

Employability Skills

Level 1

Unit 32: Interview Skills



This unit introduces you to the preparation needed for a job interview, how to conduct yourself in the interview and how to review your performance afterwards. You will be able to apply what you learn to a real or simulated interview.

You will explore how to identify, and prepare for, possible interview questions, and adopt appropriate dress, language, speaking and listening skills. Finally, you will cover ways of getting feedback to review your performance.

Aims

When you've worked through this unit you should know:

- How to prepare for an interview.
- How to conduct yourself in an appropriate manner in a job-related interview.
- How to review your interview performance.

Content

The unit contains three sections:

- 1. How to prepare for an interview**
- 2. How to conduct yourself in an interview**
- 3. How to review your interview performance**

Assessment

When you have worked through this unit, there are a series of assessment questions to complete. These can be found in a separate assessment booklet. When you have finished the assessment you should submit it to your tutor/learning provider, who will give you feedback on your work.

Section 1

How to prepare for an interview

In this section you will learn about:

- **Identifying useful information**
- **Getting there on time**
- **Finding out more about the organisation**
- **Identifying and preparing for interview questions**
- **Meeting interviewers' expectations**
- **Gathering useful information**

Identifying useful information

Good preparation is the key to being successful at your interview. The interview is like a performance – and you would not expect a professional musician, actor or sports person to go into a performance without preparation, rehearsal or practice, would you?

Key point

Good preparation is the key to a successful interview.



Activity 1

In the space below make a list of the things that you would find it useful to know, or prepare, before the interview takes place. One is already given to help you.

How to get to the interview

The following would be useful to know or prepare in advance:

- How to get to the interview – check bus or train times, parking and directions.
- The date and time of the interview.
- What form the interview will take and who will be doing the interview – contact the employer and ask them.
- What questions they might ask you – and what replies you could give in response.
- What questions you could ask them.
- What to wear.
- More about the employer.
- More about the work sector that the job is part of.
- More about the job and how your skills match the requirements.

Being prepared will enable you to relax and be yourself at the interview.

Key point

Being well prepared will give you confidence, control and keep you calm so that you make a good impression.





Top tips for non-verbal behaviour at interview

- ✓ Shake hands firmly with your interviewers.
- ✓ Sit down when you are invited to do so.
- ✓ Smile, in moderation, during the interview.
- ✓ Sit upright rather than leaning or slouching backward or forward.
- ✓ Make eye contact with the people who are talking to you rather than looking down or away.
- ✓ Try not to fidget.
- ✓ Try to look confident and enthusiastic.

Key point

Be aware of the impression that you make with your non-verbal behaviour. It will be assessed from the moment you walk into the interview room.

Language

Interviewers' expectations about your language are:

- No swearing – no matter how mild.
- Do not use slang – the interviewers may not understand what you mean.
- Speak clearly in everyday English.
- Keep your language simple.

Key point

Use language that is not offensive and that can be easily understood.

Section 2

How to conduct yourself in an interview

To complete this section you need to apply what you have already learned by undertaking a real or simulated interview.

In this section you will explore how you went about:

- **Making the right first impression**
- **Performing in an effective manner**

Making the right first impression

The employer already knows something about you from your application form and covering letter. However, the interview is your chance to really sell yourself. The first step in this process is to ensure that you make a good first impression.

Appropriate dress sense and punctuality

Q Why do dressing appropriately and being punctual make a good first impression?

A If you dress in appropriate, clean, smart clothes it tells the employer that you care about your appearance – and therefore will care about the job. Being punctual tells the employer that you can meet deadlines, which is an important ability for any job.





Activity 9

In the space below, make notes about how you will demonstrate appropriate dress sense and punctuality during your interview.

You can use your notes to help you with the tutor-marked assessment.

Try to arrive a little bit before the interview so that you can relax. If you are unavoidably delayed, contact the employer as soon as possible, apologise, explain and arrange another appointment if necessary.

Key point

Your first impression is made by how you look – not what you say or what you know. Dress appropriately and be punctual so that your first impression is a positive one.

Section 3

How to review your interview performance

You can use this section to help you think about your performance at the interview.

In this section you will learn about:

- **Using feedback to identify your strengths and areas for improvement**

Using feedback to identify your strengths and areas for improvement

It is important to review your performance after an interview.

If you are unsuccessful and are not offered the job, remember that your application and covering letter must have been good to get you an interview in the first place.

If you are offered the job, it is useful to think about what you did well so that you can repeat these points in the future, if you apply for other jobs.

Key point

Think positively – even if you did not get the job, your application form and covering letter or CV was good enough to get you an interview.



Getting feedback from the employer

The best source of information about your interview performance is the person who interviewed you. They might have something useful to tell you that will help you in future interviews. If you are unsure about who to contact, get in touch with the company's human resources department.

**Activity 13**

Telephone or write to the employer to ask them for feedback about what you did well and what you need to improve. Make a note of their comments and suggestions in the space below.

Assessing yourself

Other than the employer, you are the best source of information about your own performance.

Use the following questions to help you to review your performance:

- Did you prepare yourself well enough beforehand?
- Did you find out enough about the organisation and the job beforehand?
- Did you practise answering possible questions beforehand?
- Which parts of the interview did you find difficult?
- Which parts did you find easy?



Activity 14

Use the space below to make notes about your performance based on the employer's feedback and your own self-assessment.

a) Identify your strengths.

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b) Identify areas for improvement, and say what actions you will take to do this.

I need to improve	I can do this by

You can use your notes to help you with the tutor-marked assessment.



Assessment

Section 3: How to review your interview performance

Well done! You have come to the end of this section and should attempt the assessment questions for Section 3. These can be found in your assessment booklet. You can use your notes to help you.