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Careers and Employment

Ace the Interview! Effective Interview Preparation

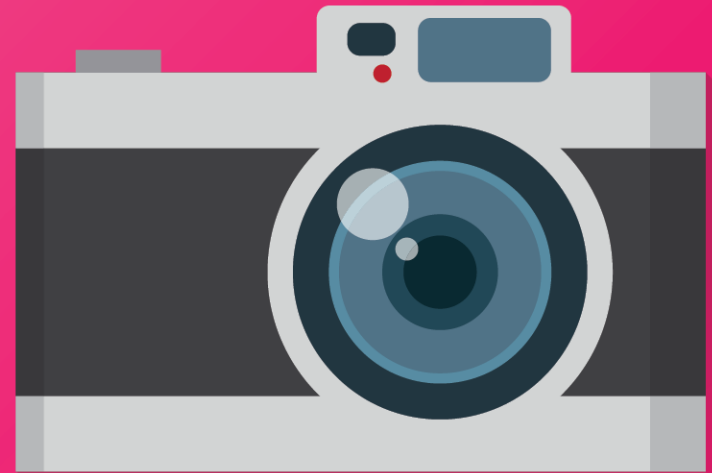
DON'T BE
AFRAID TO
STAND OUT
FROM THE
CROWD

Natasha King | Careers consultant



**Please
ask before
taking
photos of
our slides.**

Thank you!



What is the purpose of a job interview?

For the interviewer:

- Can you do the job? (*Competency in key areas*)
- Will you do the job? (*Attitude, interest, motivation*)
- Do you fit? (*Culture, values, personal attributes*)
- Confirmation of their impressions. (*Accuracy of your application*)

For the applicant:

- To present your abilities, knowledge, aspirations and experience.
- To gain a further insight into the position, employer and organisation.
- **A key Networking opportunity**

Three-step process

Pre-interview preparation

The interview itself

Post-interview activities

Pre-interview preparation

Know the Job and Organisation

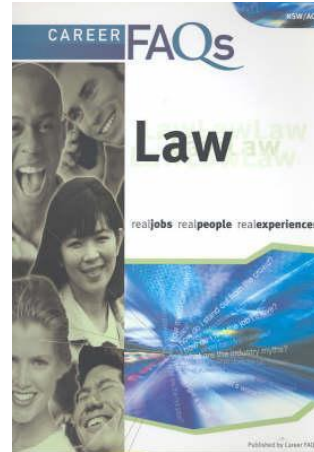
- Organisation: Structure, culture, values, recent developments.
- Job: purpose, criteria, daily duties, terminology
- Focus on the skills the employer states they want

Know and Critique Yourself

- Why do you want the job, & why in that organisation?
- Familiarise yourself with your resume, cover letter, application form
- What are your main selling points?

Know What to Expect

- One to one, panel, group
- Who is interviewing you? Names and roles?
- Face to Face/ Telephone/ Online/ On Campus
- Prepare questions for the interviewers/s

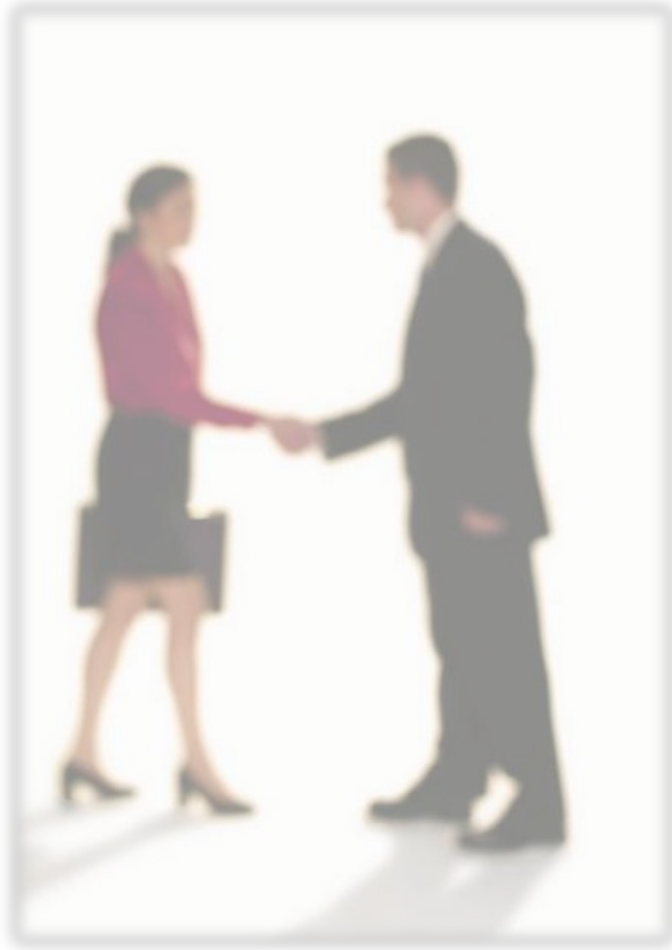


FACTIVA®

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First impressions count!



- Firm handshake
- Tone of voice
- Start the opening lines
- Body language
- Dress appropriately

Be confident.

Manage your nerves

- Use adrenalin to your advantage
- Practice LISTENING
- BREATHING techniques
- Modulated voice
- Remember that most interview situations are supportive
- Recognise and manage the physical symptoms
- Refer to your notes if it helps



Practice makes perfect

Practice typical questions

- Look at the samples on Careers Online
- Focus on the skills the employer states they want
- Highlight performance and achievements

Prepare questions for the interviewer/s

- About the role, responsibilities, challenges, training etc
- Do not ask about salary, benefits etc

Interview questions

Standard (open-ended) questions

Behavioural questions

Situational questions

Standard (open-ended) questions

General questions used as ice-breakers:

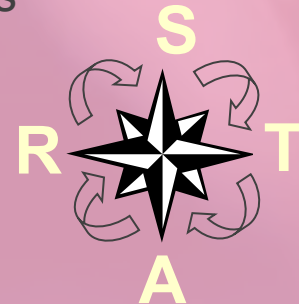
- What attracted you to apply to our organisation?
 - What are your strengths? And your weaknesses?
- Address the essential criteria
 - Focus on your achievements
 - Ask if you should expand on any of the points made, if you are worried that your answer may be too short

Behavioural questions

- Describe a complex problem you have solved recently.
- Have you been in any situations where you were required to perform as part of a team? What was the situation, what part did you play and what was the outcome?

- ✓ Choose relevant, recent and special examples
- ✓ Use the STAR Approach

Situation
Task
Action
Result



Sample behavioural answer

Where have you previously demonstrated high-level organisational skills?

- (S)** I have shown strong organisational skills as a project assistant while assisting a research team.
- (T)** One time, I helped the team to schedule some clinical trials.
- (A)** That involved booking facilities and equipment plus arranging for participants to attend. I developed a spreadsheet where I could record and track information.
- (R)** Doing this ensured the trials ran smoothly, despite the tight schedule. I was invited to join the team again when they received funding for a new project.

Ideas for demonstrating skills

Communication Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wrote 4 articles for the Blitz in 2011• Achieved HD for Counselling Psychology subject• Work as a Telephone counsellor at Lifeline	Team Work Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organised a harbour cruise for 150 members of the Psychology Society• UNSW Careers Expo volunteer
Time management Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regularly organised & chaired meetings for the Psychology Society• Worked as a Senior Peer Mentor and scheduled mentor shifts, training and allocated tasks	Customer Service <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer service employee of the month at McDonalds Feb & Mar 2012• Worked as a volunteer at CONTACT and regularly managed students enquiries
Leadership Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trained 6 new staff at McDonalds• Was a team leader with Yellow Shirts• Supervised 3 staff at in my role at KFC	Problem Solving Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Successfully found alternate venue for 150 members of the Psych Society when it rained on the day of the harbour cruise.

Situational questions

Hypothetical scenarios to see how you would respond.

- How would you handle a difficult customer if your boss was away?
 - Here is a problem we faced recently ... How would you have dealt with this?
- Understand how situational questions are developed
 - Take the time to think through your answer
 - Ask questions and make assumptions
 - Address WHAT you would do and WHY

Situational questions

Role Play:

“What would you do if you thought your supervisor gave incorrect information in a staff meeting?”

Situational questions

Interviewer: What would you do if you thought your supervisor gave incorrect information in a staff meeting?

Candidate: That's easy, I'd let him know he is wrong.

But of course, it depends on the information we are talking about. If it wasn't much of a big deal, then perhaps I can just let it go.

It may also depend on what kind of a situation we were in. If it is just a team meeting with us in a lab, then it doesn't really matter, does it?



‘How NOT to get the job.’

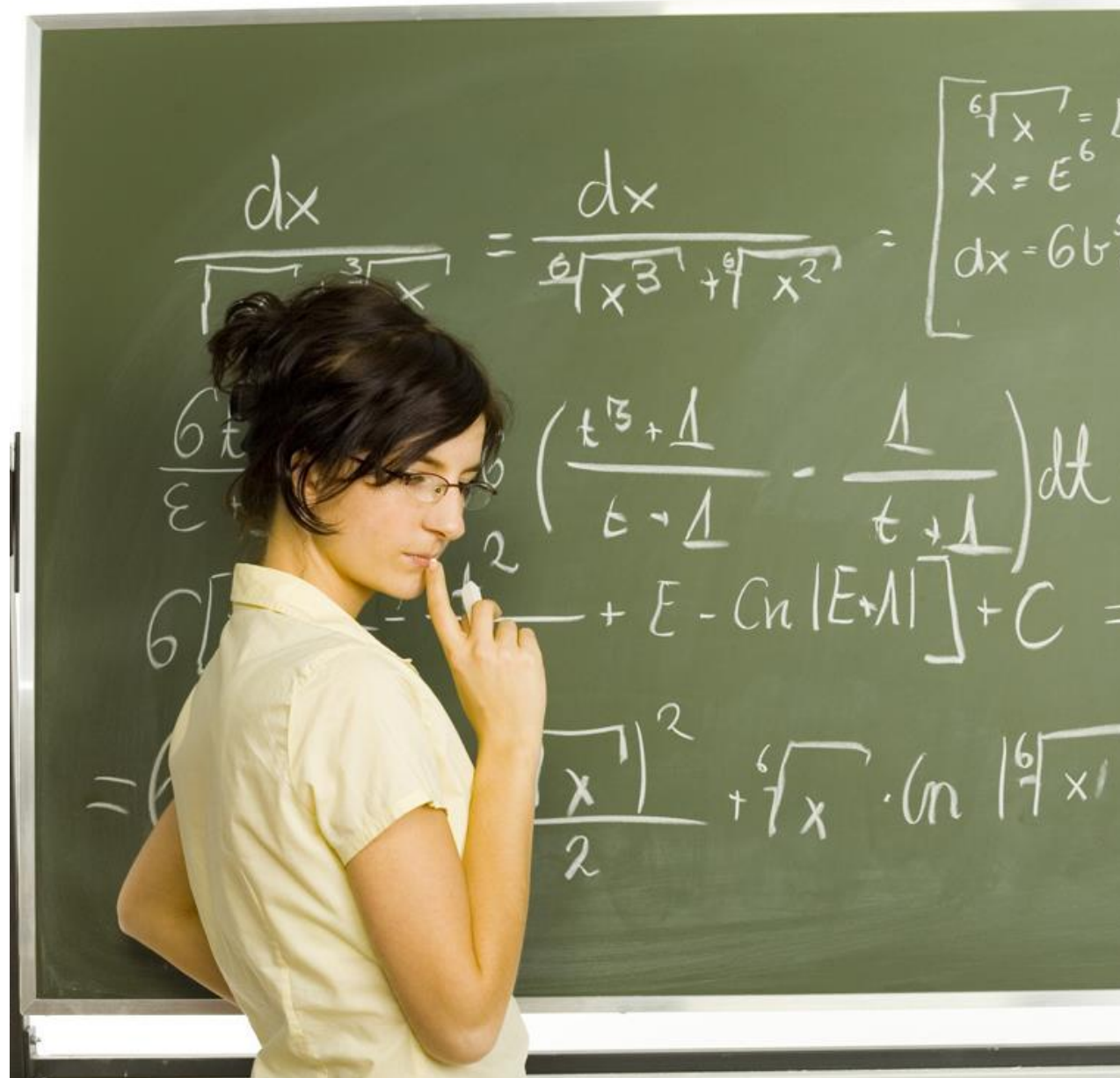
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p24r_-XcOFo

Sample interview questions

1. What would you do if an overseas client had difficulties understanding what you are saying over the phone?
2. Have you ever been responsible for the generation of new ideas or suggestions? Describe and explain.
3. What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
4. Describe how you have coped with a new or difficult situation?

Activity:

‘Practice makes perfect’



Your turn

1. Find a partner
2. Introduce yourself (name, degree, year, job you hope to apply for)
3. Decide who is A and who is B
4. You will spend 15 minutes interviewing each other

*Please take notes to give your candidate
feedback at the end of each interview*

Interviewer tips

Listen carefully, try and follow what your candidate is saying

Keep eye contact

Make notes through the interview:

- What did they do well?
- What could they improve for next time?
- Did they use the STAR technique?
- Did they 'market' themselves through highlighting their skills and achievements
- Did they sound interested in the position?
- Were they enthusiastic and positive?
- General impression of the candidate?

Re-ask any questions they need to work on following the feedback

Interviewer

Ask your partner the following:

- “Tell me a little about yourself.”
- “Why you are interested in working in Field”
- “Describe a time you worked in a team, what was your role, how did you contribute?”
- “What are your main strengths, and any weaknesses?”
- “Tell us about a time when you have used excellent interpersonal skills to help a customer or someone you are working with.”
- “Have you ever completed a project to strict deadlines? Describe how you managed your time effectively?”
- “What would you do if you made an error in a report and it had been sent to the client already?” (SITUATIONAL)
- “Why do you think we should hire you over other candidates?”

Questions for you to ask

- What attributes are you particularly looking for?
- What are some of the current projects being undertaken? What could my first project be?
- What do you see as the immediate goals of the position? How will you measure performance?
- Am I correct in saying that the position involves mediating between A and B departments and monitoring and developing new approaches to...?
- I'd like to ask about the organisational structure... are the publications produced on a national basis or individually by each regional office? How are budgets controlled and allocated?
- Would it be possible to meet with a recent graduate employee to find out a bit more about what would be expected in this role?

<i>Beware of...</i>	<i>Do...</i>
• <i>Being late!</i>	• Turn up 5-10 minutes early
• <i>Lack of preparation and research</i>	• Research the organisation/position!
• <i>Lack of enthusiasm</i>	• Be enthusiastic and confident!
• <i>Speaking poorly or too quietly, yes/no answers</i>	• Speak confidently, clearly and always elaborate/give examples
• <i>Concentrating on “What can you do for me?”</i>	• Concentrate on “What can I do for you?”
• <i>Saying no when asked “Any questions?”</i>	• Have questions prepared for the end of the interview
• <i>Being demanding with money and bonuses</i>	• Do some research about what someone with your background/experience could expect in terms of salary (as a range)
• <i>“Um” and “Uh”, “you know”, “sort of”, “like”</i>	• Speak clearly
• <i>Bad mouthing past employers</i>	• Focus on the positives of your last job
• <i>Interrupting the interviewer</i>	• Let the interviewer finish before you begin.

Curveball Questions and other tips

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qha6jjXKF8M>



Unethical questions

- race
- colour
- sex
- sexual orientation
- age
- physical or mental disability
- marital status
- family or carer's responsibilities
- pregnancy
- religion
- political opinion
- national extraction
- social origin

Source: <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/protections-at-work/protection-from-discrimination-at-work>

Tips for unethical questions

For example if you get asked: “Do you drink?”

You could try different approaches:

Humour

“I love to drink sprite and coffee!”

Rephrasing to answer the value

“I don’t drink but I love to network and socialise with my colleagues”

Challenging

“Could you please let me know how this question is relevant to the job/role”

Deflecting

“I would prefer not to answer this question” or
“My drinking preferences won’t affect my ability to complete this job”

Reporting

Let UNSW Careers know of your experience, read Fair Work regulations

Post interview activities

Constructive thinking

- Review and analyse what happened
- What went well/not so well and why?
- Use this for future reference

Follow-up action

- Quick call / Email to the interviewer
- Express your appreciation for their time
- Reinforce your interest and enthusiasm in the role in as few words as possible

Post-interview activities

What's Next?

Invitation to the next round

- Assessment day / centre
- Psychometric testing
- Skills testing
- Panel interviews

“Rejection” letter

- Use interview feedback to your advantage

In general

- Handshake is a measure of confidence
- Impressive when names are remembered
- Focus on what you can offer organisation
- Be positive
- Any questions? Use to market your skills and knowledge of organisation
- Remember to take any necessary documents with you

Questions?

What do we do?

- Career development courses
- Career planning with career development specialists
- Two annual Careers Expos
- Regular employer presentations
- Employability skills seminars
- Interview preparation
- Resume advice
- Online job search



Find us near the Basser Steps
Level 2, Quadrangle Building

Or online at:

careers.unsw.edu.au

For more career advice join us on:

