed.
- Dress smartly – even where the dress code is casual.
- Shake hands with the interviewers and introduce yourself, and thank them for inviting you to interview.
- Be pleasant to everyone on the panel and ensure your body language is positive and confident. Ensure you maintain eye contact with the person who is asking the questions.
- Listen to the questions carefully and ensure you are honest; remain professional throughout. Sell your achievements and speak clearly and confidently.

- If you are unsure whether you have answered the question in enough detail, you can offer to elaborate.
- Ask questions and don't be afraid to come with your questions pre-written, as many as a half dozen, to ensure you have questions to ask even if some are addressed in the course of the interview.
- Show enthusiasm. Demonstrate that you really want the position!
- End on a positive note: Thank the interviewer(s) for inviting you, and indicate that you look forward to hearing further from them.

Afterwards

Thank the interviewers and seek feedback on your performance. This will keep doors open if you are unsuccessful. Reflect on how you could improve your performance and make notes to help with your next assessment or interview.

Need more help?

- Attend Career Destinations events such as mock interviews and workshops on interview technique, run by graduate recruiters or Careers and Employability staff. These can be booked by visiting the Student Portal and going to the events calendar: <https://mycareer.soton.ac.uk/home.html>
- Have a look at the interview section on the Prospects website: http://www.prospects.ac.uk/interview_tips.htm.
- Borrow some of the interview preparation books that we have in the Careers Centre. Many of these include lists of the types of questions that you might encounter at interview.