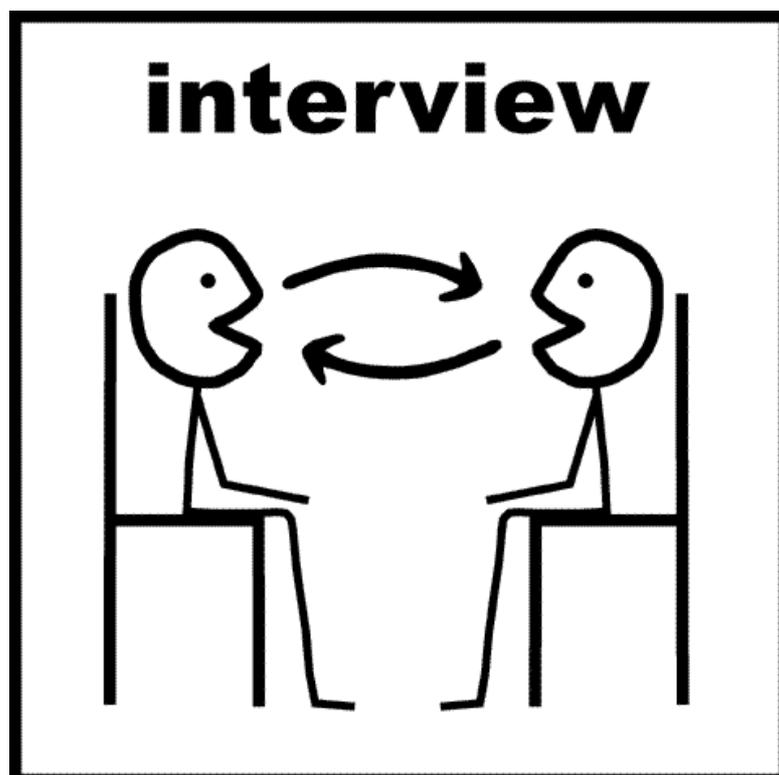


City of Glasgow College

Trade Union Education

Interview: General Tips



An interview is a discussion in person, by phone or online, between you and an employer.

The employer wants to see if you're the right person for the job. You'll get the chance to make a good impression and show the employer what you have to offer. You can also see if the job is one you want.

Types of interview

The most common types of interview are:

- competency-based - focussing on the skills and personal qualities you need, you'll have to relate your skills and experience to the job
- technical - usually for technical jobs in areas like IT or engineering, you'll have to display your technical knowledge of a certain process or skill
- face-to-face - in person
- panel interview - where one person usually leads the interview and other panel members take it in turns to ask you different questions
- telephone or online - this could be the first stage of the interview or the only stage, and you should prepare in the same way as for a face-to-face interview
- informal chat - in some job areas like the creative industries you'll have an informal, work-focussed discussion about your experience and career aims, usually somewhere like a restaurant or a cafe
- group discussion - in a group with other candidates, you'll have to show you can get along with people, put your ideas forward and be respectful of others

Before the interview

To help you prepare, you can:

- think about which areas of your CV or application form the interviewer might ask you to talk more about, and how you can relate them to the role
- prepare some answers about why you want the job, what your strengths and weaknesses are, and your relevant work and life experience
- think of some questions to ask about the role and the company at the end of the interview, but don't ask about pay yet
- try to relax the night before the interview - doing lots of last minute work could make you more anxious and reduce your sleep time

What to wear

When it comes to what to wear:

- plan what you're going to wear before the day of the interview
- find out what the company's dress code is and wear clothes that suit the company that's interviewing you
- don't wear clothes that you're uncomfortable in, or shoes that you'll struggle to walk in
- don't wear too much strong perfume or aftershave

Getting to the venue

Check in advance how to get to the interview venue, and how long it'll take. On interview day make sure you leave plenty of time to get there and aim to arrive a little early.

Get settled and ready to begin

Just before the interview starts:

- make sure your phone's turned off
- ask for water if you haven't already been given some
- don't let your nerves show too much – use breathing techniques and try to remember a few nerves are normal

During the interview

When answering the questions:

- take your time when thinking of your answer - it's fine to say you need a moment to think
- look alert and attentive, speak clearly and confidently, and don't swear or use slang
- give full answers, don't just say 'yes' or 'no'
- give examples of when you've used the skills they're asking for
- if you're asked about your experience, talk about the Situation you were in, the Task in front of you, the Action you took, and the Result of your action (STAR technique)
- be positive about your experiences - avoid negativity about yourself or any previous roles you've had
- make sure you fully understand the questions you're asked - ask for more explanation if you need to
- avoid mentioning salary or company benefits unless asked
- don't lie – the interviewer may see through you and, even if you get the job, your employer can dismiss you if they find out you've been dishonest

- if you're asked about a work skill you don't have, you could say what you'd do in a certain situation or use an example from your personal life, and also explain that you're a fast learner
- don't be arrogant and assume you've got the job - employers don't like disrespectful or over-confident candidates
- don't bring up topics like religion or politics where people can have strongly-held personal beliefs

Difficult questions

If you're asked about being made redundant from your previous job, try to stress it was a business decision and describe how you've responded positively since.

If you were fired for misconduct or poor performance, try to explain why your standards dropped on that occasion but that you have learnt from it and have since improved.

If you've been out of work for a long time and get asked about it, describe any positive steps you've taken such as voluntary work, courses, networking, industry events, keeping fit, community roles, keeping yourself up to date with your field.

If you left your last job by choice and are asked about it, you could make it clear you were grateful for the opportunity and learnt a lot, but you wanted a fresh challenge.

After the interview

When the employer contacts you after the interview:

- if you're offered the job, thank them and agree things like start date and what to bring on the first day
- if you're expected to negotiate salary, find out beforehand what the usual rate is for the job but then start high and meet in the middle if necessary
- ask for feedback on your performance - if you weren't successful use their comments to improve for next time
- if you're offered a job and decide you don't want it, thank the employer politely, as you may want to work for them in future