



Skillmax Resource Guide

THE JOB INTERVIEW



Contents

Welcome to Unit 7	5
Learning outcome F2	6
Trends in interviewing	7
Activity 1	7
Activity 2	8
Activity 3	9
What tone do I use in the interview?	10
Activity 4	11
How do the interviewers see the applicant?	12
Activity 5	12
What do interviewers want to know about me?	13
Activity 6	13
What questions will be asked in the interview?	14
Activity 7	14
Activity 8	14
10 questions that you can be asked at the interview	15
Activity 9	16
Activity 10	18
How do I respond to questions about my local experience?	18
How do I respond to questions about motivation?	19
Activity 11	19
How do I answer questions about my personal characteristics?	20
How do I respond to behavioural interview questions?	21
Activity 12	22

How do I deal with difficult questions?	24
Activity 13	24
What other questions can I expect?	25
Activity 14	26
Should I ask for clarification?	26
Activity 15	26
Obtaining information in a job interview	27
Activity 16	27
When is the best time to ask questions in an interview?	28
Activity 17	28
Can I ask about my salary in the interview?	30
Activity 18	30
How can I show interest in the organisation in the interview?	31
Activity 19	31
How do I make a decision about a job?	31
Activity 20	31
8 tips for successful interview preparation	
During the interview	32
Remember the following Dos and Don'ts	33
Closing the interview	34
After the interview	34
If I don't get the job	35
Activity 21	35
The mock-interview post-interview worksheet	36
Activity 22	37

Welcome to Unit 7

Unit 7 focuses on the job interview. You will examine different types of questions which you may be asked and which you should ask in the interview. The Unit explores your role as the interviewee.

Assessment

There is a formal assessment task in Unit 7.

You will participate in two mock interviews (Activity 21) in response to advertisements you selected in Unit 6. This gives you a chance to improve your interview performance. Your teacher will use the criteria listed in Learning Outcome F2 to assess your performance in the mock interviews.

Learning outcome: CSWE IV (E) F2

Participate in a job interview

Assessment criteria	Conditions and methods of assessment
<p>2.1 Participate effectively in a 10–15 minute interview for employment</p> <p>2.2 Respond appropriately to each stage of interview, eg pre-interview, opening questions and responses, closing</p> <p>2.3 Sustain dialogue, eg clarify, confirm repair, identify topic shifts, use appropriate paralinguistic features</p> <p>2.4 Recognise intent and type of questions, eg to elicit facts, to provide examples and to suggest solutions, and respond to these questions appropriately</p> <p>2.5 Present supporting documents at appropriate time</p> <p>2.6 Present information about self in an appropriate way</p> <p>2.7 Ask appropriate questions to seek additional information about the position or organisation</p> <p>2.8 Use appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures to setting and register</p> <p>2.9 Pronounce utterances intelligibly, ie so that delivery does not impede comprehension, or use strategies such as reformulation or repetition to clarify meaning</p> <p>2.10 Use pausing, stress and intonation to communicate meaning</p>	<p>Interview is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • face-to-face or on the telephone • a role play • relevant to advertised position • a minimum of 10 minutes in duration <p>Interviewer is fluent interlocutor</p> <p>Sample tasks</p> <p>Learners role play interviews for employment or voluntary work experience.</p> <p>Learners may role play interviews with the organisations researched in CSWE IV (E) F1: Prepare for a job interview.</p>

Trends in interviewing

Interview participation

You have now:

- researched information on Australian workplace culture
- learnt how to source job vacancies and interpret job advertisements
- developed effective telephone techniques
- reflected on your own work skills, employment history and personal attributes
- designed a current résumé and letter of application
- identified possible interview questions and practised appropriate responses

It is important that you understand the conventions of an Australian employment interview and what an Australian employer considers appropriate behaviour. Your non-verbal communication, dress and how you answer questions will influence the interviewer just as much as what you say about your experience and skills. Non-verbal communication or body language is a vital factor in an interview.

Activity 1

In a group discuss the following issues and questions concerning interviews in Australia.

- i Many researchers say that the first impression really counts. You never get a second chance to make a first impression. The impression that the applicant creates in the first few minutes is the most important of the whole interview.

How do you think applicants can create a good first impression?

- ii Non-verbal communication is said to convey a significant percentage of information in a conversation. During the interview the applicant needs to present themselves in a confident and enthusiastic manner.

What non-verbal communication is important in an interview?

- iii It is important for an applicant to sell themselves through the way they answer questions.

How can applicants sell themselves?

- iv Addressing the interviewer



What do you call the interviewer?

What non-verbal aspects of the interview should I think about?

Non-verbal communication is just as important during an interview as your answers.

Activity 2

- a Look at the sketches of two people below and write as many words as you can to describe their state of mind, their feelings and their body language.

Words	Person 1
<p>unconfident nervous not selling well</p>	
Words	Person 2
	

- b Discuss these questions with the class.

Would either of these people be successful in an interview?

What advice would you give them?

Activity 3

Under the following headings, write as many aspects of non-verbal communication as you can think of. The first one has been done for you. Discuss with the class.

i Greeting the receptionist or front-of-office staff

Remember the receptionist or front-of-office staff are often the eyes and ears of the company, so you need to be aware of the following non-verbal aspects while you are in the reception area.

- Make sure your greeting is appropriate for the time of day, eg: *Good morning, Good afternoon.*
- Smile and be polite.
- Remain calm while waiting in reception.

ii Greeting the recruitment consultant

Remember that a recruitment consultant is acting on behalf of the employer, so you need to ensure you create a positive first impression.

-
-
-

iii Greeting the employer

-
-
-

iv Appearance

-
-
-

v Personal space

-
-
-

vi Facial expressions

-
-
-

vii Listening

-
-
-

What tone do I use in the interview?

A crucial aspect of an interview is the tone you adopt in selling yourself. You need to be confident and informative when selling yourself and, most importantly, support positive statements about yourself with evidence.

What tone do I use in the interview?

Positive statement	Poor example of supporting evidence	Good example of supporting evidence
<p><i>I have extensive management experience leading and directing IT teams.</i></p> <p><i>As viewed on my résumé I have reduced costs and increased profits by 20% over the last year. This has led to my promotion to senior manager.</i></p>	<p><i>I can definitely say that during the last 3 years I have had progressively more responsible positions working with both large and small IT teams.</i></p> <p><i>These positions involved managing the teams in all aspects of their work.</i></p>	<p><i>My extensive management experience is demonstrated by my current position as Assistant Manager, Resource Development Branch where I am responsible for 85 staff. In this position I...</i></p>

Criterion: I have well-developed communication skills.

- I was required to communicate with a broad range of people in my last role, and did so very well. For example, in my last role as Team Leader, my well-developed communication skills were required on a day-to-day basis. I was required to deliver training courses to groups of up to 20 people, as well as negotiate with suppliers to source the best deals. My written communication skills were also a key requirement of this role, where I needed to write performance review reports on a monthly basis, as well as writing various training modules.

Criterion: I have excellent organisation and planning skills.

- My strong organisation and planning skills were demonstrated in my last role, as a Personal Assistant to a team of four consultants. Managing their diaries, as well as my own, required me to be constantly alert to upcoming events and also timeframes required for different projects and meetings. While employed in this position, I was also studying part time, so needed to coordinate my assignments and lectures with work, while also planning some time to relax as well!
- I have always been very organised and like to be in a role where I have the opportunity to help other people manage their day.

Activity 4

Find 3 criteria for a job you would like to apply for. Write a supporting statement using a relevant concrete example from your experience.

Criterion 1 _____

Supporting statement: _____

Criterion 2 _____

Supporting statement: _____

Criterion 3 _____

Supporting statement: _____

How do the interviewers see the applicant?

Activity 5

It is important to remember during an interview, that the interviewer is likely to form certain impressions about you, based on your actions and behaviours, as well as your answers to interview questions.

Read the interview situations and tick what the interviewers are likely to think about the applicant. You may tick more than one.

a A man arrives half an hour late for an interview, saying he couldn't find the place.

- ☐ That's not a problem. It wouldn't happen again.
- ☐ If it was true, he should have phoned to explain or ask directions.
- ☐ Maybe he is always late for work.

b A woman is interviewed for an IT position in a large organisation and arrives casually dressed and poorly groomed.

- ☐ Not a problem. We are interested in what she has to offer, not appearances.
- ☐ She has no idea about our organisation or the image we present to the public.
- ☐ Her work output may reflect her image.

c A woman is asked if she has had experience with certain computer programs. She answers: Of course I do.

- ☐ She is arrogant and rude.
- ☐ I don't believe her.
- ☐ If she could do these things she would have elaborated on her experience.

d At the end of the interview a man is asked if he is prepared to work at a level lower than his last job. He refuses.

- ☐ He has lots of confidence in his abilities.
- ☐ It must be easy for him to find a job elsewhere.
- ☐ We won't employ him because he is not flexible about working in a new situation.

What do interviewers want to know about me?

Activity 6

Interviewers sometimes ask: *What do you think of Australia so far?* What do they really want to know when they ask this question?

Tick your answer/s. Discuss with the class.

- ☐ Are you pretty familiar with the city now?
- ☐ Do you think it's a good place to live?
- ☐ Did you bring your family with you?
- ☐ Have you come across any obstacles in settling in?
- ☐ Do you plan to stay here long-term?
- ☐ Why did you leave your last job?
- ☐ Aren't you a bit over-qualified for this job?
- ☐ What are your hobbies and interests?
- ☐ Have you settled into the city yet?
- ☐ Did you have any trouble finding our office?

Adapted from Hogarth, W 1996. Job Focus. Sydney: NSW AMES

What questions will be asked in the interview?

In the job interview you will be asked a number of questions which aim to explore your suitability for the job.

Activity 7

Questions at the opening stage of the interview aim to relax the applicant. It is also important to remember however, that your answers to these questions form part of the first impression you create. Answers to these questions should be short and also positive. For instance, do not complain about the weather or traffic, if asked how your day has been so far, because you don't want the employer to form a first impression of you as a complainer.

Read the following statements and circle those that are positive responses.

- I had a very enjoyable weekend.
- I really enjoyed my last job.
- It took me forever to find a parking space.
- I have learnt so much since arriving in Australia.
- The weather has been terrible lately.
- I got very lost on the way here.
- I really don't like the rain.
- I love the view from this office.

Activity 8

- a Read the following list of questions that are often asked in an interview and what the interviewer may be looking for in your answers.
- b After reading the list, practise with a partner, answering these questions. Ask your teacher to listen to your responses after you have practised them and role play with a partner to the class.

10 questions that you can be asked at the interview

1. SO, TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

This question is a great opportunity to sell yourself for the position. The interviewer may use it to assess your personality, preparation, communication skills and ability to think on your feet. When answering this question, remember to outline your strengths (supporting them with positive evidence and linking them to the requirements of the position).

2. HOW DO YOU FIND AUSTRALIA?

You will often be asked an opening question similar to this. The most important thing to remember is to answer positively. For example, *I'm really enjoying it here. The weather is great and I think Sydney is a well-situated city.*

3. WHY DID YOU LEAVE YOUR LAST JOB?

Respond positively – for better career advancement or promotion opportunities, increased variety or greater responsibility.

4. WHY DO YOU WANT TO DO THIS JOB/WORK FOR THIS COMPANY?

Use this question as an opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge of the company and re-emphasise your suitability for the role.

5. WHY SHOULD WE HIRE YOU FOR THIS ROLE?

This is yet another opportunity to sell yourself into the position. Remember to support your positive statements with evidence and relate your strengths to the requirements of the role.

6. WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE YOUR WEAKNESSES?

An honest answer to this question demonstrates a good level of self-awareness. At the same time, you can turn this question into a positive. For example, think of something that relates to your experience and is plausible as a weakness, but is not really a negative point. For example, *I am very particular about detail.* You should also be sure to mention what you have done/are currently doing to address or improve your weaknesses.

7. WHAT DID YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT YOUR LAST JOB?

This is another opportunity to let the employer know that you are well suited to the vacant job. Be sure to provide a list of things you enjoyed about your last job, that relate strongly to, or would be relevant to the job on offer.

8. TELL ME ABOUT A TIME THAT YOU WERE ASKED TO COMPLETE A NUMBER OF DEADLINES WITHIN A SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME?

This question is asking you about your ability to multi-task and complete deadlines.

9. WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN 5 YEARS TIME?

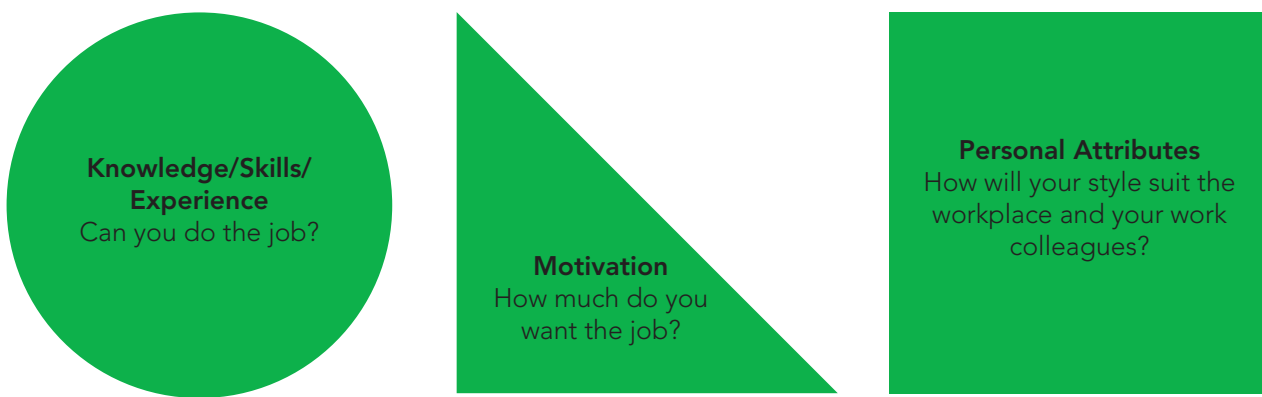
This question may be asked as a test of your commitment and loyalty to the company and the job. You should demonstrate that your long-term goals are appropriate for the position on offer, and your career goals are in line with opportunities within the organisation.

10. DO YOU WORK WELL UNDER PRESSURE?

Again, answer positively and provide supporting evidence. For example, you may wish to provide an example of a time you maintained effective performance under pressure.

Activity 9

While the opening of an interview is certainly important in creating a positive first impression, when interviewers are making decisions regarding the best person for the job, they will generally consider 3 key areas. Discuss the following with the class:



Throughout the selection process and indeed during the interview, an employer will be seeking answers to these 3 questions, so it is important you have information and responses ready to sell yourself in each of these 3 areas. We will now look at each of these 3 key areas and likely questions you could be asked in the interview.

How do I answer questions regarding my knowledge, skills and experience?

In interviews you are usually asked to talk about your previous experience. The following techniques will help you to appear competent and positive.

- a Talk only about experience which is relevant to the advertised position.
- b Use appropriate language (action words as used in your résumé are particularly good when answering interview questions).

UNIT 7: THE JOB INTERVIEW

Examples:

I experienced success by _____

I was responsible for _____

I was promoted to _____

My work involved _____

My responsibilities included _____

I have considerable experience in/with _____

I have wide experience in/with _____

I am familiar with _____

c Sequence the information in a way that is easy to understand eg: give a summary and then details.

Examples:

Summary: I have six years experience as an accountant in the field of finance management and four years as an auditor.

Details: While working with the Inland Revenue in Shanghai, I was responsible for supervising accounts payable and receivable, payroll and petty cash, liaising with clients and supervising and preparing financial reports.

Summary: I have three years experience working as a Senior Program Analyst in a large company in Mumbai and two years as a Programmer in a smaller company.

Detail: In Mumbai I was responsible for developing, maintaining and enhancing the systems architecture to enable the delivery of leading media e-learning initiatives. The role also involved working with other members of the team including graphic designers and web developers.

d Give yourself time to think

Don't be afraid of silences, a pause is quite normal when you are thinking. Here are some expressions that can be used in an interview situation when you need some time to think.

Well now, let me see ...

I'll have to think about that for a minute ...

Well, let me put it this way ...

What I would do is ...

Well, actually ...

As a matter of fact ...

Activity 10

- a Find an appropriate job advertisement in the newspaper and make some notes about your previous work experience relevant to the position.
- b With a partner practise answering the question: *Could you tell me what relevant experience you have for this position?*

How do I respond to questions about my local experience?

The interviewer may ask you about your local experience, with questions such as:

- Have you had any local experience?
- Have you worked in Australia?
- Do you think your English would be a problem?

The interviewers will ask questions about local experience because employers are concerned about whether:

- the level of technology you used in your country is higher, lower or different to that used in Australia
- you will fit in and be able to work as part of a team
- you are aware of Australia's culturally diverse workplace
- you will be able to communicate effectively on the job

If you haven't had local experience, try to answer the question in a positive way which will demonstrate your potential. For example:

- I'm aware of the differences in Australia. For example... but I'm flexible, and a quick learner (remember to support this with evidence!)
- In my country English is the language we use for business so I am confident in speaking English in the workplace.
- I have worked in... where I had to be flexible and adapt to different conditions and cultures so I know I can do it in Australia. For example in my office there were.....

How do I respond to questions about motivation?

Motivation is a desire to achieve a goal, and to utilise all your positive energy to work towards that goal.

Activity 11

Read the following questions you may be asked by an employer to understand your motivation. Work with a partner to answer the questions.

- What did you enjoy most/least about your last job?

- When were you most satisfied/dissatisfied in your last job?

- Tell us about a time you sacrificed something in your personal life for work. How satisfied were you with that?

- Describe a job or task that lacked challenge in your last job. What was your feeling about the job or task and why?

- What are your long-term goals?

- How do you see this position contributing to your longer-term goals?

- When working on projects how do you prefer to work with others?

- What things need to be present for you to be happy at work?

- What was your greatest achievement in your last role? Why was this a proud moment?

How do I answer questions about my personal characteristics?

Remember the key question you need to answer here is: *If you are doing the job, HOW will your personality suit the environment and other people you will be working with?*

When deciding questions to ask in this area, interviewers generally have a number of competencies that are considered important for success on the job. Competencies can be defined as a *collection of skills or behaviours* and are usually measured through behavioural interview questions. When answering these questions, you therefore need to provide examples of specific behaviours you have demonstrated in the past, that demonstrate your competence in that particular area. Example competencies and associated behaviours that interviewers might be looking for include:

Competency	Behaviours
Team work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – volunteers to help others – listens to others – participates in team meetings
Problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – identifies the cause of a problem – seeks help when required – considers alternative approaches – generates creative solutions
Planning and organising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – keeps a to do list or diary – pays attention to detail – anticipates potential problems
Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – handles problems with limited guidance – can make decisions without referral to others – acts without being prompted

Job descriptions or advertisements will often include competencies that are important for the role. Reviewing these competencies is a useful way for you to predict possible questions you could be asked. You can then prepare for the interview, by thinking through examples from your previous experience, where you have demonstrated these behaviours.

How do I respond to behavioural interview questions?

Your interview will include many behavioural questions. You will remember that these questions are designed to identify behaviours from the past, as a way to predict how you might likely behave in similar situations in the future.

When asked a behavioural question, it is important to think of specific examples from your past that could demonstrate some of the competencies above. Ideally they should be positive examples.

Remember you can use examples from work or from positions of responsibility, like being involved in a committee or captain of a soccer team. You will remember that these questions aim to identify behaviours that you align with success as well as the competencies that drive your success. Remember that competencies are your capabilities, skills, traits and talents that make up your behaviour.

There are more than 40 competencies that are in demand by employers. Here are some from that list:

- ✓ Initiative and decision making – to visualise as well as achieve goals
- ✓ Teamwork – being a constructive team member; contributing to its success
- ✓ Self-awareness – your strengths and skills
- ✓ Problem solving – to identify and find solutions; may require thinking outside of the square
- ✓ Leadership – to motivate and take a leading role
- ✓ Confidence and motivation – to communicate across all levels
- ✓ Planning and organising
- ✓ Commitment and dedication and a desire to ask relevant questions
- ✓ Business awareness – understanding profits and losses and budgets
- ✓ Previous work experience

Activity 12

Read the following questions and select those questions which you think you could be asked in an interview. Think through your previous experience to identify specific examples you could use to answer the questions in an interview.

Competency	Question	Your example(s)
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tell us about one of the most difficult team meetings you've ever had. What made it difficult? What did you do? – Relationships with co-workers are not always perfect. Tell us about the most difficult relationship you've ever had with a peer or team member. Why was the relationship difficult? – What did you do to improve the situation? – What contribution do you make to a team? – Please provide a specific example. 	
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Can you tell us about a time when you have needed to communicate an unpopular decision to staff? How did you do it? What resistance did you meet? How did you manage this? – How have you gone about ensuring a high level of motivation in your team? – How successful have you been? – What has been the most significant change you have influenced in the work environment? – How did you identify the need for this change? – How did you implement the change? – What was the end result? 	

Problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What has been the most complex problem you have encountered in the work environment? - How did you go about solving it? How successful were you? In hindsight, what would you have done differently? - What is the toughest decision you have needed to make? What process did you use when making the decision? In hindsight, would you have done things differently? 	
Planning and organising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you tell me about a time when you felt you had to juggle a number of tasks to achieve your outcome? What specifically did you do? - What was the result? - How do you schedule your time? How do you keep track of what you have to do each day/week? - Can you describe a particularly busy time when you put this approach into practice? What was the end result? - Tell me about the most complex project you have had to plan or co-ordinate. How did you manage it? - What would you do differently next time? - What did you learn? 	
Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describe something you have done to make your job easier or more satisfying? How did you implement it? What was the impact? - Give me an example of when you had to work without any guidance. Why was this? How did you cope? What feedback did you receive? - Describe an occasion when you took responsibility for making a key decision. What was your decision? How and why did you defend your position? What was the possible impact of a poor decision? 	

How do I deal with difficult questions?

In an interview it is important not to say anything negative about yourself or your previous employer. Therefore if you are asked a difficult question, try to answer it in a positive way. In this way you will convince the interviewers that you are the right person for the job and address any concerns.

Activity 13

a Tick the correct answer:

If you are unable to answer a specific question you should:

- ☐ ignore the question
- ☐ admit your ignorance
- ☐ make a guess at the answer

b Read this list of difficult questions:

- ☐ Why do you want this job?
- ☐ Describe your ideal work environment
- ☐ I see you've been unemployed for twelve months. What have you been doing?
- ☐ The workers here are much younger and you are very experienced, don't you think it will be a bit hard for you to work with these people?
- ☐ In your view, what are the major problems and opportunities facing this industry/company?
- ☐ What will you do if you don't get this job?
- ☐ Why have you been out of work for so long?
- ☐ How could your previous boss improve their management style?

Work with a partner to write two more difficult questions which might be asked.

i _____

ii _____

c Work with your partner and discuss how you could answer these questions. Share your discussion with the class.

What other questions can I expect?

In a job interview you need to be prepared for multiple questions or topical questions.

MULTIPLE QUESTIONS

These are questions containing more than one question eg:

How has the industry/your job changed in the last three years, how have you managed the changes and what are the implications for the future?

Notice there are actually three questions in one. There are two strategies to apply to such questions:

- a **Listen carefully for key words or the gist of the question.**
- b **Seek clarification or ask for the question to be rephrased, if necessary. It is not your fault that you have not understood the question. In fact part of being a good interviewer is avoiding asking multiple questions!**

TOPICAL QUESTIONS

Human Resource Managers, Personnel Managers and Recruitment Consultants are trained to discover what they can about you. So many ask about what you do in your free time and your hobbies and interests. However, occasionally candidates for a job may be asked questions that are topical. For example, if you work in the following fields you may be asked these topical questions:

The oil industry	What are your ideas on the Greenhouse Effect?
Government organisations	What are your thoughts on privatisation in government organisations?
The retail industry	How has the economic downturn affected retail?
Pharmaceutical industry	How do you feel about the use of animals for research?

It is important to be honest when answering these questions. Remember there is no point trying to present yourself as having similar values or opinions to the interviewer, if this is really not how you feel. In the end, you wouldn't want to work for an organisation that has vastly different values to yourself on key issues.

Activity 14

- a Write an answer to the question: *How has the industry/your job changed in the last three years, how have you managed the changes and what are the implications for the future?* Make your answer applicable to your own situation.
- b With a partner, predict and discuss topical questions which may be asked in relation to your field.

Should I ask for clarification?

Sometimes you might not be sure if you have understood the interviewer. It is very important to check that you have understood. If you misunderstand a question and answer it incorrectly, the misunderstanding may not be picked up by the interviewer who may instead think you just don't know the answer.

Activity 15

- a Form a small group:
- b Discuss these questions about social situations:
 - i What can you say when you don't understand what is said to you?
 - ii What can you say when you think you understand the other person but you want to check?
 - iii What can you say when you want to check that the listener understands you?
 - iv What can you say when you don't understand what a word or an abbreviation means?
- c Discuss these questions about interview situations:
 - i What can you say when you haven't understood one of the questions?
 - ii What can you say when you would like to check your understanding of a question?
 - iii What can you say when you want to check that you are answering a question appropriately?

d In your group discuss how you could clarify the idiomatic expressions in these questions. The idiomatic expressions are in bold.

- How do you overcome **hurdles**?
- Do you **get rattled** easily?
- **How do you find** Australia?
- We run a **pretty tight ship** around here. How do you reckon you'd **measure up**?
- We're **pretty laid back** around here. How do you think you'd fit in?
- Do you get **bogged down** in your work?
- Do you get stressed when you are **snowed under**?
- Have you ever been at **loggerheads** with your fellow team members?
- As a manager how do you handle a worker who is not **up to the mark**?

Obtaining information in a job interview

Should I ask any questions?

Activity 16

a Tick the correct answers below:

i When talking about the company, it is better to:

- ☐ ask lots of questions
- ☐ show your knowledge
- ☐ avoid detail

ii In order to impress the interviewer, it is best to:

- ☐ have some prepared answers which you can reel off when the opportunity presents itself
- ☐ avoid any gaps in the conversation which might be interpreted as a lack of communication skills by saying the first thing that comes into your head
- ☐ listen carefully to the questions and tailor your answers to fit them

iii When you need to provide a referee or reference, it is best to give:

- ☐ the name of your immediate boss or supervisor
- ☐ the name of the highest placed person known to you in your current or last workplace
- ☐ the name of a colleague or peer

iv At the end of an interview, it is a good idea to ask questions:

- ☐ to show your interest in the position
- ☐ to get more information about the position
- ☐ about how well you performed in the interview

b Discuss your answers with the class.

When is the best time to ask questions in an interview?

The end of the interview is signalled by the interviewers. They can do this in two ways:

I NON VERBALLY

An interviewer can signal the end by getting up and walking to the door. If this happens, don't try to prolong the interview.

II VERBALLY

An interviewer may say the following:

- That's all the questions we have for you ...
- We will be making our decision by the end of the week ...
- That's all we need to ask you at the moment, there may be a second interview. If you are to go on to this stage we will let you know.
- Thank you for coming ...
- Thank you for your interest in our company/organisation ...

Activity 17

At the end of the interview you may be asked: *Do you have any questions for us?*
Or you may have the opportunity to ask: *Could I possibly ask a few questions?*

a The following questions are suitable for you to ask at the end of the interview:

- What career pathways exist in the company?
- When can I expect to hear from you about your decision?
- Is this a new position?
- Can you tell me about your orientation or induction process?
- Can you tell me about your performance reviews and evaluation procedures?
- Can you tell me more about the team?
- What opportunities are offered around ongoing training?

UNIT 7: THE JOB INTERVIEW

The order in which you ask questions, tells the interviewer a lot about your motivation for the job.

b Compare these two lots of questions. What do you think the interviewer is likely to think about each candidate's motivation for the job?

Candidate A	Candidate B
What is the salary on offer?	Can you tell me why the position is available?
How many weeks holiday do I get?	Can you tell me more about the team?
How much sick leave is available?	What training will be available?
Do you provide hot meals?	
Are you right on the train line?	
Do you have mufti day?	

Many interviewers don't like to be asked: *What are my chances of getting this position? Can I call you to find out if I got the job by the end of the week?*
Instead, it may be better to ask questions such as:

- Have I answered all of your questions?
- Are there any areas you feel I could give more information on?
- Will I be provided with feedback?

c Work with a partner to list some other questions you could ask at the end of an interview.

Check their suitability with your teacher.

It is a good idea to write out a list of questions you would like to ask during the interview. It is OK to bring this with you to the interview, to ensure you do not forget anything you want to ask. Remember, that each question you ask indicates something about you, as does the order in which you ask the questions.

The interviewer will be looking for someone who is likely to **WANT** to do the job, so questions relating to job satisfaction are good to ask (eg: *What would I be doing on a day-to-day basis*, or *Can you tell me more about the team I would be working with?*). It is best to leave all questions about conditions, hours and pay until last. To show you really want the position, you could also ask when the interviewer/ employer will be making a decision, and how you will find out.

Can I ask about my salary in the interview?

If you do not know the pay or salary by all means ask, but leave it until last. Make it clear that you are more interested in the job. Often it is advisable to accept the salary offered. Most companies have a trial period and you can renegotiate your salary after the trial period. Public service advertisements usually state the salary range. Your offer will depend on qualifications and experience.

While it is often best to avoid asking about salary in the first interview, you do need to be able to answer the question if asked. This shows an interviewer that you have done some research and are familiar with relevant jobs in your industry. Alternatively, you may choose to ask the interviewer what range they are considering for the role. If they do not provide this information, and you are asked about your salary expectations, it is best to provide a salary range you would be willing to accept. Remember to be realistic about this. Don't aim too high for what is required in the job and don't aim too low (ie: below an amount that you would be happy with over the long-term).

Activity 18

Form a group with people from the same area of expertise and discuss how you would answer or avoid the questions listed below.

- How much are you worth?
- What did you earn in your last job?
- What do you think we should pay you?
- What salary do you expect?
- We are offering a low salary – are you prepared to accept \$..?
- How much do you expect per hour?
- The award/basic wage for this job is \$... Are you prepared to work for this amount?

How can I show interest in the organisation in the interview?

Each workplace has its own culture. When you are invited to an interview it is helpful if you understand something about the culture of the organisation where you wish to be employed. A visit to the workplace, a telephone call to the Human Resources Manager and reading the annual report or a company newsletter may help you understand more.

Activity 19

Work in a small group to list questions which will show your interest in the organisation and the job.

How do I make a decision about a job?

After you have had an interview you will have some ideas as to whether you wish to work for the company. You will have had time to assess the people who interviewed you and know if you will fit into the organisation. The final decision is up to you.

In spite of wanting a job it is not a good idea to take a position where you know you will find it difficult to get on with those who will supervise you. If it is a short-term role (ie: temporary or contract), you may be best to accept it, particularly if you do not have any local experience or have found it difficult to find work.

Think of the idiomatic expression – *A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush*. In other words, take the job if it is offered, it may be a while before you get another offer.

Activity 20

Discuss this question with the class.

Should I take any job that is offered?

8 tips for successful interview preparation

1. Research the company and familiarise yourself with relevant facts and figures, products and services the company offers.
2. Check interview details including time, location, what you need to bring with you and who you'll be meeting.
3. Check the location and how you will get there; knowing how long it will take, where you can park, or which train station or bus stop is closest.
4. Refresh your memory regarding important facts and figures of your employment history. Think about your greatest achievements so far in both your work and personal life, and prepare for general questions the interviewer may ask (and how you can use each of them to sell yourself). Possible questions could include:
Tell me about yourself.
What value have you added to your most recent employer?
What are your career goals?
Describe your ideal next role.
Describe the environment in which you wish to work.
5. Understand the key competencies or selection criteria for the role and possible questions you might be asked. Think about examples from your history you could use as supporting evidence.
6. Practise. You could role play with a friend, or even practise answering questions to yourself in the mirror! Remember to practise the pronunciation of the name of the person you will be meeting with.
7. Consider your dress and remember first impressions count. Dress conservatively (a good tip is to dress one notch better for the interview than would be expected of you on the job). Look your best and pay attention to details such as clean and polished shoes, groomed fingernails and tidy hair.
8. Plan to arrive early so you have time to relax before the interview. It is normal to feel nervous – try to relax by taking a few deep breaths.

During the interview

1. Remember the interview isn't just about questions and answers. It starts from the moment you meet the interviewer(s) until the moment you say *goodbye*. Your positive attitude, appearance and body language are critical to that first impression.
2. When being introduced to someone:
greet the interviewer confidently and shake their hand firmly
smile and keep eye contact with the interviewer.

3. Be prepared to give articulate and clear answers to the questions you are asked. When answering questions use action words such as *achieved, managed, improved*.
4. Avoid negative statements. For example, instead of saying *I have only been in Australia for 8 months and don't really have much experience here*, you could say *I have considerable experience from overseas... and since arriving here I have completed the... training program which has given me... skills*.

Remember the following Dos and Don'ts:

DO arrive at your interview a couple of minutes early if possible. Being late for an interview, even if only slightly, is never acceptable and will usually ruin your chances right there and then.

DO greet your interviewer with a firm handshake and good eye contact.

DO wait until you are offered a chair before you sit down. Sit upright and maintain good, positive eye contact throughout the interview. This will show that you are listening keenly.

DO listen carefully. Be sure to give direct and relevant answers to the interviewer's questions. Giving irrelevant answers, no matter how brilliant, will not help you.

DO show enthusiasm. With interview nerves, it is easy to forget this crucial point. Take a deep breath, be conscious of your whole body language, and be keen and interested throughout the interview.

DO be honest. Answer questions truthfully, succinctly and as close to the point as possible.

DO use the questions as an opportunity to sell yourself to the interviewer. Use your answers to highlight your strengths and your suitability for the role.

DO show maturity, a clear well-spoken manner and confidence in your own ability! Remember, you're there to show that you're the best person for the job.

DON'T ask about salary, fringe benefits, holidays, bonuses or the like. This may be appropriate later on in the process, but not in a first interview. If you are applying for the job through a recruitment agency, ask your consultant for advice.

DON'T give one word answers like a simple Yes or No. Explain yourself in some detail and give evidence to support your responses.

DON'T ramble on too much when asked a question. Even though you need to provide informative answers, you can go overboard.

DON'T speak negatively about anything if you can avoid it, especially past employers.

Closing the interview

Show you are keen and inquisitive by asking some questions when given the opportunity. Some examples may include:

- How has this vacancy come about?
- How would you describe the culture of your company?
- Can you tell me about your training and induction program?
- What are the company's growth plans for the future?
- What will be the next step from here?

If you are offered the position on the spot and you feel comfortable with the offer, say yes!

If you are not ready to make a decision, request some time from the interviewer and commit to a definite time by which you will give an answer.

Even if the interviewer doesn't give you much indication of your chances in getting the role (often they won't), don't be discouraged. Simply thank the interviewer and restate your interest in the position.

Thank the interviewer for their time and depart with another firm handshake.

After the interview

Take a deep breath and relax! You've given it your best and now it's a matter of waiting for the outcome.

If you have applied for the position through a recruitment consultant, they would like to hear from you to understand how the interview went.

You may also like to complete an *after-interview checklist* to rate your own performance and identify possible ways you could do even better next time.

POST-INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

- ☐ Were you punctual?
- ☐ Was your dress/grooming appropriate?
- ☐ Did you speak clearly and confidently?
- ☐ Did you show genuine enthusiasm in getting the job?
- ☐ Did you provide supporting evidence when selling yourself?
- ☐ Were there any questions that concerned you?
- ☐ Did you maintain eye contact?
- ☐ Did you mention your major strengths as they relate to the role (and provide supporting evidence)?
- ☐ Did you ask all the questions you intended to?
- ☐ Did you summarise why you wanted the job and why you would be good at it?
- ☐ Did you establish when the hiring decision would be made and who would contact you?

If I don't get the job

Even if you aren't successful in an interview, make sure you take the opportunity to use it as a learning experience. Try to remain positive and think about these points:

- Ask the interviewer for feedback on how you can improve your interview performance for next time.
- Talk to others in your situation.
- Keep trying – the next job you apply for could be the one for you.
- Remember the more interviews you attend, the easier it gets.
- Ask the interviewer to keep your details on file for any future opportunities.

Activity 21

The mock interview

You are now ready for a series of mock interviews which will be conducted with your Class Partner/Teacher/Recruiter/HR Manager/Hiring Manager.

Use the job advertisements you selected in Unit 6 or you have selected this Unit.

The role play will be a minimum of ten minutes duration and may comprise:

- a panel interview
- group interview (often used for bulk recruitment where several positions are being selected)
- a one-to-one interview.

The interview will be recorded on a digital DVD camera and then replayed for the class to review. Constructive feedback will be provided. There will be an opportunity to repeat the interview. As part of the feedback complete the post-interview worksheet below and discuss in groups.

Prepare a mock interview with the following components:

1. a copy of the advertisement for the job that you are applying for
2. an analysis of the essential and desirable criteria
3. information from your research into the company
4. a covering letter suited to the advertised position
5. a résumé suited to the advertised position

Make an appointment for an interview with your Teacher/Recruiter/HR Manager/other Hiring Managers and note the details below:

Interview is on: _____

On level: _____

At: _____ o'clock

Your interviewer is: _____

The mock-interview post-interview worksheet

Interview content	Self assessment	Class assessment	Teacher/ Recruiter/HR/ assessment
Punctuality			
Greeting			
Grooming and presentation			
Body language and facial expression			
Confident manner & positive attitude			
Presented documents at required time			
Tone of voice, use of vocabulary, pausing, and intonation			
Responses to questions asked			
Sought clarification if required			
Ability to ask appropriate questions			
Ability to provide concrete examples related to job history and skill set			
Conveyed understanding of the position advertised			
Demonstrated knowledge of the company			
Asked relevant & appropriate questions			
Confirmed follow-up from the interview			
Concluded interview appropriately Gave hand shake to the interviewer & made eye contact			

Activity 22

You have attended the interview as role played in Activity 21. Two weeks later you receive a letter or phone call to inform you that your job application was not successful.

1. For class members who have had unsuccessful job interviews, what reactions did you experience? How did you manage this situation? What advice would you offer other job applicants?
2. Are there any lessons to gain from the interview experience?
3. Can you approach the employer and ask for feedback? If so write a list of possible questions to ask.
4. Consider your strategy if the employer or consultant chooses not to provide feedback.
5. Discuss as a class.