

During the Interview

To be on the safe side, bring a spare copy of your resume to the interview. We advise arriving at least ten minutes *early* as interviewers are unimpressed by lateness and will rarely accept excuses from prospective employees.

A firm (but not bone crunching) *handshake with a big smile* will do wonders when you first meet your interviewer. Some small chit chat from the reception area to the interview room will also help. These are the vital seconds (not minutes) in making your first impression.

Body language and other forms of non-verbal communication are important elements in the way an interviewee performs. Appearing relaxed and trying to act naturally is easier said than done but good appearance is mostly a matter of assuming a position that you are comfortable with. We suggest sitting up straight, leaning forward slightly and always maintaining good eye contact with the interviewer or panel. Looking disinterested will limit your options.

If offered a drink, this can help and can be used as a prop to perhaps give you some time to answer a difficult question. By accepting a drink it does show that you are fairly confident and reasonably relaxed.

Interview questions

Always treat the interview as a two-way discussion and answer questions honestly, directly and keep to the point. Everyone present will be focusing their attention on you, so clouding your answer with jargon or evading the issue will be more obvious than you think. If you are not certain about a particular question, do not be afraid to ask if it can be rephrased. Listen, never interrupt and answer only what is asked.

Some interview questions include:

General background - Often the first question is a request for a summary of your background. It is quite acceptable to repeat major points you have outlined in your resume or letter of application.

Qualifications - Qualifications, in this context, mean all qualifications which could make you suitable for the position including educational, employment-related and personal.

Experience - Here is where your research pays off. Your answer should include details about relevant employment, community or educational experience and a discussion of the nature of the industry, the organisation and the position itself.

Reasons for applying - If you are applying for your first, or one of your first jobs, your answer should describe what you find appealing about the position, how you prepared yourself for a career in the organisation and how you believe your present job equips you for the position in question.

Interviewers often turn to behavioural interviewing, an interviewing style that aims to establishing your core competencies relevant to the role, such as teamwork, creativity and innovation, decision making ability, business awareness or conflict resolution. The interviewer will be looking for examples of past behaviour that demonstrate these competencies.