

CAREER TEACHERS

Career Teachers Interview Guide

Most people are nervous about attending job interviews - but nerves can be a useful tool for sharpening up your performance. The key to preventing pre-interview jitters is preparation.

Organise Yourself

In most cases, you will be notified that you have got through to the interview stage a few days in advance. You can use this time to prepare. Try to find out as much as you can about the employer. You should also read up on the type of work you are applying for. Go over the job description thoroughly and make a note of any questions you would like to ask at the interview.

Travel Arrangements

It is vital that you find out:

- Where the employer is based - it seems obvious but if you need to get the train, find out where the nearest railway station is
- When the interview is to be held - calculate how long it will take you to get there and make sure that you leave in plenty of time (particularly if you are relying on public transport) Check out journey planner on www.tfl.gov.uk
- What the name of your contact is
- Who will be interviewing you

Confidence

Confident people inspire confidence in others - if you appear confident that you are able to do the job, the employer is likely to believe that you can. Naturally it is important not to go to the other extreme and appear over confident, arrogant or pushy.

Expect the Unexpected

Bear in mind that interviews vary enormously. The interview itself may be a quick, informal chat or it could involve a panel of interviewers all asking questions. There may even be group activities with other candidates designed to see how you perform in a team situation.

Interview Questions

Obviously, no one can know exactly what questions he or she will be asked at interview but there are certain topics that will almost certainly come up. Think through your answers to the following questions beforehand:

- Tell me about your work experience - what did you do, what did you enjoy, what were you good at, why did you leave each job.
- Why have you applied for this job?
- Why do you want to work for this company?
- What can you bring to this job?

Look Good, Feel Good

Make sure that you have an outfit that is smart and presentable. It's a good idea to try the whole thing on before the day of the interview to check there are no problems. If you feel that you have made an effort and look good, you will be more confident and relaxed.

The Big Day

Make sure that you allow yourself enough time to get ready and that you have all your exam certificates, records of achievement, testimonials and anything else relevant to the job with you. Also remember to take the letter inviting you to the interview and any maps that you might need. Leave in time to arrive about 10 minutes early for the interview - this will allow you to gather your thoughts, go to

CAREER TEACHERS

the loo, check your appearance, etc. When you arrive, give your name to the receptionist if there is one. Try to relax - everyone gets nervous before interviews. The chances are that you will feel more nervous than you look and anyway, most interviewers are trained to make allowances for the fact that you are likely to be on edge.

First Impressions

The following tips will help you make a positive impression:

- Shake hands firmly (but not to the extent that they require first aid) with all the interviewers when you first enter the room - and smile
- Maintain eye contact whilst answering all questions - and remember to speak up
- Don't smoke
- Try to avoid 'Yes' and 'No' answers to questions even if they seem appropriate - they tend to be conversation stoppers. Make sure that you answer questions fully without chattering on unnecessarily.
- Never lie at interview, but make sure that you present yourself in the best possible light
- When you are asked if you have any questions, use this as an opportunity to demonstrate your interest and enthusiasm. Begin with questions about the job role. Save questions about pay and holidays until last.
- If you are not asked about something which you feel illustrates an important aspect of your ability to do the job, don't be afraid to bring it up yourself at the end of the interview
- Make sure that you find out when you can expect to hear whether you have been successful - it could be anything from the same day to a few days.
- Remember to thank the interviewers for their time before you leave.

The Wait

You should hear one way or the other within a week or so of the interview taking place. If you were not successful, try to treat the interview as a learning experience - nearly everybody gets a few setbacks when they are hunting for a new job. Think about why you were not selected and if there was anything that you could have done differently. Don't be too hard on yourself. It may simply have been that there was a better qualified or more suitable candidate. Above all else, remember: there is a job out there with your name on it and if employers haven't recognised your star quality yet it's up to you to dazzle them!