

5 answers you should be able to answer before your job interview.

As more and more graduates are leaving university employers expectations are also increasing to find their ideal candidate.

Before your next job interview you should know these 5 commonly known asked questions:

Question: Tell me about yourself.

Answer: Your answer should be well-rehearsed and approximately 2-3 minutes in length. Try to avoid the typical statements about your family, where you're from, and focus more on your experiences and background that best relate to the job.

This is your first opportunity to develop a great first impression-think about key achievements.

Question: Why did you leave your last job?

Answer: Your answer should be honest and open- speak positively about your experience even if it wasn't the best.

If you have been made redundant, discuss this with the reasoning behind the company restructure.

Question: What has been your biggest achievement in your career?

Answer: Think of an achievement that you had control of or influence over. Preferably choose one that is work related that will relate to the job that you are applying for. Describe the process that you took to making the decision a success, outline how this choice impacted others and the impact it had on the company.

Question: What would you say is your greatest weakness?

Answer: Please try avoiding the embarrassing 'I'm a workaholic'-try and pick something that is a weakness to your work. For example 'I have difficulty with public speaking' but explain that you are taking proactive steps in improving this- describe the steps that you are taking to improve your personal development. For example; 'I am currently researching and investigating lessons and seminars in public speaking'.

Question: Why do you want to work in our company?

Answer: Your answer should reinforce that you are the best candidate for this role. Show your passion and enthusiasm for the role. If you know of anyone currently at the organisation, explain their positive impact working there.

5 Questions that you should ask during your interview.

At some part of your life everyone has to go through the stressing times of an interview. An interview is like a sales call, you are the product! You need to sell yourself in a way that, they need you for that position.

I have compiled a list of questions that we think you should ask during your interview.

1. Can you tell me more about how I would fit in with...? (insert the name of company)

Employers want to know how much you want this job. Are you willing to spend time studying the company and position? If you are looking to secure that position then I highly recommend you doing so. This way this will enable you to ask further questions, and to make them aware you have been researching. Make sure all your questions are relevant and fully researched correctly accordingly to the company.

2. What is your vision for your company's future, and how do you see me contributing to this?

Employers love to talk about their company and their positive vision for the future. If they are passionate about their work, they will enjoy a discussion on their dreams-let them start to think about you helping to fulfil them. Asking these types of questions shows them that you are a forward thinker – a desirable quality.

3. Can you tell me what a typical day in this position and company is like?

This will show the interviewer that you are looking to understand how you will fit in to the company and shows that you are prepared to understand the work required.

4. Can you tell me about your company culture?

Every company has a culture. Let them know you are interested in what makes them tick, how they are unique in the way they relate to each other.

5. Do you have any concerns about my qualification's or faults that would prevent you from selecting me for this position?

As explained earlier, you are a product where you need to sell yourself. It's better to get all objections on the table so you can deal with them. Many people never ask this question as these discussions can be uncomfortable, but wouldn't you like to have a heads up on what could potentially hold you back. This will give you the opportunity explain that you may not necessarily have the required qualifications, but you have the experience to actively put this into place. You're best to deal with any obstacles head on.

Top Tips

Counting down the days till your interview can be the scariest times for anyone, especially if you haven't had an interview for years. With all the legal changes recently and the fear of being made redundant hovering, being worried about your interview is one more thing you could do without.

I have compiled a list of top tips that may help you to de-stress.

1. Do your research.

You may not know everything about the company that you are applying for, but be sure that they will ask you 'What do you know about our company'. Make sure you outline; what the company does where they currently stand and their mission. Also investigate developments in the industry so you can converse with confidence.

2. Practice your Answers.

Giving that there is no formality set for every job interview, there are some questions that you can almost guarantee will pop up; What are your Strengths? What are your Weaknesses? Explain why you are the best candidate for this role? Prepare your answers.

3. Look the part

Appearances shouldn't matter, but the plain fact is that you are often judged before you've even uttered a word. Make sure your shoes are polished, your clothes fit correctly and that your accessories are subtle. Dressing one level above the job you're applying for shows a desire to succeed.

4. Stay calm

Good preparation is the key to staying in control. Plan your route, allowing extra time for any unexpected delays, and get everything you need to take with you ready the night before. Remember to speak clearly, smile, do not fidget and remember that your interviewers are just like you, and they may be nervous too!

5. Ask questions

You should always have some questions for your interviewer to demonstrate your interest in the position. Prepare a minimum of five questions, some which will give you more information about the job, and some which delve deeper into the culture and goals of the company.

ACS offer guidance assisting candidates with help on what to expect on an interview. Whether this be your first interview ever, first interview in years or you have been on many interviews but not securing the position.

With all of our candidates that go for interviews, we ask for feedback whether positive or negative from the company, on all candidates. We will then provide all constructive feedback to the candidate to help them secure a position.

ACS guide to Interview tips.

A job interview can be a stressful experience and most people dread them, but remember a job interview is your chance to shine and show what you're capable of and it's the last hurdle in your search for a new job. The secret to a successful interview is preparation – do your homework and an interview can be a positive, useful experience.

The interview

The interview panel is normally made up of 3 panel members who will be asking the same basic set of questions of each candidate. Supplementary questions may be asked based on your answers, and you may be asked specific questions which relate to areas which are unique to you, for example your previous work history.

The interview gives the interviewer a chance to ask you questions and find out if you can actually do the job – so BE PREPARED! Each member of the panel will take notes of your answers on a standard assessment sheet so that the reasons for their decision are clear, consistent and justified.

You will also be given opportunities to ask questions about the job, conditions of service, or any other areas which may be relevant to the post.

Preparation

It helps to know a little bit about the company that you want to work for, so before your interview do some research:

- Look at the company website
- Read the job description. Are there any areas you don't understand? Make a note of these and seek clarification at the interview.
- Know your positive points. What skills, knowledge experience or expertise do you have that will help you carry out the duties of the job? What can you tell us about yourself which might make us choose you for the job? Why did you apply for the job?

Then, be ready with a few questions for the interviewer which show that you have done your homework.

Before the day

- Check the format of the interview – for example will there be any personality or skills testing?
- Check buses/trains/parking/directions.

At the interview

All the interviewers will be taking notes throughout the interview. Do not be put off by this – it is done so we can be fair to you and the other candidates. The notes will enable the interviewers to recall what each candidate said and thereby determine the best candidate for the job.

Do:

Turn up on time

- Be nice to everyone you meet from the receptionist onwards – you never know who might have a say in your appointment

- Make the most of your research
- Relax, pay attention and look at the interview panel. Concentrate on what is being said and do not allow your mind to wander. Try to maintain friendly eye contact with panel members but do not stare.
- Make sure you talk to everyone if it is a panel interview rather than directing your answers at one or two people only
- Find out as much as you can about the job – how else will you be able to decide if they make you an offer?
- Listen carefully to the questions. If you do not hear a questions properly ask for it to be repeated. Do not try and guess what was said.
- Speak clearly and concisely - do not 'waffle'
- Be honest. If you do not know the answer to a question, say so.

Don't:

- Be late – in fact, try to arrive early
- Criticise current or previous employers
- Answer a question with another question
- Interrupt the interviewers – although they may interrupt you
- Leave without finding out when you will hear if you have made it to the next round of the recruitment process, and what that will involve

Clothes and appearance

What you wear speaks volumes. A job interview, however, is a time for your experience, skills and qualifications to speak for you, not your clothes. Follow these simple rules and you shouldn't go wrong:

- Wear something conservative, smart and clean
- Wash your hair and trim your nails
- Don't wear too much make-up or jewellery

After it's over

Don't gush, but say how much you enjoyed the chance to meet them. Say you look forward to hearing from them and that if they need any more information they can contact you.

A job interview needn't be a distressing experience. Prepare yourself well, know what you're going to say and look the part. If you do all those things, your confidence should be so high that half the battle will be won before you even step through the door!