

Interview tips

Preparing yourself

Before the interview find out:

- Where will it be held?
- How long will it last?
- What format will it take?
- Will there be any tests or group exercises?
- Do I need to bring or prepare anything specific?

The interview invitation is likely to provide you with the above information. If not then call the organisation and ask for it.

Ensure that you check the date and time of your interview. Figure out how you will get to the venue and how long the journey takes, especially if you are using public transport. Check for any planned disruptions to road or public transport services and aim to arrive early, rather than rushing in late. This is especially important for assessment centres, where the day runs to a tight schedule.

What to take

On the day, make sure you have the interview invitation letter and a copy of your CV, cover letter and application form if you used one. You will need notes of the key points you want to make and the questions you want to ask during the interview. Take some cash in case you need to get a taxi at the last minute or some other unforeseen expenditure.

What to wear

Decide on your outfit well in advance; ideally it should be a suit or equivalent business wear. Ensure it is ironed and ready to wear. Have a second outfit as a back-up and ensure your shoes are clean. Personal grooming is essential and you should avoid wearing overpowering fragrance. It is probably best to avoid alcohol the night before the interview and smokers should resist the temptation to have a cigarette on the way to or while waiting for an interview.

Personal safety

Give someone all the details of where you are going and when you expect to return. In the unlikely event that you are invited to a private residence bring someone with you and have them wait for you outside the venue.

Knowledge about yourself

If you are being interviewed for a job that was advertised, use the job description as a guideline as to what you'll be asked about in terms of your personality, skills, work experience and qualifications. Other candidates may have similar abilities, employment and academic experience to you. Think about how you might distinguish yourself. It is possible to highlight all of your strengths without sounding over-confident or aggressive.

Knowledge about the job

Know everything you can about the job on offer including the job and/or person specification. Search the web for profiles of employees who hold the same or similar roles and read the relevant occupational profiles in [types of jobs](#).

Knowledge about the organisation

Research your prospective employer organisation. Employers will expect that you will have at least researched their website, their recruitment information and their annual report(s). Do more than this - search for media articles about it and consult [job sectors](#) for an overview of a range of employment sectors.

Current affairs/commercial awareness

Expect to be questioned about current affairs, about how they currently impact upon the sector in which the organisation operates and what developments are likely to impact on the organisation's future.

Disability

If you have a disability, check the physical access to the premises. Let the employer know in advance if you need any additional support in order to fulfil the requirements of the interview or assessment centre. If you do not need any special arrangements, you may choose not to disclose your disability. For help and advice on when and how to disclose a disability, you can contact [SKILL \(National Bureau for Students with Disabilities\)](#) or go to [equal opportunities - disability](#).

Psychological preparation

Remember that the interviewer wants every candidate to be a great one. Remember also these key points:

- get a good night's sleep the night before;
- eat properly and drink plenty of water on the day;
- practise breathing deeply;
- think positive thoughts;
- remember that, if properly harnessed, nerves can sharpen your performance.



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