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Getting Interview Fit

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Introduction

This task focuses on equipping you for interviews. Although it will be of more relevance to job seekers than the self-employed, you'll find that a number of aspects can be easily transferred to a situation like pitching for new business.

GENERAL INTERVIEW PREPARATION

At this point, most of you have probably applied for several jobs or pitched for several new business opportunities in the tech sector. If you are a job seeker, it's time to start preparing for when you are invited for an interview. The same skills are relevant for self-employed students, and can be used in any sort of face-to-face or videoconferenced business meeting, either for direct synchronous business pitches or to follow up on written pitches in order to win contracts. In this task, we will cover what to expect and how you can prepare for the interview/synchronous meeting process. Let's get started!

The interview/synchronous meeting process will differ from company to company. However, there is some general preparation you should do for any interview/synchronous meeting. For instance, you always want to start by researching the industry and hiring/potential client company. The company's website usually provides a wealth of information about the business and what they do. Use the information you collect to align your skills and experience with the company. This research will also help you to provide specific reasons you want the job/business opportunity and prepare meaningful questions about the company/client.

Another good exercise is to compare your skills, academic qualifications, and experience to the requirements and 'good to have' area of the job specification, or, for self-employed students, to the aspect of the potential client's business that your pitch is directed towards. This will help you to anticipate an interviewer's/potential client's concerns and reservations. Prepare answers for your possible gaps and remember that every answer you provide should demonstrate to the interviewer why you are the best hire for the job/company for the business opportunity. You can use your list of achievements and transferable skills to craft these answers. For example, if you do not have experience in a specific tool you can express that you value learning and are keen to learn and grow so that you can excel in the role. For a business opportunity, you could respond by framing the tool as an area of expertise you are currently branching into and will soon be likely to provide (which, of course, would require you to do exactly that).

Extra resource Evaluate your transferable skills using this **transferable skills checklist**.

In addition to researching the company and comparing your skillset to the job specification, answering common interview questions should be part of your preparation. Think about how you would respond to these common questions:

- Tell me about yourself and your background.

- What do you know about the company?

- Why are you applying for this position/business opportunity?

- Why do you want to work at/with this company?

- What appeals to you about the job description/business opportunity?

- What are you passionate about?

- What are your salary expectations/rates for the product or service offered?

- Are you interviewing with other companies/Do you provide this product or service to other clients?

- When can you start?

- What type of management style do you prefer?

- What are your career goals?

- What are you most proud of and why?

- What are some lessons you've learned from your previous experience?

- Can you give an example of a time when you worked well in a team and what lessons you drew from the experience?

- Can you give me an example of a time when you had to deliver demanding results under time pressure?

An interviewer/potential client will almost always ask you to 'tell them a little about yourself/your company' so prepare a good **elevator pitch**! Candidates/companies who are well prepared for interviews/client meetings are more confident and provide more thorough answers. Practise answering questions aloud or with another person to build up your confidence and reduce your stress on the day of the interview. Remember to consider how you can leverage your strengths and mitigate your weaknesses in the role/business opportunity. You can also note where you have had a positive impact in professional roles or informal roles such as volunteer work or sports teams.

Some of the questions that are likely to be asked are behaviour and competency questions. The best way to answer this type of question is by using the STAR technique.

STAR technique:

Situation: Describe the situation to provide context to the interviewer.

Task: Outline your role in the situation by explaining your duties and what was expected of you.

Action: Explain how you performed your tasks including instances where you went above the call of duty to achieve a positive outcome.

Result: Conclude your response with the outcome of your actions and whether the situation was resolved or not. If possible, it is beneficial to include quantitative data to quantify the outcome.

Practise answering behavioural interview questions using the STAR technique by referring to a list of **common STAR interview questions**. The same approach can be used to structure a meeting with a potential client, by referring to situations in previous business opportunities or related experiences that can help to convince the potential client you have what it takes to deliver the product or service they want if they give you their business.

Technical questions may also be included in an interview/potential client meeting, even if it is not framed as a 'technical interview'/'technical meeting'. You should be able to answer specific technical questions related to the role/business opportunity and be able to explain your thought process in solving technical problems, as employers/potential clients want to see that you are a problem solver and strategic thinker. Examples include:

- What are CSS selectors or practical aspects of CSS in everyday use?

- What is object-oriented programming?

- Explain the logic of a common algorithm such as a sorting algorithm.

Explore the following resources to see example interview/client technical questions relevant to the programming language or role you are interested in:

- **Python**
- **Software Engineering**
- **Data Science**
- **Web Development**

At the end of an interview/potential client meeting, you will usually have the opportunity to ask questions (sometimes this can happen during the interview or meeting as well; it's up to the potential employer/client). Prepare some well-informed questions to demonstrate that you have done your homework about the company and that you have a genuine interest in working for them. Some examples include:

- Can you tell me more about the day-to-day responsibilities of the role? / Can you provide more detail about the business opportunity?
  This provides an opportunity for you to sell yourself with regard to some of the skills/products/services required if you haven't had a chance to do so earlier in the interview/potential client meeting.

- How could I impress you in the first three months?
  The aim of this question is to identify goals or challenges the potential employer/client is facing that you could support them with. Asking this type of question shows a goal-orientated and growth-directed mindset, which is attractive to employers/clients.

Before you leave, ask what the next steps are or when you can expect to receive feedback from the potential employer/client.

TECHNICAL INTERVIEW

While you may ace your initial verbal interview/potential client meeting, when it comes to hiring for any technical roles/business opportunities, the core of the whole process is to determine your ability to write quality code that is correct, efficient, and adheres to industry standards. Hiring managers/potential clients often achieve this through in-person whiteboard technical questions and take-home tests or assessments.

Ace your technical take-home test using **helpful tips** from Jane Philipps.

The main aim of technical interviews/meetings goes beyond simply testing your ability to solve the problem or provide the required technical product/service. Hiring managers/potential clients want to test your technical capability, which includes your sense of logic, ability to think clearly in a high-pressure situation, and ability to work through problems by formulating and asking appropriate questions. Some questions hiring managers/potential clients will be asking themselves include:

- What is your overall approach to solving a problem?
- What do you do when you get stuck?
- Are you able to 'brute force' your way to the solution?
- Are you methodical or do you just hammer through a bunch of approaches and see what works?
- Do you document your code?

During a technical interview/meeting, your best bet is to take a moment to organise your thoughts. Then, think through the question verbally and ask clarifying questions. Logically analyse (out loud) the different ways to approach the problem. Discuss why you would prefer approaching it in a certain way, and, if you get there, eventually describe your answer. Often, interviewers are not just looking for the right answer. Getting the right answer (or one of the right answers) is important, but it is equally important to showcase yourself as a logical, verbal, and analytical person who retains their wit in a stressful situation. For self-employed people in a technical meeting, there might be the latitude to request a written set of technical requirements and respond at a later date; this mirrors the situation

employers try to assess when they provide a take-home test to potential employees.

Here are some resources that will help you prepare for the programming part of technical interviews/meetings:

- *Full-stack Developer Interview Questions and Answers* on **GitHub** provides questions across a range of tools including Python, JavaScript, SQL, and Git.
- **A2Z Interviews** focuses on questions related to software engineering questions rather than coding tasks.
- **HackerRank** allows you to practise your coding skills in Python and SQL and includes databases, algorithms, and data structures as topics.
- **Careerride** provides questions and some coding problems for Python and JavaScript as well as several other languages.
- **Topcoder** focuses on web development and data science.
- **CodeChef** allows you to choose a topic and then the programming language you would like to use.
- **Coderbyte** has an online environment where you can practise coding challenges in several languages including Python and JavaScript.
- **TestGorilla** includes tests for SQLite, working with data, CSS, and software engineering principles.
- **Exercism** helps you to develop fluency in the programming language of your choosing.

Explore online to find other websites to **improve your coding skills**. It's important to be confident in your abilities to win over interviewers/potential clients, and the best way to achieve this is to be able to communicate genuine confidence in your abilities and passion for the technical components of the role/business opportunity you're seeking.


Extra resource

We highly recommend you look for a text called *Cracking the coding interview* by Gayle Laakmann McDowell, which offers valuable guidance and practise for tech interviews. This can be **purchased from Amazon**, but may also be available in your local public library or other places online.

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS AND PITCH OPPORTUNITIES

Each company will have a different interview process for job seekers, however common elements include assessing behaviours and competencies (STAR questions), technical skills, and team fit. In this section, we will discuss the different

types of interviews and assessments that may be included in the interview process. An example process is illustrated in the diagram below:
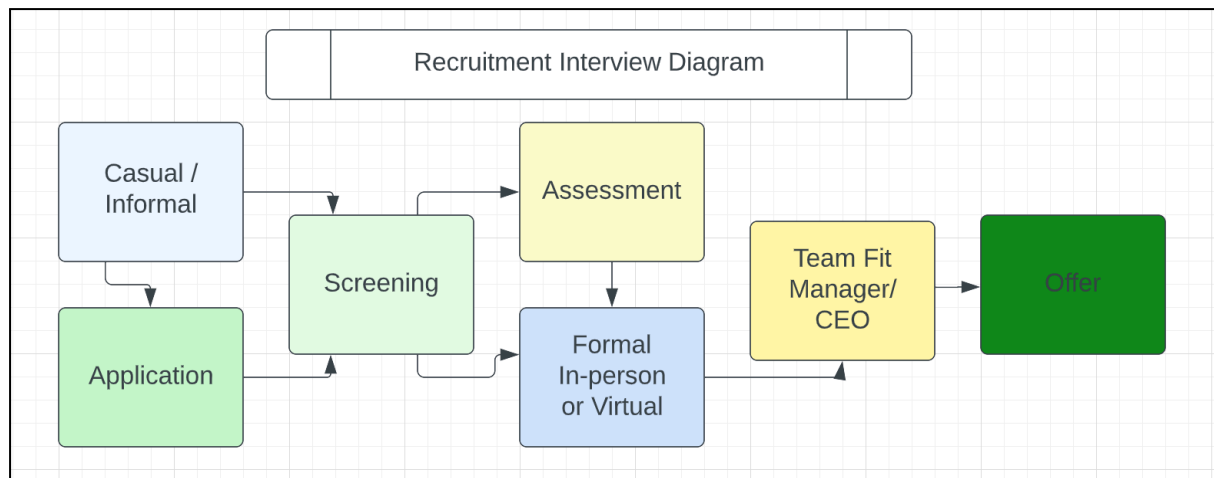
Note that some steps may be bypassed in some instances; for example, a candidate who is headhunted in an informal interview may progress to a screening interview without submitting an application. Also, several interview types may be grouped together or scheduled as individual interviews. If interviews are grouped together the interview process may take a full day as you take part in a range of interviews and assessment activities. The same principle applies to business pitches – the company may not apply the same process every time to hiring a person or company to provide products/services, although larger companies do tend to establish a process for this.

Informal or casual interviews

Informal or casual interviews/business pitch opportunities can happen at an informal industry meet-up, graduate network event, or conference dinner. Informal interviews/pitch opportunities allow the potential employer to observe how you conduct yourself and get an idea of whether or not you would fit into the company or department, or whether they'd like to do business with you or your company.

In the informal interview/pitch opportunity, try to find out as much as you can about the role/business requirements and match them up with your relevant skills and experience, thereby showing the potential employer/client you are a good fit. If the potential employer communicates any challenges or problems (often called 'stucks' – areas they are stuck on) or business needs, offer suggestions or solutions to show the value you would bring. If you receive an invitation to apply or pitch your business as the provider of the relevant product/service, send your application package/pitch the same day or as soon as you can. Remember to customise your details for the specific job/business opportunity.

Screening interviews/meetings

Screening interviews/meetings are normally performed after you have sent your application. They are similar to informal interviews/pitch opportunities in that they allow the potential employer/client to observe how you conduct yourself and gauge whether or not you would fit into the company or department, or whether you're the right person to provide the product/service they need. Telephonic or videoconference screening interviews/meetings are generally 15 to 30 minutes. Ensure you're in a quiet place and have a good connection and a charged device for the call. Prepare by using some **screening interview questions** assembled for tech roles.

Career history interview

Career history interviews are held with one or two members of the hiring committee. This interview aims to evaluate role fit and dive deeper into the different roles you've held in your career that are relevant to the role you've applied for. Employers use this interview to understand your day-to-day responsibilities, achievements, and low points, as well as find out about the teams you worked with in your previous roles. For technical roles, this will include going into the details of previous technical work, your side projects, and so forth. Explore **work history questions** to prepare for this kind of interview. For self-employed students, you're more likely to encounter potential clients interested in your/your business's experience in providing the sort of product/services you're pitching. Previous work experience can help to show why you/your business is a good choice.

Focused, competency, or behavioural interview

We have already touched on the **types of questions** you can expect in a competency or behavioural interview. This interview is typically attended by one or two members of the hiring committee and aims to evaluate culture fit. Interviewers will focus on specific competencies companies know are essential to their team and to the specific role you've applied for. During the interview, the interviewer will take up certain competencies one by one and explain to you what the competencies mean to them. Then, they will ask you to reflect on previous roles and share instances or anecdotes demonstrating times when you feel you displayed each competency well, and when you could have displayed it better. For self-employed students, this would be an opportunity to showcase the qualities a potential client might find attractive in a supplier of the product or service you're pitching. This could include qualities like confidence, knowing your business area well, demonstrating good organisation and professionalism, etc. Think of the things that are important to you when you're selecting someone to provide a product or service to you!

Assessments

Interview assessments/potential client requests for detailed business proposals or plans can include a challenge, project, or test. Sometimes job seekers are asked to do a take-home assignment, whereas self-employed people may need to show the potential client what they/their company will do and thereby show they're the right choice for the opportunity. The length and difficulty of assignments/proposals/ plans differ widely depending on the company/client and the role, product, or service offered. In other industries, any of these assessments may be referred to as the 'technical interview'. Testing or requesting a detailed proposal/plan aims to determine a candidate's true personality and abilities and not just what they say about themselves. It also allows an organisation/potential client to see how a candidate copes under pressure. There are many methods that can be used to test a candidate's ability. Some examples are listed below.

- An **aptitude test** is essentially a skill and capability test that looks at the candidate's ability to acquire skills (intellectual, motor, etc.). These tend to be used in an interview scenario more than in a business pitch scenario.

- **IQ** tests are one metric used to assess mental ability, which includes problem-solving, numeracy, and literacy. These skills are some of the most sought-after skills in the tech sector. These tend to be used in an interview context more than a business pitch context.

- **Psychometric tests** look at a candidate's potential suitability for a company by measuring traits such as intelligence levels, values, and behaviours, as well as ability and personality. These tend to be used in an interview context more than a business pitch context.

- Stemming from the field of psychology, **personality tests** have been used to better understand character traits in a variety of settings, including the workplace. These are sometimes used in a business pitch context, but still mostly in an interview context

- **Technical assessments** are a combination of application-based techniques and knowledge-based questions employed to measure an employee's understanding of concepts, tools, and frameworks on a required technical skill or technology. Although this usually forms part of the technical interview/meeting, some companies/potential clients will want to test your technical skills with a preliminary test before giving you the full tech assessment interview/meeting.

- **Business simulations** may be paper-based or computer-based. You may be split into small groups with other candidates, and over a series of rounds, compete with other groups to develop, manufacture, market, and distribute

products. For self-employed people, the business situation they need to respond to will be similar but will be a real business need and not a simulation.

- **Presentations** are used to assess your self-confidence and ability to communicate and manage mini-projects. You may be asked to present in person, virtually, or by pre-recording a video. If you are asked to give a presentation, take it seriously. Management time is very valuable and if the company has gathered an audience to listen to you, then you can be sure that they will be taking it seriously. Presentations are a very common way for self-employed people to pitch their product/service to potential clients, and winning or losing major contracts can hinge on the professionalism and quality of such pitch presentations.

- **Take-home tests** are assessments in the form of a written assignment or presentation that you complete at home. The questions will most likely be focused on the actual job specification and the type of tasks that you would be expected to perform in the actual role. Take this very seriously and make sure to deliver it in a professional format. 'Take-home' requirements for a business proposal or plan are similar but once again, this is the real thing, not a simulation. Both job seekers and self-employed students pitching for business opportunities should aim to showcase their insights, research done, and unique interpretations/suggestions/value offered in response to this sort of opportunity.

- **Group discussions** assess interactive skills by giving the group a problem to solve. Common problems are simulations where your group has been stranded at sea, in the desert, or on the moon. In the context of business meetings with potential clients, the scenarios presented are much more likely to be real current business problems the client is grappling with, but both situations have in common the opportunity to showcase your problem analysis and solution approaches.

VIRTUAL VS IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS

It is also very important to be prepared for the nature of the interview/business meeting, whether it is face-to-face, telephonic, or video conferencing.

More contemporary companies/potential clients are opting for virtual interviews, which is great for both parties as it is time-saving and cost-effective. For virtual interviews/meetings, you need to prepare a neutral or neat background and ensure you have a quiet room. Also, consider the lighting from windows and outside interference. From a technical standpoint, you need a good working laptop or device with a camera and microphone. Download/install/sign up for the

videoconferencing platform/program selected by the interviewer/potential client ahead of time, e.g., Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Skype, or Zoom. Test the platform a few days before the interview/meeting and ensure you will have appropriate connectivity on the day. It's a good idea to have a backup ready in case of failure of your primary connectivity channel; for example, having data on a mobile phone you can use as a hotspot if your fibre connection plays up.

Make a good first impression by dressing comfortably but professionally and being punctual. During a virtual interview/meeting, eye contact will be the main method an interviewer/potential client uses to determine your confidence as body language is limited. Ensure you maintain eye contact, switching between panellists/attendees if more than one person is interviewing/meeting with you.

 Learn some **tips and tricks for virtual interviews** on the HyperionDev blog.

An in-person interview/meeting requires more preparation time due to transport planning, parking logistics, and appearance preparation. Give a firm handshake and smile when introducing yourself and try to get there ahead of time to show punctuality (aim to be at least 10–15 minutes early). During the interview/meeting, maintain a good posture but feel free to lean forward or nod to show interest when the interviewer/potential client is asking a question or explaining something. Eye contact also contributes to confident body language. Resist the urge to fidget; keep your arms relaxed and hands folded in your lap.

 Read more **tips for a successful interview** and **advice on body language** to make a good first impression.

INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

The infographic below is specific to interviews, but the principles apply to self-employed students and pitch/business meetings as well.

Do your research

Dedicate some time a few days beforehand to research the company. Make note of any significant milestones, the company structure, the ethos and the culture.

Dress for success

Make sure that you are neat and presentable: a collared shirt, tailored pants and smart shoes are always a safe bet.

Be honest

Don't pretend you know an answer. If you're unsure, say so, and then explain how you would go about finding an answer. Employers want to see that you know your limitations but are also keen to learn.

How to ace an interview

Preparation is key

Have a look at possible interview questions and practice your answers - especially for technical interviews

Mind the time

You need to arrive at least 15 minutes before your interview.

Also be mindful of keeping your answers succinct. If the interviewer needs more information, they'll ask.

Use the checklist below to do a quick review of the key steps you need to take to prepare for an interview/business meeting.

Before the interview/meeting

☐ You should respond quickly when a company reaches out to you to arrange an interview, or when a potential client contacts you or responds to an advert or pitch you have made. Respond to emails or other messages sent out by interested companies/potential clients (even if you are no longer interested in the role/business opportunity) to foster good relationships with companies you may approach again in the future.

☐ Research the company/potential client to make sure you understand their strategy/needs/etc. This also shows you have a keen interest in the company/potential client.

☐ Be prepared to talk and 'tell the story' of how and why your education and experience make you a good fit for the role or business opportunity. Yes/no answers don't give the interviewers/potential clients enough information to make a decision about you; you want to make their decision to hire/work with you an obvious and easy one!

☐ Recap your technical knowledge from your Skills Bootcamp. Although you can be trained on the job, and this is an increasingly common practice, most companies would like to see a basic level of technical knowledge that indicates you're a fit for the role. For self-employed people pitching for business opportunities, the bar is higher – it is unlikely that a potential client will want to hire someone who communicates that they can't do the job, so you need to impress. If you do need the opportunity to research something, it's a good idea to capture the potential client's technical requirements and

promise to revert in a couple of days with a detailed proposal.

☐ If you're doing an online interview, connect to the platform and install any required software the day before your interview, as previously mentioned.

On the day

☐ Be punctual. It is mandatory to be on time for a job interview/business meeting and rescheduling is going to put you at the back of the shortlist and allow other candidates/companies a better shot, so it's important to both prepare and be punctual for the interview/meeting slot you have been given/arranged.

☐ If possible, log in or join a virtual meeting ahead of time to ensure your microphone and camera are working. This will enable you to troubleshoot glitches and sort them out before the interview/meeting.

☐ Whether interviewing/meeting online or face to face, use positive body language: maintain eye contact, sit up straight, and ensure you convey enthusiasm and interest in the job.

☐ Dress appropriately, even if the interview/meeting is online. Looking like a professional helps you feel professional, gets you into the right headspace, and projects the appropriate image.

☐ Try to smile and look happy to be there. This can be difficult if you're very nervous, but do your best. If you can manage to come across as relaxed and confident, you will already have the proverbial 'foot in the door'.

☐ Motivate why they should hire/select you/your company's product/service by selling your strengths and showcasing your potential contribution to the role/potential of your product or service to meet the client's needs.

☐ Ask what the next steps are before leaving the interview/meeting; for a meeting where you've pitched for a business opportunity, you can also propose next steps (for example, something similar to 'Now that I know what your company needs, I will draw up a more detailed proposal and get that across you to by close of business tomorrow!').

☐ Thank the interviewer/potential client for their time and perhaps follow up with an email expressing your enthusiasm for the role/opportunity; for a pitch opportunity, you can also include further details such as a business proposal/company brochure/free trial of your software/etc.

RUBRIC FOR INTERVIEW/PITCH SKILLS ASSESSMENT

In today's Practical Tasks, one of the activities you will be asked to do involves recording yourself doing a mock interview/pitch. Your video be marked using the rubric below. It is included here so that you can use it as a guide to completeness if you wish.

	Unsatisfactory (1)	Acceptable (2)	Outstanding (3)
Appearance/Physical presentation of self	· Appearance is untidy or somewhat untidy OR · Choice in clothing is inappropriate (shirt untucked, t-shirt, too much jewellery, etc.) OR · Poor grooming	· Overall neat appearance · Choice in clothing is acceptable for an interview or business pitch · Well groomed (i.e., shirt tucked in, hair neat, minimal clothing wrinkles)	· Overall appearance is very neat · Choice in clothing is appropriate for any job interview/business pitch · Very well groomed (hair, clothes, etc.) · Overall appearance is highly professional
Greeting/Introduction	· Uses informal/overly casual behaviour and language, doesn't modify behaviour to fit the interview/pitch scenario · Attempts to be courteous but is awkward	· Acceptable behaviour, comes across as polite, professionalism may be immature or somewhat lacking	· Professional behaviour and language · Friendly and courteous demeanour
General spoken communication	· Speech is unclear – lapses in sentence structure and grammar (*do not mark students down for poor sound quality related to having a poor microphone, as this is out of their control*) OR · Volume is inappropriately loud/soft/uneven (varied)	· Speech is clear with minimal mistakes in sentence structure and grammar · Volume is appropriate	· Speaks clearly and distinctly with no lapses in sentence structure and grammar usage; speaks concisely with correct pronunciation · Volume conveys business tone and professionalism
General body language	· Fidgets (i.e., frequent movement of hands and body unrelated to expressively communicating answers) OR · Rigid/inexpressive body language and facial expressions which convey fear/boredom	· Minimal fidgeting (i.e., occasionally shifting); average use of physical gestures, facial expressions, and body movements in a manner which enhanced what they were saying	· No fidgeting · Consistently uses facial expressions and body movements in a manner which enhances the delivery of what they are saying

Specific body language; posture and eye contact	· Does not look at camera OR · Keeps head down OR · Minimal to no eye contact OR · Poor posture/slouching	· Sits up straight, good posture; establishes eye contact with interviewers during the interview 60–70% of the time	· Sits up straight, excellent posture · Looks relaxed and confident · Establishes appropriate eye contact with interviewers during the interview 90–100% of the time
General attitude	· Shows little enthusiasm OR · Appears only somewhat interested in the mock interview/pitch delivery	· Shows interest in the mock interview/pitch delivery; shows some enthusiasm	· Conveys interest in and enthusiasm for the mock interview/pitch delivery
Responses to set questions	· Long and waffley responses to questions (total over 16 minutes) OR · Responses that don't really answer the questions	· Answers the questions but doesn't always provide answers that would win over a potential interview of business client; answers may be slightly too short or long and overall question responses lack maturity/polish	· Concise yet informative responses that provide appropriately tailored and nuanced answers to the questions · Answers are likely to impress an interviewer or potential business client
Overall demonstration of interview/ pitch skills	· Demonstrates limited proficiency; limited demonstration of competent interview skills and general professionalism	· Demonstrates average proficiency; average demonstration of competent interview skills in a generally confident manner	· Demonstrates a high level of proficiency · Appropriately utilised interview/pitch skills in an engaged and professional manner · Conveys confidence and authenticity

Take note!

A reminder of the important dates.

By **11 August 2024**, you should have recorded an **invite to an interview** (if seeking employment) **or** a self-employment declaration (if seeking to be self-employed) at **www.hyperiondev.com/outcome7**. Please record this milestone as soon as you reach it. You can record any of the following:

- Joining an apprenticeship programme that utilises some of the knowledge obtained in your bootcamp.
- Obtaining a paid work opportunity for a duration of at least 12 weeks that utilises some of the knowledge obtained in your bootcamp.
- Obtaining a full-time job that utilises some of the knowledge obtained in your bootcamp and is with a new employer or your current employer (e.g., a promotion or extension of role).

Additionally, by **22 September 2024**, you should have recorded an **offer of a job** (if seeking employment) or evidence of obtaining **new work/contracts** (if self-employed or seeking to be) at **www.hyperiondev.com/finaloutcome7**. Please record this milestone as soon as you reach it. You can record any of the following:
- An offer of a new job or apprenticeship that utilises part or all of the skills acquired in your bootcamp. You don't need to accept the offer to fulfil this requirement.
- New contracts or opportunities you obtained that utilise the new skills acquired through the bootcamp, which may include self-employed contract work or starting your own company.

Remember to keep an open mind and **explore various opportunities** to help you practise your interviewing skills and broaden your engagement with the tech sector. If you receive an invitation to a job or apprenticeship interview, please remember to fill out **www.hyperiondev/outcome7** **before attending** the interview.

A **limited** number of co-certifications will be awarded based on your achievement of all **four criteria** for successful completion of this Skills Bootcamp.

Practical Task 1

First, create a Google doc with a uniquely identifiable filename that includes your name and email address and a task identifier for this task (**Interviews**). For example, if your name was John Smith and your email address was john_smith@gmail.com, your filename would be **John Smith - john_smith@gmail.com - Interviews**. As you progress through the Practical Task you will fill your answers into this Google doc, which you will save as a PDF and upload to your Dropbox at the end.

As usual, the instructions below differ slightly for job seekers and self-employed students. Read them carefully and follow those that fit the category you are in.

SELF-EMPLOYED STUDENTS

- Once again, consider companies and business contacts that you would pitch your services or products to. Note the contact person and other details of five such companies and contacts.
- **Create and submit pitches** to these five opportunities. For each opportunity you pitch for, this will involve:

  - Using your improved CV as the basis, create a CV tailored to the business opportunity. Ensure you have your GitHub and LinkedIn profile links included in your CV.
  - Using the cover letter template we shared previously along with the guidance provided, create a cover letter tailored to the business opportunity.

- You will need to track this data in your copy of the tracker spreadsheet as you go along.

- For each of the opportunities you pitch for, capture your contact's details if possible (company name, name, email, phone number, and their LinkedIn profile URL if possible). **Try to find LinkedIn profile links for all contacts.**

JOB SEEKERS

Time to apply for some more roles! You can follow these steps, which should be familiar by now:

- Once again, consider the sort of roles you might like to apply for and the sort of companies you might want to work for. Take into consideration the role, the skills required, location, ways of working (remote, hybrid, or on-site), the type and size of the organisation, and the industry.
- Find five junior tech roles currently being advertised – **different from any previous roles you identified or applied for** – ensuring you consider **a range** of employers – large (1,000+ employees) and small (100–500 employees) companies as well as tech scale-ups (up to 100 employees), paid internships and apprenticeships, or companies that source, hire, and train.

  Remember that we specifically request that you search for and apply to a **broad range of organisations**. Many years of experience in helping students find work in the tech sector have shown us that this is **best practice** for a number of reasons: it pushes students out of the comfort zone of just applying to work for the major brands they're already familiar

with; it helps students to broaden their knowledge of which companies form part of the tech hiring landscape, particularly small to medium enterprises (SMEs); and, it ensures that we meet the DfE requirement to address the needs of the broader, especially SME, tech market. Keep in mind that our team will review your submitted data and endeavour to create relationships with your identified companies wherever possible if we do not already have relationships with those companies; focusing on companies of different sizes and profiles will also help to diversify your application profile and increase your chances of success.

- **For each of the roles** you have identified, again identify the recruiting or hiring managers (possibly the Talent or HR people at each company) and their contact details if possible.

- **Create and submit applications** to these five opportunities. Also, **reach out** to the contacts you have identified in whatever way possible (email, LinkedIn direct message, phone call, etc.), drawing their attention to your application to their company's role.

ALL STUDENTS

- Fill in the details of the contact people you have identified into **this form**. Take screenshots of the form showing all the data you have filled in, and paste them into the Google doc you created earlier so that the person reviewing your work can see that you have completed this part of the task. Also include a screenshot of the message that displays on-screen after your form has been successfully submitted, proving that you have properly submitted the form. Note that each BYB submission success message contains a unique code, so please take care to avoid accidentally using a screenshot from a previous BYB form.
- Update your copy of the Job Interviews/Pitch Opportunities Tracker and insert a publicly accessible link to it into your Google answers doc. This **short video** will guide you through creating a shareable link. Remember that your tracker will be reviewed fortnightly to assess updates, however, you will not receive additional grades or feedback.

Practical Task 2

Using one of the job listings or business opportunities you identified in Practical Task 1, practise your interviewing/live business pitch skills by conducting a mock interview/pitch. This exercise will help you articulate your thoughts, showcase your skills, and improve your interview/pitch technique with constructive feedback from career coaches.

Preparation:

- Select a job description/business opportunity you have recently applied/pitched to or plan to apply/pitch to in the near future. This will serve as the basis for your mock interview/pitch.
- Choose a simple recording app, such as Photo Booth (for Mac users), or free online recording software like Loom, to record your mock interview/pitch.

Recording setup:

- Ensure you are in a quiet, well-lit space where you can record without interruptions.
- Test your microphone and camera to ensure they are working correctly and that you are clearly visible and audible in the video.

Record yourself answering these mock interview/pitch questions:

- Stating whether you are a job seeker or a self-employed student. Those who wish to remain at the same company but achieve an internal move to/promotion into a tech role should follow the instructions for job seekers.
- Tell me about yourself/your company/your product or service (elevator pitch).
- Why are you interested in [role/business opportunity]? (Tailor this response to the position/opportunity you've selected.)
- Please share some of your professional strengths/company areas of specialisation that you feel would be particularly beneficial for [role/business opportunity]? Also,
    - Job seekers: Discuss an area where you're looking to improve or a weakness you've been working on.
    - Self-employed people: Discuss an area of growth for yourself or your business where you are still trying to break into the market.
- Describe a technical project you worked on and how you overcame the challenges you encountered while completing it.
- Choose a technical concept and explain it to the imagined interviewer/potential client assuming they are not a technical person. (For

example, explain algorithms in Software Engineering, responsive design in Web Development, or a statistical method in Data Science, depending on your field.)

Record your responses:

- Start your recording by introducing the mock interview/pitch, and mentioning the role/business opportunity and company related to the job description/opportunity you've chosen.
- Proceed to answer each of the six questions, aiming for concise yet informative responses. Each answer should ideally be between one to two minutes long, so your overall video length should not exceed approximately 13 minutes.
- Conclude your recording by thanking the imagined interviewer/potential client for considering your application/pitch.

Submission:

- Once you are satisfied with your recording, either add a link to it (if it is hosted online) into your Google answers doc, or upload a copy of the video itself to your Dropbox for this task.
- Ensure your file is named appropriately, including your name and the date of submission for easy identification, e.g., **John_Doe_Interview_20032024** or **Jane_Doe_Business_Pitch_20032024**.

Practical Task 3

Follow these steps:

- Push one or more new practical coding tasks to the remote repository you created and called **codingTasks**.

- Add a detailed README file for each practical coding task that you have pushed to GitHub. A reminder that README files should contain the following:
  - The coding task name.
  - A clear, short, and to-the-point description of your coding task. Describe what it does, and why learning this aspect of coding is important.
  - A table of contents to allow other people to quickly navigate especially long or detailed READMEs.

- If anything needs to be installed to run your code, include an installation section that tells other users how to install your project locally.
- A usage section must be included that instructs others on how to use your code after they've installed it. Include screenshots of what your program does.
- A section for credits that highlights and links to the authors of your code (in this case it should only be you, but this is good practice for a professional role where you are likely to work in a team of developers).

- Put a link to your repository in your Google answers doc.

Final Submission Checklist

Ensure you hand in the following:

- In your Google answers doc:
  - Screenshots of your completed form and a screenshot showing proof that you have successfully submitted the form.
  - A publicly accessible link to your copy of the Job Interviews/Pitch Opportunities Tracker, updated to include the five new roles you applied for. This **short video** will guide you through creating a shareable link.
  - A link to your video from Practical Task 2 if you're hosting it online rather than uploading it.
  - A publicly accessible link, pasted into your Google answers doc, to your GitHub repository containing the code you uploaded to your developer profile repository.

  Once you've done the above, save your Google answers doc as a PDF (using menu options File -> Download -> PDF) and upload it to your Dropbox folder for this Task.
- If you haven't provided a link to an online version of your interview/pitch video in your Google doc, please upload a copy of the video to your Dropbox for this task.

Remember, if you secure an interview, it is absolutely vital that you notify us via **hyperiondev.com/outcome7**.

If you score below 18/27 for these tasks, you will be able to resubmit the tasks. If you score 18/27 or higher, you will not be able to resubmit the tasks.

RUBRIC FOR JOB APPLICATION ASSESSMENT

Your Job Applications will be marked using the rubric below. It is included here so that you can use it as a guide to completeness if you wish.

	Unsatisfactory (1)	Acceptable (2)	Outstanding (3)
Job/Pitch Data Form: Provision of evidence of completion	Evidence not provided or incomplete	As for outstanding	Evidence provided as requested.

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