

Prepare for Interview

Employers understand that you might not have much interview experience. But, they will expect you to prepare well, in advance of the interview. Do your homework in the following key areas to maximize your chances of success:

Know yourself well

The interview will be based on the content of your CV, so make sure you can talk about everything in it.

Know the skills and abilities you have to offer an employer. You spent time looking at these [transferable skills \[ppt\]](#) when you were writing up your CV. Also, know the personal qualities you have that will appeal to an employer.

The job description gives the required skills, so have practical examples ready to show that you have the skills they are looking for. For example, if the required skill is 'Must be a good team player', your example might be 'I've been playing basketball with my local club for the past six years and I show I'm a good team player by...'

Research the company

Employers expect you to know about their company and it shows you are interested in them and in the job they have available.

- Scrutinize the job description and know what it involves.
- Visit the company website and read up on any new developments.
- Research the internet for any articles about the company or its competitors.
- Keep an eye on the business pages of the daily papers.
- Read the Work Summaries, written by students who were with the company in the past. Meet these students if you can.

Anticipate Questions

It is impossible to predict all questions that you might be asked, but there are typical questions which you can prepare for.

The employer wants to find out about you and about your interest in the job and the company. They also want concrete evidence that you have the skills or competencies they are looking for. Many questions will be 'competency-based', where you will be expected to give practical examples to show that you have the required skills.

So, questions are usually based around three main areas - yourself, your interest in the company and the job and your suitability for the job.

These [sample interview questions \[doc\]](#) cover all three areas, so make sure you can answer any of those listed below. For specific questions that are relevant to your course, talk to your Placement Officer.

Do practice interviews

No matter how confident you are, it is a good idea to do a few practice interviews, so you can hear yourself answer questions out loud. Get a classmate to do one with you and you can return the favour!

If you would like one-to-one advice about your interview technique, your Placement Manager will organise a mock interview for you.

Remember, practice makes perfect!

Dress to Impress

First impressions count, so it is essential to dress well for interview. It is not always necessary to wear a formal suit, but if you have one, wear it. Alternatively, you must dress appropriately as described below.

- Males must wear a shirt and tie and smart trousers, smart jacket optional
- Females must wear a shirt and smart trousers or skirt, smart jacket optional
- Formal suit is compulsory for interviews with banks
- Footwear must be formal shoes only
- Strictly no denims, sweatshirts, t-shirts or runners
- Simple jewellery only, no facial jewellery
- Hair must be well groomed and long hair tied back from your face

Prepare your own questions

You should see yourself as an active participant in the interview. The interviewer wants to know more about you, but you should want to find out more about the job and the company.

So, it is important to have one or two questions ready to ask at interview. The most appropriate time to ask these is at the end, or when the interviewer invites you to ask a question. Make sure you don't ask a question that has already been answered during the interview!

Sample Questions:

- What are the main tasks involved in the job/project?
- Apart from this project, would there be an opportunity to work on other tasks?
- Who would I be working with in the project team?
- Would I be working with Placement students from other colleges?
- Do you provide initial training on the job?
- You have a number of offices - which one would I be based in?
- Is this a new once-off project or has the team done similar work before?
- Do you have opportunities for graduate jobs for successful Placement students?
- When do you expect to have a decision?