



University College Dublin
Careers Network

Here



MSc Computer
Science
(Conversion)

There

Ms. Edel Caraway
Careers and Skills Consultant

Learning Outcomes



- Interviews: Employer Perspective
- Preparing effectively for an interview: including the key areas to research in advance.
- Understand how to make a good first impression and why this is so important.
- Common questions asked at graduate interviews and how to go about answering these.
- Competency-based interview : STAR Method
 - how to respond effectively to competency-based questions and how responses are 'marked' by graduate recruiters.

Write down
one thing
you would
like to take
from this
session



The perfect candidate...



Enthusiasm

Knowledge

Professional
experience



Understand role and
organisation

Transferable skills

Self-aware and
motivated

Most Important Transferable Skills

Verbal communication	Time management	Teamwork	Presentation skills
Ability to multi-task	Managing one's own learning	Written communication	Planning
IT skills	Decision making	Problem solving	Critical thinking

*As stated by graduate employers (Transferable Skills Project)



They want you
there!

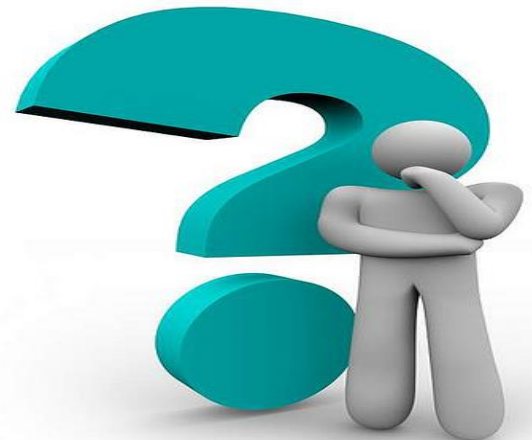
How should
you prepare?

Relax



The interviewer's perspective

What does an employer
need to find out before they
can give someone a job?



THERE ARE ONLY

3 TRUE **JOB INTERVIEW**

QUESTIONS

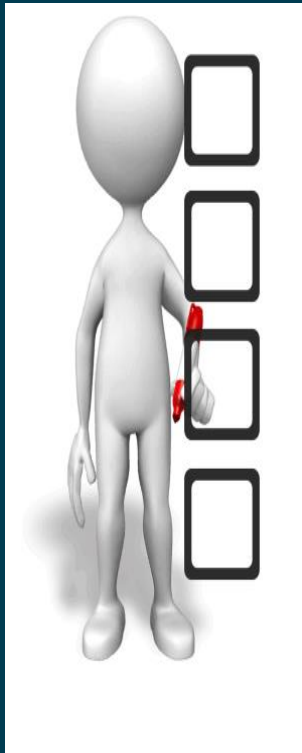


Forbes

1. Can they do the job?



Do you have the.....



Education

Qualifications

Experience

Skills

Abilities / aptitudes

Knowledge

2. Will they LOVE the job?



Do you demonstrate....



3. Will they fit in?



Can we tolerate working with you?

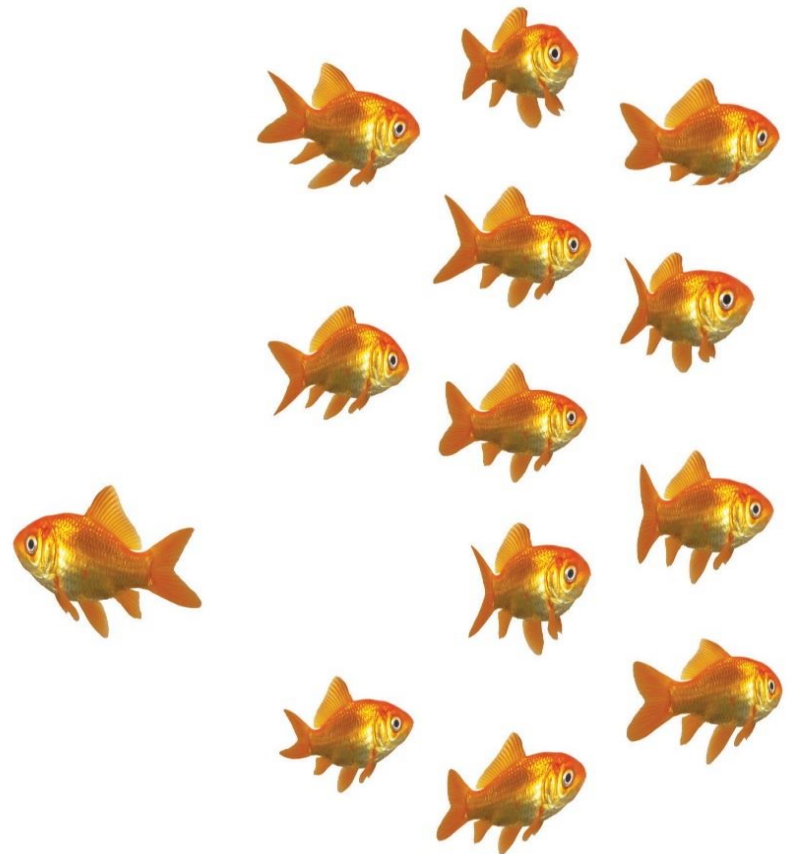
Is there a good person-organisation fit?

Personality

Values

Cultural Fit

Emotional
Intelligence



Non-Verbal Communication - Absolutely Vital

- It's not what you say, but how you say it that's important
- Handshake - firm but not crushing!
- Eye contact
- SMILE! (when appropriate!)
- Facial Expressions
- Gestures – Control your hands – Don't fidget
- Posture
- Proximity
- Language barriers – Speak Clearly & Slowly

Confidence is more important than cleverness!

Standard interview preparation

1. Know your **CV / Application Form** inside out – Be able to talk (positively) at length about anything on your CV/ re. your academic, work & intrests sections
2. Decide which **competencies / skills** are required to do the job & develop examples (stories) to prove you have demonstrated these competencies
3. **Research** the company, industry sector etc.
4. How does this job fit with your career aspirations? Can you convince me that this is want you really want.

**What type of
interview am I
preparing for?**

Interview Types

Screening interviews

- Telephone
- Video interviews > pre-recorded questions

Group Interviews

- Assessment centres – listen & speak confidently
- Usually before a one to one or panel interview

One-to-One interviews

- First or second round
- Via Skype (can be at any stage, usually first round. Be sure to do lighting/image/sound checks in advance)

Panel interviews

- First or second round



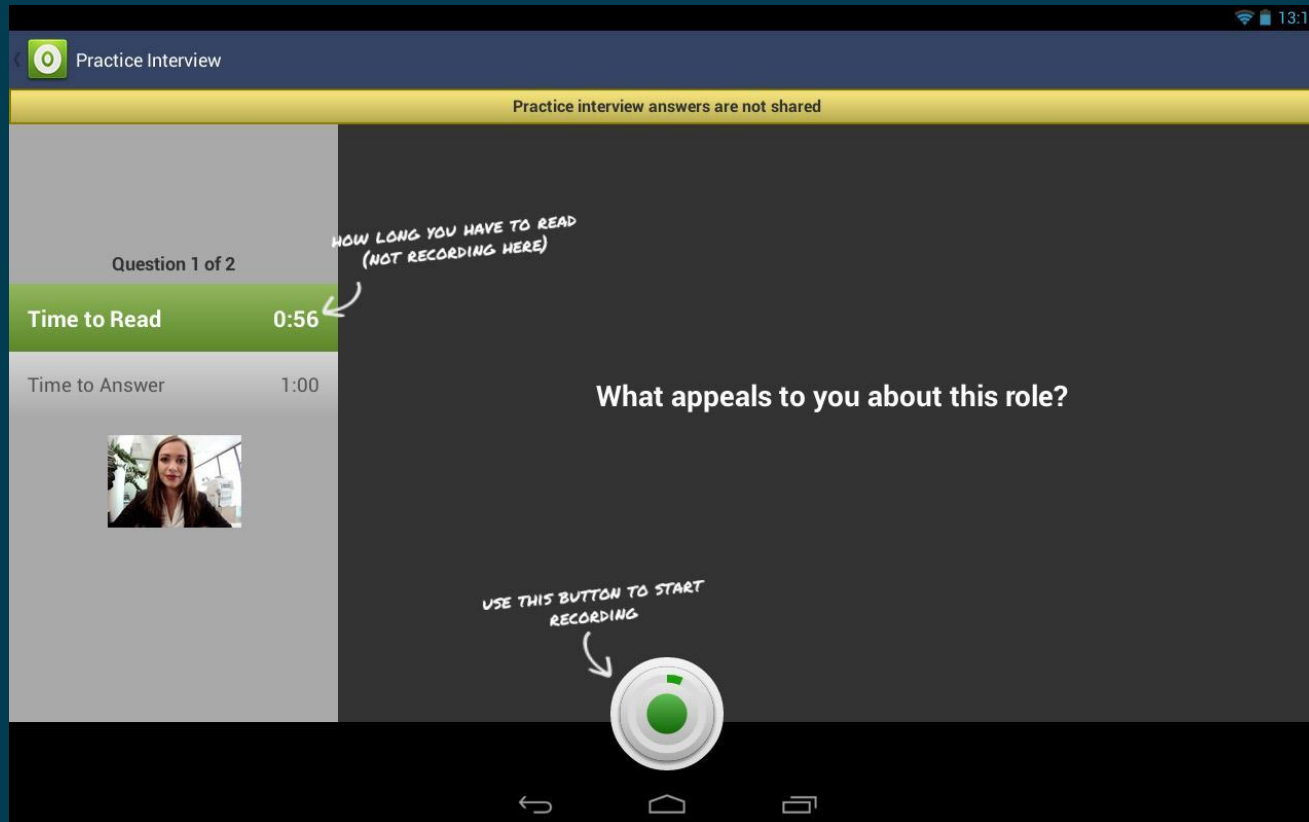
Screening – Telephone Interviews

- Screening your application & competencies
- Quiet room with desk /table
- Landline = better reception
- Arrange your CV or application material and Prep Notes so all are easily read
- Stand up
- SMILE while talking
- Speak slowly and clearly

NB. You can reschedule



Video Interview – Screening



Group Interview Tips



- Contribute early – say something
- Listen to others & respect different opinions
- Remain positive
- Be confident
- Build on ideas of others
- Evidence your leadership skills – bring the team ideas together
- Quality not quantity is important!



Panel Interview Tips

3 or more interviewers

- Find out in advance who they are, what area they work in / check out their LinkedIn profile for information

Eye contact is important

- First with person asking the question
- Glance around to engage others

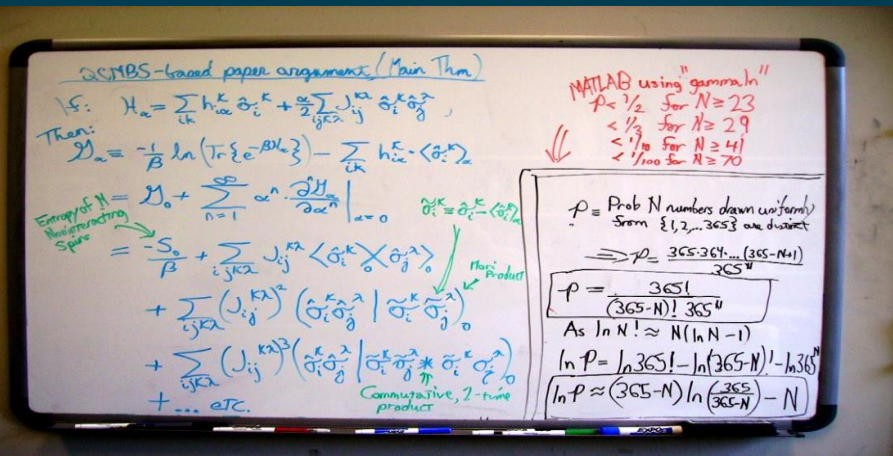
Be clear, concise and to the point

- All interviewers will have Qs to get through



Technical Interviews

- Assess your technical knowledge, problem solving, logical thinking skills
- What steps/approach would you take to solve a real world problem
- White board questions - write some code/solve an algorithm/find a bug
- Case study/scenario/real world problem



How can you prepare for a technical interview?



- Go back to basics (the fundamentals of programming/software engineering principles - class, object, define an OO language)
- Practice writing some code
- Research the latest technologies
- Glassdoor for tips

Some practice questions



- What development tools have you used?
- What languages have you programmed with?
- What kind of tech projects do you work on in your spare time?
- Tell me about the most difficult technical challenge you encountered and how you solved it?
- Note: Workday will be delivering a seminar on Technical Whiteboard Interviews on Wednesday 24th August.

How to Ace an Interview



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHDrj0_bMQ0&list=PLBX40E3UOcmm8nt3x4F4IW1ZGUTNk2x

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OW-yxxPMtro&index=2&list=PLBX40E3UOcmm8nt3x4F4IW1ZGUTNk2x>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulHxhTH0Ass&list=PLBX40E3UOcmm8nt3x4F4IW1ZGUTNk2x&index=3>



Before the Interview

Interview Preparation Checklist

- ✓ Do your research
- ✓ Anticipate and prepare for key questions
- ✓ Confirm logistics



Key Areas for Interview Questions

- 1. Know Yourself**
- 2. Know the Job**
- 3. Know the Organisation and Industry**
- 4. Know Your Skills/Competencies in Relation to this Role**
- 5. You Career Pathway, Motivation and Progression**

What are Employers Advising?

Evidence

Examples

Keep it
positive

Avoid
clichés



What to Research in advance?

1. Know Yourself



TELL
ME ABOUT
YOURSELF

Tell me about yourself...



Education

Experience

Skills

Example

Education

I am studying an MSc in Computer Science in UCD and I am on track to achieve a 1st. I have studied object orientated programming theory, Java programming and R and Ruby scripting. My final project is about...

Experience

Last summer I completed an internship with Workday where I designed and developed an app for their finance tool using Java and Ruby. We had daily scrum meetings and I got to know all areas of the business. We had to work to strict timelines in order for the app to go live on time. I have previous experience working as a Network Engineer but I am now looking to change direction into programming

Skills

I am motivated and driven and have shown this by going back to undertake a Masters. I'm a confident communicator and I enjoy interacting with people on projects. I like setting challenges and I want to keep improving on my coding skills and learning about the latest web technologies

Career Objective

I want to build on my knowledge of the industry and become an expert Programmer. I want to work in an organisation where my technical skills can make an impact on the business. I am keen to work in a company who values the training and development of their staff





Exercise – In Pairs

Individually prepare your answer to the question ‘**Tell me about yourself**’? (10 mins)

Take turns playing role of Interviewer and Interviewee

Give each other feedback on answers / body language / tone of voice etc.

Five minutes per round

Know yourself: Key Questions to Prepare

- Why you want the job?
- What motivates you?
- Your skills, abilities and attributes relative to the role
- Your values
- Your key achievements
- Your strengths and development areas
- Your career goals and ambitions

Know Yourself: Key questions to prepare

- Why did you choose your course/university?
- What aspects of your course have you most enjoyed and why?
- What skills have you gained at university?
- What non-academic activities have you been involved in?
- What have you learned from your work experience?
- What achievements are you most proud of?
- What are your strengths/development areas?

Strengths & Development Areas – key considerations

Evidence – It's not enough to say “I am a great communicator”

Examples – prepare a couple of examples to illustrate each of your key strengths

Keep it positive “I'm rubbish with people, I lose my temper a lot and I find it hard to get up in the mornings”

Avoid clichés – “I am a perfectionist”, “I have too much empathy”

What is your greatest weakness?



Weakness

- State what it is or what it was.

Action

- What steps have you taken to overcome this weakness?

Result

- What has been the outcome?
- How have you improved?

What is your greatest weakness?

- Be selective when answering this
- Turn it into a positive when phrasing your answer
- It's a strength in disguise
- It should not hinder your ability to do the job



Weakness

- *Honestly, I would say that presenting is an area that I could work on. I tend to get quite nervous presenting to large groups of people*

Action

- *I decided to attend a presentation skills workshop where I was given practical and useful tips on how to structure and deliver a successful and engaging presentation. I then made a conscious effort to volunteer to present when working on group projects*

Result

- *I also got the opportunity when working as an intern in Workday to deliver presentations to team members and management on projects that I was working on. This further increased my confidence*

What is your greatest weakness?



2. Know the job

- Job specification
- Profiles of current graduates on the company website
- Information from company presentations
- People you know who do similar jobs
- Online occupational profiles (e.g. Prospects website)

Job advertisement analysis

biggest retailers in the world and working alongside some of the most senior people within the company

Duties may include:

- Project managing the progress of our customer orders using critical path software.
- Communicating with our suppliers and customers to ensure all requirements are met.
- Forecasting stock trends through analysing key buying data and monitoring buying trends.
- Managing the stock and forecasting of stock for our online websites and direct despatch customers.

Qualifications: 

Recent degree essential.

Skills:

- Good work experience, preferably in a similar environment.
- Strong IT skills, especially in Excel.
- Hard-working, reliable with a committed and pro-active approach.
- Self-motivated with the ability to work in a timely manner with minimal supervision.
- Good communication skills both written and verbal.
- Excellent organisational skills with attention to detail and accuracy.

Teamwork

Commercial awareness

Problem-solving ability

Analytical thinking

Initiative

Communication

Key questions to prepare

- What do you know about this role?
- What do you think you will be doing when you first start in this role?
- Why have you applied for this role in particular?
- What do you think you will find most challenging about the role?

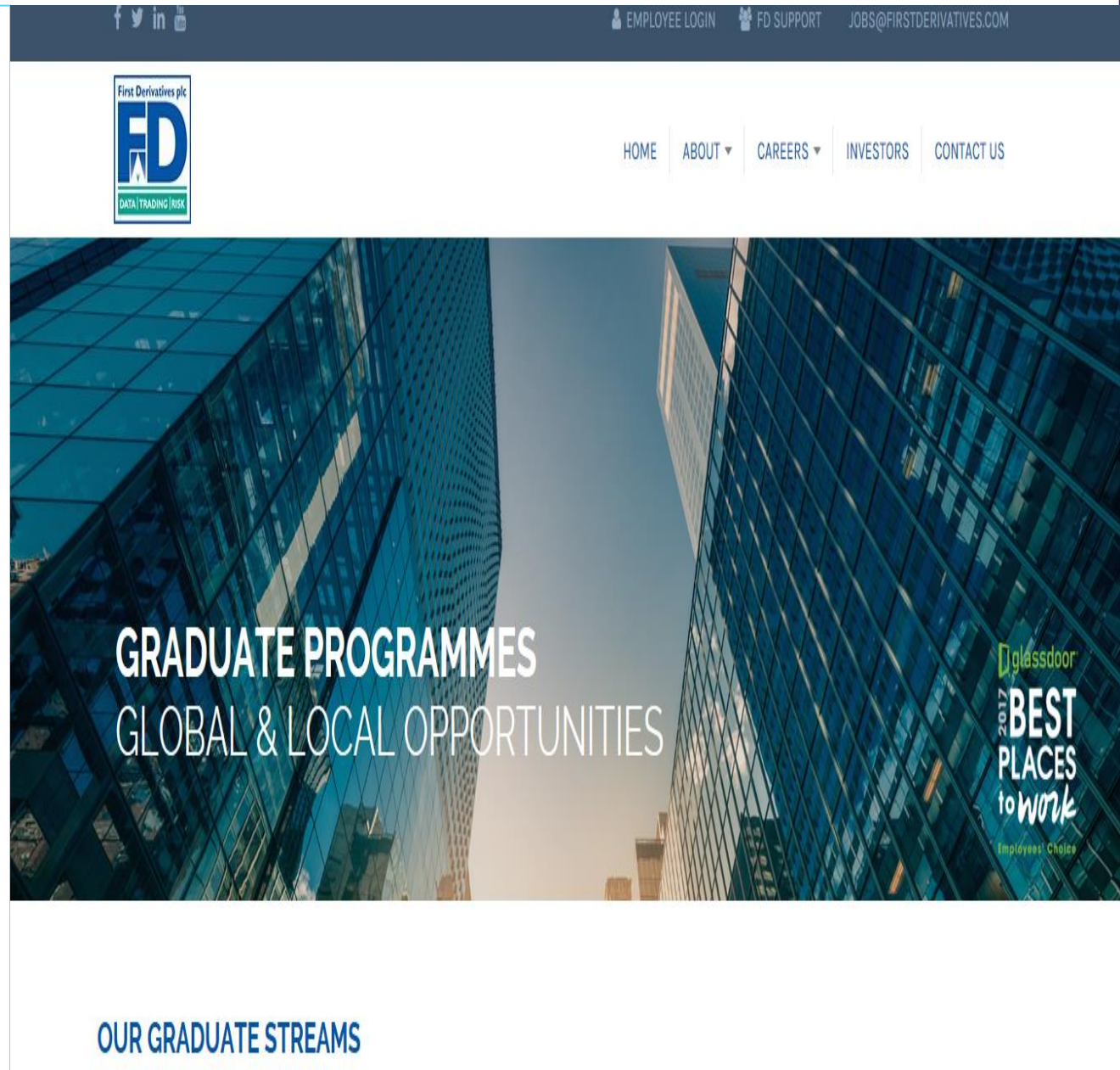
3. Know the Organisation



Know the Organisation

Research:

- Mission statement
- Values
- Strategy documents
- Social Media
- Grad Literature
- Reports
- Media Articles
- Competitors
- Industry Reports



Key questions to prepare

- What attracts you to our organisation?
- What do you see as the major challenges facing our organisation over the next five years?
- What is your view of recent media coverage of our organisation?
- How do you think you will fit into the culture of this organisation?
- What do you know about our strategy?
- Who are our major competitors? What differentiates us from them?

Do your Research

Know Yourself

Review Your CV

Write down
relevant
examples based
on the job spec

Know the Job

Job
specification

Information
from company
presentations

People you
know who do
similar jobs

Research the
interviewer/s

Know the Organisation

Website, mission
statement, grad
literature, annual
reports, strategy docs
etc.

Press articles

Sector/ industry
analyses

Social Media

Should they choose to look at any public profile you've created, who would know?

If you've created an online reputation, look again with a critical eye

Remove anything you wouldn't want curious recruiters to see

70% of employers are now checking social media

60% of employers are now actually using social media for recruitment purposes

65% said they do it to see if the job seeker presents himself or herself professionally.



The interview

A black and white photograph showing three people sitting at a long table in a meeting room. On the left is a woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a light-colored blazer. In the center is a man with short, light-colored hair, wearing a dark suit and a white shirt. On the right is a man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark blazer. They are all looking towards the back of the frame where the back of a person's head and shoulders are visible, suggesting they are interviewing a candidate. The table has some papers, a pen, and a dark cup on it. The background is a plain wall with a window.

Logistics



Remember to confirm in advance....



- Time
- Venue
- Location e.g. *Accenture have three offices in the Grand Canal area*
- Duration
- Interviewer Panel – how many? Who? Roles?
- Type of interview
- What to bring (in addition to CV, application etc.)

Wear a dark conservative business suit...



First impressions....



- On time
- Appropriate dress
- Grooming
- Demeanour

Common Non-Verbal Mistakes Made During an Interview

** From a survey of 2,000 bosses (Courtesy of Classes and Careers)*



Avoiding pitfalls

- Listen carefully
- Take cues from your interviewer
- Ask for clarification
- Take time to think
- Avoid defensiveness and/or negativity



Competency-based Interviews:

Past performance is the
best predictor of future
performance



Competency Based Interviews

Competencies are “areas of personal capability”

Combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to perform the job

Predict someone's future on their **past patterns** of behaviour

- Past Behaviour **Predicts** Future Performance
- Determining the ‘**Why**’ behind the behaviour, so the meaning of the behaviour can be understood
- **It’s not what you know you would do, it’s what you did!**



STAR

Common competencies



Results
focussed

Teamwork

Financial
awareness

Problem-
solving ability

Analytical
thinking

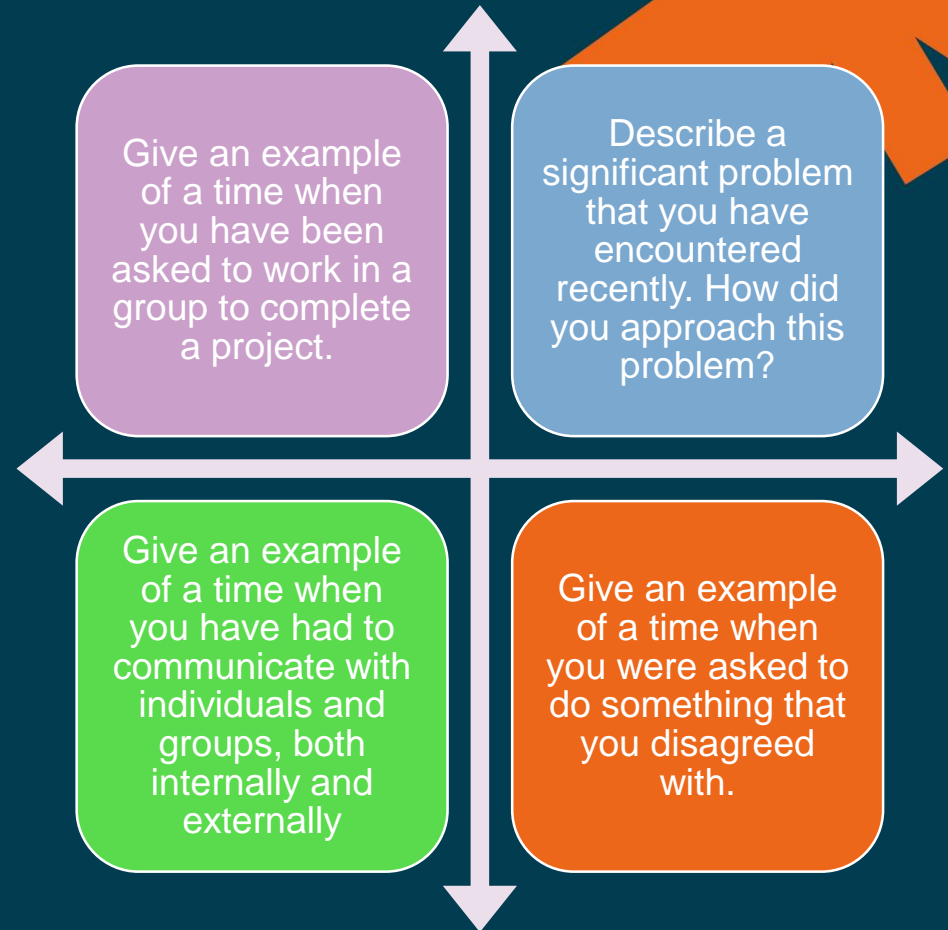
Initiative

Flexibility

Emotional
intelligence

Communication

Tell me about a time when.....?



S

- **Situation**
- Set the background and context

T

- **Task**
- What was required of you

A

- **Action**
- The actions that you took

R

- **Result**
- The result of your actions

S **Situation**

Detail the background. Provide a context.
Where? When?

T **Task**

Describe the challenge and expectations.
What needed to be done? Why?

A **Action**

Elaborate your specific action. What did you do? How? What tools did you use?

R **Results**

Explain the results: accomplishments, recognition, savings, etc. Quantify.

Example

Situation: "A customer rang up complaining that they'd waited more than two weeks for a reply from our sales team regarding a product query."

Task: "I needed to address the client's immediate query and find out what went wrong in the normal process."

Activity: "I apologised, got the details and passed them to our head salesperson, who contacted the client within the hour. I investigated why the query hadn't been answered. I discovered that it was a combination of a wrong mobile number and a generic email address that wasn't being checked. I let the client know and we offered a goodwill discount on her next order."

Result: "The client not only continued to order from us but posted a positive customer service tweet."

Examples of Competency Based Interview Questions

Teamwork: Describe a situations where you have worked effectively as part of a team.

Problem Solving: Describe a situation where you were resourceful, i.e. you came up with a solution or way of improving something you were working on?

Performance Management/Emotional Intelligence: Tell me about a time when you were not pleased with your performance and how you handled that situation?

Ability to Meet Deadlines: Tell me about a situation where you had to persist to complete a major task whilst under pressure or in the face of setbacks?

Project Management: Describe a time when you had to manage a project from start to finish – what was involved, how did you structure it, what was the outcome?

Examples of Competency Based Interview Questions

Tell me about a time when.....

- You achieved a goal
- You had to deal with a challenging situation
- You to meet a tight deadline
- You worked as part of a team
- You took the lead
- You had to take the initiative to get something done

Examples of Competency Based Interview Questions

- Describe a situation where you were resourceful, i.e. you came up with a solution or way of improving something you were working on?
- Tell me about a time when you were not pleased with your performance and how you handled that situation?
- Tell me about a situation where you had to persist to complete a major task whilst under pressure or in the face of setbacks?

When they ask, “Have you any questions for us?”

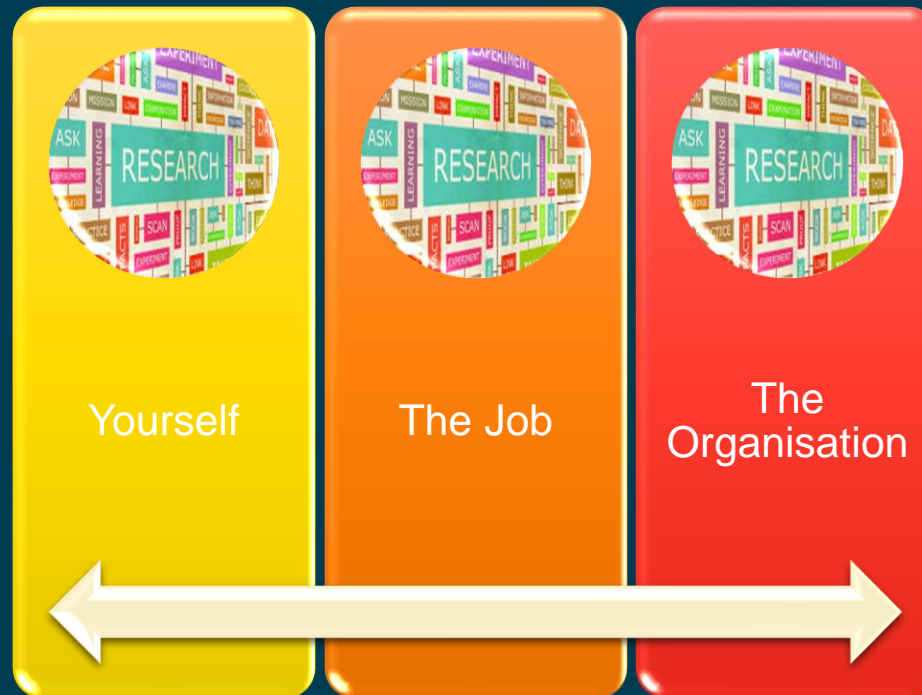
- Not too many
- Choose with care (avoid salary issues / job conditions)
- Avoid being critical
- Focus on:
 - Types of projects & responsibilities
 - Training programmes
 - Career development opportunities
 - Reporting structure
 - Performance Management System
- If you ask a question - have your own opinion on the topic that your question relates to.



Interviewer's Pet Hates

- Asking previously answered questions
- Not KNOWING your CV and competencies
- Not knowing why you want the job
- Not engaging with Interviewer-ENERGY !
- Not knowing enough about the company / career you are applying for!

Do Your Research!



Presenting Yourself...First Impressions....



On time



Appropriate
dress



Grooming



Demeanour



After the interview

Thank You Email



Request Feedback





In Class Exercise

Competency Interview Role Play Exercise

- Get into groups of 2
- Take turns in being the interviewer and interviewee
- Take 5 minutes to prep for the questions
- Your answer should be not longer that 30 seconds
- Ensure you think of key criteria:
 - Reflect on your evidence of the competency that they are looking for
 - Use the STAR Approach
 - Watch Body Language
 - Ensure good Eye Contact
- Debrief from each group

Question 1

“Tell me about a time when a team that you were part of faced an issue or challenge. What role did you play?”

Feedback from Interviewer to Interviewee for each group

Debrief from Exercise

Question 2

“ Describe a situation where you were resourceful, i.e. you came up with a solution or way of improving something you were working on?”

Feedback from Interviewer to Interviewee for each group

Debrief from Exercise

Group Debrief

Group Debrief on Exercise
and Key areas for
improvement

Online Resources

[Find a job or internship](#)[Explore your career options](#)[Meet with a Consultant](#)[Build your skills](#)[Online Resources](#)

Online Resources

UCD Career Development Centre provides access to a range of online resources **free of charge** to University College Dublin students and alumni. To use these resources, you'll need a number of codes depending on what you want to use, such as: client code, access code and password.

Please [login to your Careers Connect account](#) to obtain the codes necessary for online resources outside of UCD:

Home tab → Welcome Heading → Online Resources for UCD students



ucd career development centre



'5 Minutes on UCD Careers' Video Series

5 videos • 117 views • Last updated on 20 Feb 2018



UCD Career
Development Centre

SUBSCRIBE 18

1



5 Minutes on the UCD Career Development Centre

UCD Career Development Centre

Rectangular Snip

2



Effective Applications

UCD Career Development Centre

3



Recruitment Fairs

UCD Career Development Centre

4



5 Minutes on Interview Skills

UCD Career Development Centre

5



5 minutes on Internships

UCD Career Development Centre

YouTube: UCD Careers Network

Quick Query Appointments: One-to-One



20 minute individual appointment

Book online – from 8am on the day you want an appointment

High demand in semester

Come prepared- printed cv/cover letter/job description etc.

Quick Query - 20 minute sessions

Discuss:

Discovering Career Interests

Goals – Career Action Planning

Advice on Obtaining an Internship

CV Development and Review

Interview Strategy



One to One Meetings

Careers Network: Location

