

INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES HINTS AND TIPS

1. Research the Organisation / Company

It is vitally important that when you are attending an interview that you know as much as possible about the interviewing company/organisation.

We supply you with as much information as possible – but do your homework, check their website and familiarise yourself where possible with the annual accounts and any recent press releases.

Before your interview, make sure that you are up to date with what is going on in the business world – check news articles on the internet, and if applicable, check the share price of the company with which you have the interview.

2. Curriculum Vitae and Job Description

It is important that the CV you supply to APLUS is factual and accurate.

- We transfer your CV onto our database in a standard format so that all Candidates' details are sent out to Clients in a similar style. Before an interview you should look over your CV, in order to recap on exactly what it says (please note that if at any time anything has changed on your CV you should let us know immediately so that we can update our database copy).
- When at the interview NEVER read from your CV (the interviewer will have read through it and therefore know the content). It is important to communicate face to face.
- Before the interview we will supply you with details of the job. This allows you to highlight areas of your strength and experience which ideally match their requirements and "sell" yourself more effectively.
- You should prepare a brief list of questions that you can ask the interviewer. Try to make sure that you have something to ask near the end of the interview when the interviewer asks if you have any other questions.
- Remember that the job has to be right for you as well as you being right for the job; but it is a good idea to go into every interview aiming for success. You have plenty of time afterwards to make up your mind as to whether you accept an offer.

3. Practicalities

- Make sure you know how to get to the interview venue (leave plenty of time – allow for public transport delays, traffic hold ups). Ideally, do a dry-run to the location prior to the interview itself, and remember that satellite navigation systems are notoriously unreliable!
- Take the name, address and telephone number of the company with which you have the interview (as well as our telephone number) and if you are likely to be late or unable to attend for some reason phone APLUS and the Company immediately so that the Client is not inconvenienced. Often we will be able to rearrange if there is a genuine reason for non-attendance.
- If you arrive more than 10 minutes before the interview time *do not* go into the premises (unless you have no other option) until the a few minutes before the allocated time as this, too, can be interpreted as bad manners.



- TURN OFF YOUR MOBILE PHONE.
- “Dress to impress” – this means looking smart and conservative (bright or ‘whacky’ suits/ties/shoes are not a good idea). It is better to be overdressed than too casual.
- Report to reception when you enter the venue – be polite and friendly, inform the receptionist who your appointment is with and at what time. Receptionists are often asked their opinions on interviewees!
- Only accept a drink if you need to (trying to juggle a drink and briefcase etc. can be a cause for embarrassment when you are collected by the interviewer).
- When greeted by the interviewer smile, and greet your interviewer. Make eye contact. Shake hands if this is instigated by the interviewer. Remember that firm handshakes are preferable to ‘wet fish’!
- The interviewer may be nervous too, and may use icebreaker questions to help you both relax (for example talking about the weather or your journey). Answer them appropriately and keep to the point (do not go off on tangents). Do not be overtly controversial!
- During the interview, listen carefully to questions, and if you are unsure what the interviewer is getting at, ask for clarification or for the interviewer to repeat it.
- Answer questions to the best of your ability, be concise and honest – offer expanded answers and not Yes or No. The interviewer wants to hear what you have to say/your opinions and knowledge, but make sure you can adequately back these up.
- If you cannot answer a question DO NOT try to muddle through, admit it.

4. Commonly asked Interview Questions

Some questions may seem like old chestnuts, but are commonly asked, so be prepared. Examples are as below:

‘Tell me about yourself’

- This is very common at the start of an interview and you can prepare what you are going to say. **Briefly** outline your academic history, career history and personal details.

‘What has given you a sense of achievement’

- Find out if they mean on a professional or personal level. Your answer should give them an idea of your key strengths, how you overcame any problems, and you should try and relate your answer to the position that they are offering.

‘What are your strengths and / or weaknesses’

- Try to focus on strengths giving 2 or 3 examples of instances where you have demonstrated these. With weaknesses, try to turn a negative into a positive, for example, ‘some people say that I am too organised’.

‘Why do you want to change your job?’

- Again focus on positives and not negatives. For example, you may want to gain more experience or develop a certain area in your career.



- Try not to focus on salary or terms of employment at this stage. You will have plenty of time to address these issues at a later stage if you impress at first interview.
- Some interviewers use 'competency based' questions. Please see our separate guidance notes for advice.

5. Example Questions for the Interviewer

- Why has this position/vacancy become available?
- If it is a new position – why has it arisen?
- Do you feel that there are areas of expertise that you would be able to help develop?
- What process do you have in place with regard to new employees? Induction Programme, training etc.
- What do you feel are the main strengths of the company/organisation?
- What is the culture of the business?
- Does the company have a policy of promoting from within?

You will find that many of these questions may have been answered during the interview, so make sure you do not ask the interviewer something that has been discussed previously – it will give the impression that you have not paid attention.

At the end of the interview, if you are interested tell the interviewer, and ask what the next step is from here. Don't be afraid to ask how they feel the interview went – they may not be able to give you much feedback but you may get some useful information.

6. After your Interview

After your interview it is important that you call us at APLUS to give us your feedback on how the interview went.

We will then get feedback from the Client, and discuss the next steps with you.

Remember even if you are unsuccessful, we will be able to offer you constructive advice on how to approach the interview next time.

APLUS Appointments Ltd wish you the very best of luck with your interview. If you have any queries before the interview, please do not hesitate to contact us on 029 2038 2555 or cardiff@aplusaa.co.uk, we are more than happy to offer advice.