



MODULE 11

PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW



INTERVIEW TYPE?	
Competency-based	
Standard	
Telephone / video	

Date	
Time	
Venue	
Contact	



MODULE 11

Preparing for an interview

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF A JOB INTERVIEW?

- An interview is a two-way discussion between you and the employer.
- It lets the employer find out more about you and the other applicants, so that they can decide who the best person for the job is.
- An interview is also an opportunity for you to find out more about the company and its employees, products and services.
- An interview helps you to decide if you want to work with an employer.

Interview types

Standard (strengths-based) interview

- Otherwise known as traditional or skills-based interviews.
- The interviewer will ask open, sometimes informal questions, for example 'What are your strengths?', 'Tell me about yourself?'

Competency-based interview

- This style of interview is popular in public sector organisations like local authorities and the Civil Service.
- They are structured around the competencies required for a particular job - usually outlined in the job description or specification.
- The questions are usually based around situations; for example, the interviewer might ask 'Can you give me an example of a time you worked in a team?'

Telephone/Video interview

- This style of interview is becoming increasingly popular as it allows employers to screen a large amount of applicants.
- There are two types of video interview, live and pre-recorded.
- A telephone or video interview often follows an online application form and aptitude tests.



How will I know what type of interview the employer will use?

The employer will let you know in advance what type of interview you will be given. This information is also usually in the job advert, the application pack or on their website.

If you aren't sure what interview method the employer uses, contact them before the interview to ask.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

If you want to succeed, you must prepare for the interview well in advance.

Confirm the arrangements

Inform the company you will be attending for interview by phone or email. The employer might tell you the best way to contact them. For telephone or (live) video interviews, the employer will arrange a time that suits you both.

Research the company

Interviewers will expect you to know about the company: what they do, the different departments they have, and how many people they employ.

The amount and type of information you find will probably depend on the size and scope (local, national or international) of the company. You can try searching:



- the company website
- the company's social media platforms, for example X, Instagram, LinkedIn and Facebook
- any information that the company sent with the application pack
- general search engines for any news stories or information.

Important: Doing independent research shows you are keen and can use your initiative.

Study the job

Thoroughly read the job description, person specification (if one was supplied) and any other information you received from the company.

Before the interview you should have a good understanding of:



- what skills are required to do the job successfully
- what other personal qualities the company are looking for
- how the role fits into the company.

Prove how you're a good fit for the job

Using the research you have done on the company and job, you should now think about what your skills and qualities are, how they make you suitable for the job and what kind of questions you might be asked. Get started by:

- writing down all of your skills and qualities - you should have this from completing the activities in [Module 1 - All about you](#)
- looking at the duties in the job description and writing down how your skills will help you do the job successfully (similar to [Activity 2](#) in [Module 7 - Matching your skills to a job](#))
- identifying those skills that are your best - you should have this from completing the activities in Module 1
- identifying those skills that aren't your strongest, and also how you try to improve or overcome these
- writing down examples of situations that demonstrate your skills (and if your interview is competency-based, making sure that you have at least one example for each competency mentioned in the job description)
- reading through your CV and application form to jog your memory.

Preparing for each type of interview and example questions is covered in [Module 12 - A standard \(strengths-based\) interview](#), [Module 13 - Competency-based interviews](#) and [Module 14 - Video and telephone interviews](#).

VIDEO TIPS!

Watch this video from DYW Forth Valley to hear interview tips from a number of companies:

<https://youtu.be/PwIDP8QhKrQ?si=7q80-VkA0Ym7An3V>



PREPARE TO ASK QUESTIONS

Asking questions will demonstrate:

- your enthusiasm
- you have an enquiring mind
- that you are taking the job and interview seriously.

Questions to ask	Why?
What is a typical day like in this job?	This shows that you want an understanding of what the job entails and an interest in what it's like on a day to day basis.
What kind of training do you offer?	This highlights that you are keen to learn and improve your skills, which in turn can be valuable to the company.
What happens after I complete my training?	This shows that you are thinking ahead about your longer term role in the company.
What do you consider the most challenging aspects of this role?	This shows that you want to know what kind of challenges the job has so that you could be prepared.
What is the company culture like?	This can demonstrate that you want to understand the company as a whole, the working environment as well as the business and what they do.

Questions to avoid	Why?
Will I have to work overtime?	Asking a question like this says to the interviewer that you are inflexible and unwilling to put some extra work in to meet objectives.
How many days holiday do I get?	If this information isn't in the details you received when you applied then wait for the interviewer to bring this up, otherwise it looks as though you are more interested in the benefits you'll be getting.
What is the salary?	This is similar to the holiday question. If it hasn't been stated in the advert or application pack, wait until the interviewer brings it up.
How long will it be before I can get promoted?	This comes across as being impatient and just a bit too sure of yourself! The company will want to see how well you perform in the job you have applied for before considering anything like promotion.
Does this company monitor internet usage?	This will ring alarm bells with the interviewer. It could make them think that you intend to spend some work time on social media/online shopping. It might sound like we're pointing out the obvious by saying don't ask this question, but some people actually have!



TAKE CARE OF THE PRACTICAL DETAILS

- ✓ **Time and place:** Double check when your interview is – turning up on the wrong day or at the wrong time is not going to impress a prospective employer.
- ✓ **Plan your journey:** Make sure you know how to get to the interview, and how long it takes. If it's somewhere you're not sure about, have a practice run beforehand.
- ✓ **Clothes:** Plan what to wear and have your clothes prepared the night before. First impressions do count. Clothes do not need to be new, but they should be clean, ironed and smart.
- ✓ **Documents:** Look out anything you might need to take with you, such as your exam results certificate or your CV. It is also common for an employer to ask you to take along proof of ID/right to work in the UK to the interview - see below for more information.

Proving your identity and right to work in the UK

If you were born and raised in Britain or the UK, it's usually fairly straightforward.

Employers can accept:



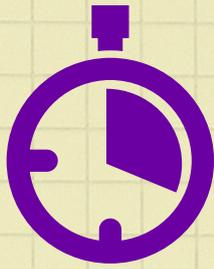
- a current or expired passport showing you're a British citizen
- a full birth or adoption certificate issued in the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man or Ireland, which includes the name of at least one of your parents, plus an official document issued by a previous employer or Government agency that includes your permanent National Insurance number and your name, such as a P45, P60 or a National Insurance number letter.

P45 - is the tax form you get from an employer when you stop working for them.

P60 - the tax form you get from an employer at the end of each tax year.

National Insurance number – the unique number that records your National Insurance and tax contributions when you work. You should get this by post shortly before your 16th birthday.

You can get more information at the [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk) and the employer can also advise what you need to provide.



ON THE DAY OF THE INTERVIEW

- ✓ Check that you have everything you need to take with you.
- ✓ Leave plenty of time to get to the interview. Aim to arrive early. This should help you to stay calm.



When you get there

- ✓ **Give your name to the receptionist.**
Tell them you have come for an interview, the name of the person you have to see, and your interview time.
- ✓ **If you have to wait, try to relax.**
You could try some deep breathing, read your CV or application form again, ask for some water or just think about the questions they might ask and what your answers would be.

When you are called in for interview

Good body language and manners help to create a good first impression, so don't stroll in while chewing gum or checking your phone. Your phone should be turned off well before you're due to go in for your interview.

Also remember to:



- ✓ be polite and courteous
- ✓ smile
- ✓ make eye contact with the interviewer throughout
- ✓ sit up straight and try not to fidget, even if you are nervous.



The question and answer part of the interview is where you can really sell yourself and if you've done some prep work you should be armed with some really good examples of your skills, experience and strengths.

Here are some useful tips.

- **Listen carefully** to anything the interviewer says. If you don't understand a question, or you didn't hear it properly, ask the interviewer to repeat it – they won't mind and it shows that you want to be thorough.
- **Take your time** when answering a question and speak clearly. You can pause for a moment to consider before giving your answer.
- **Answer with as much detail as you can**, remembering to keep it relevant to the question – sell yourself.
- **Give honest answers** – it's easy to get caught out if you lie or exaggerate your answers.
- **Be positive and enthusiastic**, both about yourself and about the job you are being interviewed for.
- **At the end of the interview, remember to thank the interviewer for their time and make sure that you know what the next step in the process is.** For example, when they are likely to make a decision, how they will inform you or whether there is another part to the interview process.



Activity 1: Interview tips

Watch the video in the [Activity 1 worksheet](#) to hear some tips on preparing for an interview from people involved in recruitment. Make a note in the space provided of as many tips it mentions as you can. You can do this while watching the video or after. Remember that you can pause it at any time.



Activity 2: The Interview Game

Have a go at the [Interview Game](#) which is an interactive tool that presents a scenario covering each type of interview. You can try each one, watch the candidates give answers and select which you think are the best.



Quick Checklist Reminder!

- Smile at the interviewer, say hello and shake their hand.
- Don't sit down until you are asked.
- Don't fidget, slouch or bite your nails.
- Don't chew gum.
- Switch your mobile phone off.
- Speak clearly.
- Make eye contact, don't stare at your shoes or look around the room.
- Be polite, friendly and show that you are interested.
- Be alert, focus on what you are being asked.
- If you don't understand a question, or you didn't hear it properly, ask the interviewer to repeat the question.
- Don't give one-word 'Yes' or 'No' answers.
- If your throat goes completely dry ask for a drink of water.

The following Modules will help you to prepare for different types of interviews and practise typical questions and answers.

Now you know more about interview preparation, you can move on to

[Module 12 - A standard \(strengths-based\) interview](#)

Or [click here](#) to return to the main screen.