

A guide for Graphic Design students in

PROFESSIONAL PROMOTION

BRIEFINGS

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Design Briefs - UNI.

- © A UNI design brief is nothing like a real brief.
- © They are purely designed for **Educational Assessment**.
- © ...and they are written by nice, lovely lecturers, not clients.

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Design Briefs - UNI.

- ◎ You get a fully written design brief.
- ◎ Staff will verbally expand on the design problem.
- ◎ ...and lecturers are available for constant re-checking.
- ◎ The brief has to be consistent for all – no major changes occur.

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Design Briefs – Client (Professional).

- ◎ The brief will be formulated by the client. If you are lucky, it may contain the information you need.
- ◎ What they think they want and what they actually need may be two very different things.
- ◎ The client will probably have very little knowledge of design processes and how long it may take.
- ◎ They will be working to a budget.

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Design Briefs – Client (Professional).

- ◎ If you are lucky, the client may request your guidance.
- ◎ You may need to help them to make good design choices.
- ◎ Remember – Communication goes both ways!
- ◎ Details are often not clear or even missed out entirely.

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Briefing Prep – What should you take?

- ◎ Before the briefing try to get an idea from the client what they are after.
- ◎ Take samples of work to show the client.
- ◎ A notepad & pen.
- ◎ A checklist of questions. You will need to get more information than your client thinks you need.

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Possible Checklist Questions.

- ◎ **The What.** What are the aims of the design?
- ◎ **The Who.** To whom is it aimed?
- ◎ **The How.** Print or Web? (or Both)
- ◎ Any colour considerations?
- ◎ Any size restrictions?

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Possible Checklist Questions.

- ⦿ Is there a budget? Does it include the print run?
- ⦿ Is there a proposed number of pages?
- ⦿ Will illustrations / photographs be provided, or will they need to be commissioned?
- ⦿ What references are available? Any corporate restrictions?

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Possible Checklist Questions.

- ⦿ How much copy will be needed?
- ⦿ Is it available or when can it be supplied? How will it be supplied?
- ⦿ When will specific resources be made available?
- ⦿ When are the deadlines for ideas, artwork etc?

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Possible Checklist Questions.

- ⦿ Who will be proof reading the work? (Designer or Client)
- ⦿ How will payment be made and at what stage?
- ⦿ Lump sum on completion of work?
- ⦿ Or weekly?
- ⦿ Or at production stages?

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Possible Checklist Questions.

- © Terms of Copyright etc?
- © Printing or ISP (Internet Service Provider) arrangements?
- © Etc. etc. etc.

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Checklist Responses.

- ⦿ Get your answers in writing or email.
- ⦿ Get the client to sign it if you can.
- ⦿ Make sure you cover all the info you need to do the job. **Do Not assume anything.**
- ⦿ Assumption is the mother of all fuck-ups!! And will cost you money!!

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Ex Student Comments.

- “I find myself teaching my clients half the time... explaining how my job works.”
(Darryl Edgecombe)
- “Coming away with the right information can make the difference between getting paid or not - as I discovered!”
(Ian Simmons)

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Ex Student Comments.

- “My checklist that I did at college was pretty thin... can I catch up with you to do a better version... think I need it!”
(Leanne Ellis)

- “We got together (a group of graphics and illustrators) like we did in year 2... it was amazing what we all thought of for that checklist.”
(Tom Buttle)

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Ex Student Comments.

- ⦿ “Listen when being briefed and ask questions if you do not understand. You cannot solve a problem that you do not understand.”
(Gavin Kirby)

- “Get your content and check list signed off to protect your own arse.”
(Student not named)

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Task.

- ⦿ Develop and design a briefing form.
- You can use examples from this presentation.
- Try and think of some other questions.

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A camel is a
horse designed
by committee.

Sir Alec Issigonis

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PORTFOLIOS

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- ◎ You will need to produce a professional portfolio.
- ◎ This is what you will be taking to your interviews.
- ◎ We recommend that it be A3 in size.
- ◎ You will also need to produce a digital version of your portfolio.
- ◎ You could also hand it in as part of your assessment at the end of the year.

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Portfolio – UNI Assessment.

- ◎ This is your Graduate Portfolio Assessment.
- ◎ It will contain all of your 3rd year project work from the Graduate Portfolio Module, warts and all.
- ◎ Work is to be presented to show it at its best.
- ◎ The projects will have comprehensive back up work, showing ideas and developments.

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Professional Portfolio – For Interviews.

- © Similar to the assessment version but...
- © ...it can contain your best projects from any modules.
- © Ideas and development sheets will be cherry picked and placed into the portfolio.

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Professional Portfolio – Physical Mock-ups.

- ◎ Aim to show your work as it is intended to be used.
- ◎ Where you can, make actual mock-ups. This will really help to present your ideas and designs.
- ◎ Magazines, books, book covers, box packaging, zines etc are relatively easy to create as a physical mock-up. Use our workshops.
- ◎ Online print solutions can be used. Shop around.

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Professional Portfolio – Digital Mock-ups.

- ⦿ Not all of your work can be made into a physical mock-up.
- ⦿ Digital mock-ups can be a solution to this problem.
- ⦿ Lots of different solutions are available and it is worth looking at. It's also worth investing money to get good digital mock-ups.
- ⦿ psdcovers.com is an example of this type of thing.

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Professional Portfolio – for interviews.

- ◎ Many professionals' despair at college portfolios.
- ◎ They are cumbersome and can be difficult to navigate.
- ◎ It will need to be restructured to target hard nosed professional people.
- ◎ It is to show them what they want to see, in the way they want to see it.

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Professional Portfolio – for interviews.

- ⦿ Size **does** matter.
- ⦿ Size and style of your portfolio are important factors. Show that you care about your work.
- ⦿ Consider the interview environment.
- ⦿ Find out as much as you can beforehand.
- ⦿ Contact the company. Be Prepared!

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Professional Portfolio – for interviews.

- ⦿ Keep it looking good & fresh.
- ⦿ Consider changing content for specific interviews.
- ⦿ Have something that you can leave behind as a reminder / gift.
- ⦿ Show some of your development work.

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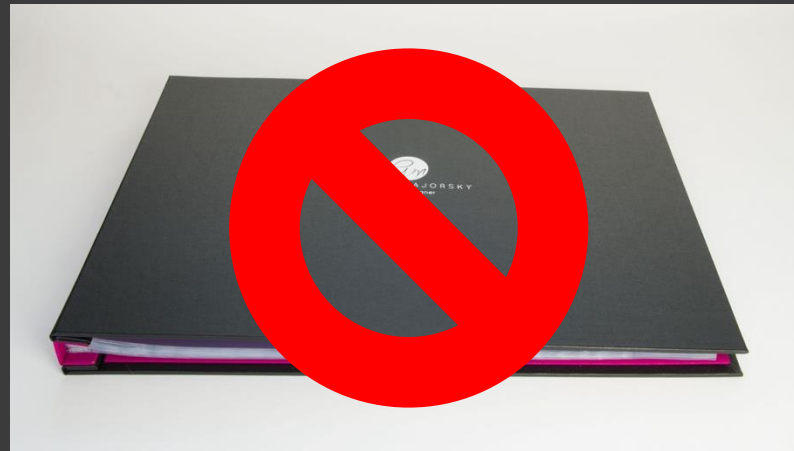
Professional Portfolio – for interviews.

- ⦿ Have the project backup work to hand (time sheets, costs etc).
- ⦿ Know how much you would charge for your projects.
- ⦿ Remember this is a window to your skills / abilities.
- ⦿ Include any success stories and client feedback.

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Professional Portfolio – for interviews.

- ⊙ There are many types available but keep it editable.
- ⊙ Invest in a good quality one, it will last you.



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Professional Portfolio – Digital Versions.

- ◎ Lots of digital options available to you.
- ◎ You will need to produce your own personal website as part of the Graduate Portfolio module.
- ◎ You can choose to code it yourself or you can sign up to an online build solution (recommended).
- ◎ You will need to style it to your personal branding.

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Professional Portfolio – Digital Versions.

- © Also look at portfolio communities.
- © Behance, Dribbble, and Adobe Portfolio are examples of these.
- © Just uploading stuff to the web is not enough on its own. How will potential employers find your work?
- © You need to develop a social media strategy that can reach interested viewers and point them to your online portfolios.

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Professional Portfolio – Digital Versions.

- ⦿ Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, Instagram etc.
- ⦿ These are good ways to raise awareness that you exist. However...
- ⦿ Know what their function is. Likes do not directly translate into money. Use them to direct people to your websites.
- ⦿ Also, look at professional solutions like LinkedIn.

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Professional Portfolio – Digital Versions.

- ◎ Spend the time to create an emailable PDF of your portfolio that can either be downloaded or sent on request.
- ◎ Keep pages the same size and orientation.
- ◎ You should always have access to examples of your work. You never know who you can meet.

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Professional Portfolio – Alternative thoughts.

- ⦿ Consider skills shortfalls in the portfolio, what can you do about them?
- ⦿ Now is the time to bridge those gaps.
- ⦿ Never again will you have this level of equipment, support and expertise at your fingertips.
- ⦿ Spend your time this year wisely.

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Portfolio – Summary.

- ◎ If possible, keep it small and light (A3).
- ◎ Carefully consider content – be flexible.
- ◎ Include professional looking backup, include external design briefs not just Uni briefs.
- ◎ Be as creative as you can – it will be remembered!

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Portfolio – Summary.

- ⦿ Research the company. What projects do you think they are most wanting to see.
- ⦿ Start with your strongest project.
- ⦿ Finish with your 2nd strongest project.
- ⦿ Don't pad it out with poor work.

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Professional Portfolio – Ex Student Feedback.

- “A2 is too big.... I was told this at an interview.”
(Mark Goulden)
- “They won’t be impressed by a wall-to-wall self portrait, keep it clean and simple.”
(Joseph Dickens)
- “I would say A3 portfolio as you can get most of your stuff in that.”
(Lee Stinton)

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Professional Portfolio – Ex Student Feedback.

- “Their office was tiny! Thank goodness I had that small portfolio and CD.”
(Tanya Allen)
- “The other applicant had to show their portfolio in the corridor as there wasn’t enough room.”
(Helen Richards)
- ⊙ “I also left them an A5 card with examples of my work and with my details on the back which they liked.”
(Lee Hazell)

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Professional Portfolio – Ex Student Feedback.

- © “Have a wide range of styles in your portfolio. I wrote down a list of things I wanted to show I could do such as packaging design, branding, typography etc and based my projects around these, this has been really helpful in the long run as in my interviews they always mention the range of work I have.”

(Laura Jones)

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Professional Portfolio – Ex Student Feedback.

- ◎ “Make use of the facilities while you’re in Uni. Riso and letterpress are so hard to find outside of Uni.”
(Jeonard Cruz)

- “Designers are like Magpies and will keep hold of well-designed things. Having something to leave behind will help you to be remembered.”
(Anonymous)

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Professional Portfolio – Ex Student Feedback.

- © “A lot of brand agencies and design companies are now looking for people that can show their development and how they got to an idea or final design. Showcase half a page or a page in your portfolio on the strategy / thought process so employers can see the design thinking.”

(Joseph Lloyd)

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Professional Portfolio – Professional Comments.

- “I got my job because I was the only one with development work in my portfolio... it really is important to make a neat job of it... only three of us were invited in for an actual interview.”

(Stacy Taylor)

- “There is nothing more unprofessional than struggling red faced through a prospective employer's door with a cumbersome portfolio.”

(McDaniel Woolfe)

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Professional Portfolio – Professional Comments.

- “Taking a physical portfolio was what made me stand out and get the job over other applicants. They liked to physically hold the work. If you have something small like a bookmark from a project you can leave behind it keeps you on their mind.”
(Rebecca Hodgson)

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Professional Portfolio – Professional Comments.

- “Have both a physical and digital portfolio, as there is a total mix of what companies and employers are requesting so definitely be ahead of the game and have both prepared.

Do not put any piece of work that you are not confident or happy with in your portfolio, only use work you are passionate about and can therefore discuss with great confidence.”

(Laura Wade)

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Professional Portfolio – Professional Comments.

- ❑ In a bar in New York, I was asked what do you do?
- ❑ Out came the iPhone...
- ❑ So, I am still here living in Brooklyn
- ❑ Working for Apple.
(James Grey King 2009)



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Portfolio – Your Task.

- ❑ You will need to start thinking about your professional portfolio and its appearance.
- ❑ Obviously, you can't do much until you have completed some projects but keep this in mind.
- ❑ There will be reminders and workshops later this semester and next semester to help you prepare.

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The dictionary is the only
place where Success
comes before Work.

Mark Twain

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INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

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Coping with Interviews - Introduction.

- ◎ Having done everything and got that precious interview date you will now need to be able to interview well.
- ◎ You will be nervous and full of adrenaline.
- ◎ They will be looking at more than just your skills...
- ◎ ...your personality and attitude counts greatly.

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Preparing for the interview.

- ⦿ Have you called and asked about the environment and the resources that will be on hand?
- ⦿ Have you done your research on the company?
- ⦿ Is your portfolio layout and content appropriate?
- ⦿ Have you got your questions to ask them?

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Preparing for the interview.

- ⊙ Have you researched the area for living?
- ⊙ Will you be happy there?
- ⊙ Can you afford to make the move?
- ⊙ Have you planned the day of the interview? When will you arrive/leave?

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Preparing for the interview – Before you leave.

- ⦿ Have you organised your transport?
- ⦿ Are your clothes ready and presentable?
- ⦿ Is there a coffee shop nearby?
- ⦿ Do you have a contact number if there are transport delays?
- ⦿ Do you have the interview letter / email to hand?

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Preparing for the interview – On the Day.

- ⦿ Plan to get there early.
- ⦿ If you are early enough, grab a coffee and freshen up. Go over your questions and answers.
- ⦿ On arrival, check that you have the interviewer's name correct.
- ⦿ Avoid making last minute changes.

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Interview – Keep in mind.

- ◎ The interviewer needs someone like you.
- ◎ Imagine yourself in the job, how does it make you feel.
- ◎ Leave pauses. Give yourself time to think about your answers – Don't rabbit!
- ◎ Don't know? Express a willingness to learn.
- ◎ There will be unexpected questions. Stay calm and think.

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Interview – Awkward examples.

- ⦿ Why are you interested in this job?
- ⦿ Why are you particularly suited to it?
- ⦿ How long did this project take? Why did it take so long?
- ⦿ How much would this work cost me?
- ⦿ Have you worked in a team and how did you contribute?

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Interview – Awkward examples.

- ⊙ If there was this problem...how would you solve it?
- ⊙ How did you save these files for print / web?
- ⊙ Describe your career aspirations?
- ⊙ What are your strengths / weaknesses?
- ⊙ What will you bring to the company?

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Interview – Awkward examples.

- ◎ Tell me about a dispute that you had to resolve.
- ◎ Tell me about a major change in your life.
- ◎ What are you currently reading and why?
- ◎ What is the weakest project in your portfolio?
- ◎ Why is it in there?

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Interview – Awkward examples.

- ⦿ How competent are you on the Mac/PC?
- ⦿ Where else have you applied?
- ⦿ You may be asked to do a design task. This would normally be outlined before you arrive, but it could be dropped on you when you get there.

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Interview – Why the awkward questions.

- ◎ These questions are designed to put you on the spot.
- ◎ Always, always keep your cool.
- ◎ Take your time and give it your best shot.
- ◎ Be honest in your responses – Don't bullshit!
- ◎ All of these examples came from ex-students.

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Interview – Keep in mind.

- ◎ You are constantly presenting yourself.
- ◎ Try to retain composure and confidence – don't be cocky!
- ◎ Pleasant smiles help, even if they are not returned.
- ◎ Don't let defensive body language creep you out.
- ◎ Keep a natural eye contact with the interviewers.

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Interview – Your questions.

- ⦿ When your turn comes for questions be prepared and be respectful...
- ⦿ What are your main responsibilities going to be?
- ⦿ What problems are commonly encountered?
- ⦿ How does the team operate?
- ⦿ On site or Hybrid working?

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Interview – Leave these to last...

- ⦿ Any questions about pay and pensions or terms & conditions etc.
- ⦿ Only ask these if you have to, they can be checked later if they offer you the job.
- ⦿ Thank them for their time, it was nice to meet them etc.
- ⦿ Even if you hate them at this point!
- ⦿ If you really want the job, leave a keepsake you have designed.

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Interview – Employers comments.

- ◎ “Selling yourself, whether for a freelance job or a full time one, is all important... After all, every new briefing is an interview isn't it?”

(Peter Vosper – HMSO)

- ◎ “I never employ on the basis of a portfolio only, how do I know if I can work with them?”

(Paul Drewson - SDC)

- ◎ “You see it differently when you have the responsibility to get it all done – a little pressure at interview can give a great insight.”

(Ben Louis-Smith – Slightly Different Design)

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Interview – Employers comments.

- © “We use a lot of illustrators and designers... we usually interview twice to test them.”

(Sharon Blowers – Finishing Line Art)

- © “We are responsible to our clients... we never accept onto our books until we are 100% sure.”

(Bob Berendsen - IllustratorsRep)

- © “Uni projects are one thing but can a student work to direction?”

(Eddy Wouters – VMF Hoffman)

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Interview – Employers comments.

- © “We sometimes test people by asking them to do a basic test on a computer right now.”
(Olaf Robrecht – Illustrators Agent)
- © “We work online with most of our freelancers and rarely meet some of them face to face. Designers need to develop their internet communication skills if they want to work with companies like ours.”
(Su Jones – Tigerprint / Marks & Spencer)

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Interview – Employers comments.

- ◎ “If a candidate doesn't have any questions, it worries us. They haven't engaged with the interviewer or our company.”

(Nick Gilbert – Agency recruiter)

- ◎ “I love to see the faces of people who haven't prepared for the costing questions – they squirm so much and are so totally unprofessional.”

(Bernard McCabe – Dreamscape Design)

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Interview – Employers comments.

- © “Presentation, presentation, presentation – Neat concise portfolio and neat concise personal appearance.”
(Nick Gilbert – Agency recruiter)
- © “Those big portfolios and irrelevant projects – what a joke, how on earth do they think the interview will go if they turn up acting like a novice before saying a word?”
(Daniel Allen – Danallen Design)

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Interview – Closing comments.

- © “Just thought I’d say hi...I wanted to let you know that I have just conducted my first interview...heehee so funny, all the time I was there I was thinking back to what you were saying about first impressions. So important! I can’t believe how my perceptions changed sitting on the other side of the desk.”

(Anne Scourfield – Hello Advertising Group)

- © “For freelance work you need to be better at sales than you are at design.”

(Anonymous)

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Interview – Ex-student comments.

- © “One of the biggest things which helped was having a written list of questions to ask at the end of an interview. It came in really handy, and they knew I was prepared and had done a lot of research on the company.”

(Steph Carver – Graphic Designer at CDSM)

- © “Design something that can be left behind so that you are remembered by potential employers.”

(Jade Ponting)

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Interview – Ex-student comments.

- © “Don't be afraid to make a few jokes in your interview, in good taste of course, it breaks the atmosphere.”
(Nathan Griffiths – Sky Creative)
- © “Do your research on the company and know what type of work they do.”
(Anonymous)
- © “Enjoy the work that you do in third year as it's nice to talk about work in an interview that you are genuinely passionate about.”
(Joseph Lloyd – Landor & Fitch)

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Interview – Ex-student comments.

- © “In hindsight I should have listened to all of the bad feelings I had about the job before I took it. The bad reviews of the company I choose to ignore because I was worried I wouldn’t get another shot or the bad feeling I had leaving the job interview.”
(Joelle Evans)

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Interview – Ex-student comments.

- ◎ “Had to knock up a 3-page spread about Bang & Olufson. Then he gave me a ‘I didn’t tell you this, but you’ve got the job’.”
(Griff)
- ◎ “Practice responding to the interview questions. It will help to get you into the habit of giving positive answers.”
(Anonymous)

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Don't work for assholes,
Don't work with assholes,
Don't be the asshole.