

Preparing for an Interview

You have been offered an interview: this is your chance to show more about your skills and your personality than you could on your CV or application form.

Here are a few tips about how to prepare for the big day:



- **Research the role you are being interviewed for.** What does it involve? What will you be doing? Where will you be doing it? What key skills do you need? What might you need to learn on the job/course?
- **Research the company or organisation.** Check their website. Where are they based? How many people do they have working for them? Who is in charge of the company? Knowing some basic information shows the interviewers that you have a genuine interest in the role they are offering.
- **Think about the possible questions they may ask you.** Although you cannot predict exactly what you will be asked, be prepared to talk about why you're a good fit for the role and what you can offer to the company or organisation. Do not be afraid to ask for a question to be repeated or rephrased if you misheard or misunderstood it – this is much better than trying to guess what was asked of you.
- **Practise your answers thoroughly to these possible questions.** Ask a friend or relative to act as your audience. Although you don't want to come across as if you are acting, rehearsing what you might say beforehand means you'll always have something to talk about. Equally, it is not a good thing to give long, vague answers to questions.

- **Think about questions of your own.** You are not there to just answer questions: the interview is a chance for you to find out more about what is on offer if you were to be successful. Try not to leave the interview with any unanswered questions.
- **Ask for a tour of the company or organisation if you think this is appropriate.** You may want to look around a department at college or look around the company you have applied to work for. This will give you a good idea how people work there and what the atmosphere is like before you make up your mind to apply.
- **Ask for an informal conversation before the interview.** Is there someone you can speak to on the phone or over email about the course or the job you have applied for? The more information you can gather, the less nervous you will feel about the interview. Equally, the employer can get to know you personally, making you a more memorable candidate prior to interview.
- **Choose appropriate interview clothes.** Even if you are going to be working on a building site and will never need to wear a suit, it is important to look smart at an interview. It is your chance to make a good first impression.
- **Plan your route to the interview.** How are you going to get there? Are you taking the bus/train/taxi or being taken by a family member or friend? Set off in plenty of time – it is better to arrive far too early than it is to arrive even five minutes late.
- **Ensure you take your identification and qualifications with you.** You will usually be asked to do this in your interview offer letter, but it is good to have these documents ready anyway.

