

Interview Skills

The interview is your chance to talk about the information you provided in your application. It is your opportunity to make a positive impression and show the employer you are the perfect person for the role.

Preparing for an interview

- Read over the job advert, job description and person specification. Have examples ready that demonstrate you have the key skills and attributes they are looking for
- Review the information you gave them in your application and consider the questions they might ask you. Think about what you want to tell them about yourself
- Use their website and social media platforms to investigate their core values and beliefs. Research examples of their recent work to generate questions you could ask them
- First impressions count. Think carefully about what you are going to wear
- Plan your journey. Make sure you know exactly where you need to be and know how you are going to get there. Leave yourself plenty of time so you give yourself time to relax
- If you have been asked to deliver a presentation make sure you take a back-up on a USB
- Practise answering questions. Use real experiences to describe your skills and attributes

Types of interview

Face-to-Face – the most common form of interview. These involve being questioned on your suitability for the job by an individual or panel.

Telephone - these are often used by large employers in the initial round of the application process, they usually last around 30 minutes.

Video - Video interviews can be live or pre-recorded and usually last around half an hour.

Assessment Centres – these allow employers to compare the performance of a large number of candidates and usually involve tasks such as presentations, team exercises and psychometric tests.

Group Interviews - Candidates are observed and compared together. The interviewer assesses each person's contribution and judges their interaction as part of a group.

Interview Questions

Competency-based questions

Competency questions focus on the main skills an employer is looking for such as, time management, team working, and planning so consider examples and experiences where you can illustrate these. Examples might be: Describe an occasion where you had to achieve a task within a short deadline or tell me about a time when you have dealt with an angry or distressed person.

Scenario-based questions

A scenario-based question asks you to explain how you would respond in a hypothetical situation. This type of question is used to assess how you approach, prioritise, and respond to tasks, so it is important to give logical and well considered answers. Think about the key topics that are relevant to the job role, or subject area of your course. You can plan generic answers to these questions.

Strength-based questions

These are used to find out what you are good at and what you enjoy doing. They don't just have to be related to school or employment. Your interests tell a lot about you too. An example might be: What is your favourite interest outside of work or education?

How to answer effectively

- Listen carefully to the question and consider what is being asked
- Where possible use your own experiences as examples and relate them to the question
- Speak clearly and concisely. Think about the tone and speed of your voice and never use any inappropriate language. Keep your response structured and relevant
- Be prepared to follow up and expand on any of the points you raise

The STAR technique

The STAR technique provides a model for structuring your answers:

- S** Situation – set the scene and describe where, when, and who you were with
- T** Task – describe what you were asked to do and outline any challenges you encountered
- A** Action – outline what you did and explain and why you resonded in that way
- R** Result – what did you achieve, what was positive about the outcome, how did you feel?

At the end of interview

Having questions for the employer will show you are really passionate about the position and working for the company. You could ask for more details about the day-to-day responsibilities of the role, the opportunities for training and progression and the long term plans for the company.

Do not be afraid to contact the interviewer for feedback. They should be happy to provide constructive advice on what you did well and may highlight any areas for development.

Sources of further help and support:

<https://staidans.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Top-tips-for-job-interviews-2.pdf>
<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/interview-tips>
<https://www.ucas.com/careers/getting-job/how-prepare-interview>

Please contact the Careers Department at careersstaff@staidans.co.uk if you would like individual information, advice and guidance or would like to arrange a mock interview– we are happy to help.

Careers Department
St. Aidan's and St John Fisher Associated Sixth Form
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