



Curtin University

Malaysia

Career Services

INTERVIEW WORKBOOK

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Introduction

One of the most nerve-racking and difficult parts of the application procedure is the interview. This workbook serves as a quick introduction to help you start developing your interviewing skills by outlining the typical interview process and having you complete exercises that are directly related to conversations you will conduct in the real world.



Preparation

Your likelihood of getting the job for which you are seeking directly correlates with how well you prepare for an interview. You must become proficient in interviews if you want to succeed in your professional job. Like with any acquired talent, you have already prepared for your interview. Use this quick survey to see if you've done everything you should have.



- **Arrive on time.**

Plan to be there five to ten minutes early. This will be the first thing you notice. Employers will evaluate your time management skills. Whatever the reason for your delay, people will not think well of you.

- **Know the location of the interview and how to get there.**

Draw a map of the building's layout, parking areas, and any transportation paths.

- **Dress appropriately for the position you are applying for.**

Almost always, wear business attire. If you have a tailored suit, wear it. For women, a professional office dress, suit, or skirt and blouse will work. Make sure you look your finest and are properly groomed. This enables you to present your strongest self and demonstrates that you are taking the interview seriously.

- **Take a pen, pad of paper and folder into the interview with a copy of your resume, referee details, selection criteria, portfolio (if relevant) and any key questions you wish to ask.**

It is frequently very beneficial to have the necessary paperwork on hand, and this shows effective resource management. You can use a pen and paper as a prop to jot down information as it is mentioned or, in the case of some technological interviews, to visualize your responses or show how you are working.

- **Know your work history and the key skills you have gained from these experiences.**

It will be easier for you to respond to difficult questions or follow-up inquiries if you are familiar with your own background and how it might be relevant to the organization and role.

- **Research the company and the division/department.**

With each additional step you take in the selection process, the amount of time you spend investigating should increase. Although time-consuming, research pays off but requires cautious time management and prioritization. Knowing how to connect your prior experience with the requirements and values of the employer will not only demonstrate your capacity for audience research and audience understanding, but it will also help to forge stronger bonds between you and the interviewers.

- **Prepare questions to ask.**

Each query should elicit information that you want to comprehend, demonstrate your expertise, and express your ideas clearly. Avoid asking queries that have already been answered. Questions indicate interest and highlight the value of the tour. Keeping in mind that this will almost always be the final part of the interview, you should make sure your queries are presented favorably.

For hints and tips on preparing for a telephone interview, refer to Appendix 1





Preparation Activity

A graduate should thoroughly study the organization and the job they are applying for before attending the interview, according to many employers who have engaged with Curtin.

Finding a job you'd be interested in applying for and researching the business and the position are the requirements for the next activity. The questions below are meant to get you started, and you can write your responses within this booklet.

1. What is the company's vision and/or mission statement? What does the company do differently from its competitors?

2. What is the website saying about the 'people' who work at the company?

3. Often companies have a specific section on their website about graduate recruitment. What personal attributes is your potential employer looking for in a graduate? What previous experiences do you have that show these attributes?

4. What skills, experiences, knowledge and abilities does the company value in the graduates they recruit? How do they match your own experiences and skills?



Types of Interview Questions

Interviewees frequently concentrate on their formal education and technical, or job-specific, abilities. However, interviewers also look for proof that candidates can get along with current staff members and that they adhere to the company's core principles. You can frequently stand out from the competition thanks to your unique personal traits.

It can be helpful to think about the kind of employee you hope to be as you get ready for your interview. Do you like working in a team? Are you a competitor and an entrepreneur? What relationship abilities do you have the most of? What are your areas of weakness? How do you handle a lot of work? What moral principles do you bring with you to work? Which kind of work-life harmony are you looking for?

An interview for a position resembles a sales pitch. Every response you give leaves some sort of impression, so it's critical to consider thoroughly what it is you actually want to convey to the employer.

Good product knowledge and an understanding of the customer's needs are essential components of a successful sales pitch. You can use your research to better understand what the consumer wants, but it's also critical to have a solid grasp of oneself.

Think about the purpose of the interviewer's query before responding to it. What exactly are they seeking to learn? The three major types of interview questions are as follows. If you can identify these, choosing the format and substance of your responses may be simpler.

3.1. Traditional Interview Questions

Common names for traditional inquiries include textbook, generic, common, and opinion questions. These inquiries give you the chance to elaborate on your motivations and justifications for choices as well as to highlight qualities and values that can't be covered in a skills evaluation. Knowing your strengths, motivations, and reasons for wanting to work in a specific field, organization, or industry will help you convince an employer that you'll be a good match for the team and for the position.

TRADITIONAL INTERVIEW Q&A EXAMPLES

Why do you want to secure a graduate position with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade?

"I choose to study international relations at university, as I am passionate about human rights and tolerance between cultures. Having also worked part time as a Recreation Assistant with the Catholic Migrant Centre, I have developed a sense of social responsibility which has drawn me to apply for a graduate role with the federal government agency that has core responsibilities towards advancing the interests of Malaysia and Malaysians internationally. I feel that by securing a graduate position with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, I can effectively contribute to the promotion and protection of Malaysia's national interest, to create a real impact on our international reputation."

In the above response, the interviewee has listed the following:

- Why they are passionate and how this relates to the core responsibilities of the employer.
- How they will contribute to the employers core responsibilities, through their personal attributes and values.
- Their education (job specific skills) in the field of international relations, which gives further credibility that her education has prepared the interviewee for work within this department.





The personal characteristics, transferable skills and technical knowledge the interviewee demonstrated in their response is detailed below:

Personal Characteristics, Values and Beliefs

- Passionate about human rights and tolerance between cultures
- Sense of social responsibility

Matching Goals

- Contribute to the promotion and protection of Malaysia's national interests
- Relate a real impact on your international reputation
- Graduate program will enable student to contribute Malaysia's interests on an international scale

Technical knowledge, skills and experience

- Bachelor degree with major in International Relations
- Work experience - Recreation assistant at Catholic Migrant Centre

Traditional Questions Activity

List the components of your technical, transferable, and personal skills that you can use to successfully answer to the traditional questions below. Your answer needs to be customized for a business where you might eventually want to work.

1. Why are you interested in our organisation / company?

2. What motivated you to study in your field? How is this related to the work you believe you will be doing with us?

3. Why should we hire you over the other applicants? What do you bring to the table that differentiates you?

4. Tell us what you know about our organisation. Why select us over our competitors?



3.2. Behavioural Interview Questions

Behavioural questions call for you to give in-depth descriptions of particular incidents from your previous experiences. The fundamental tenet of behavioural interviewing is that prior behaviour in analogous situations is the best indicator of future behaviour. The phrase "in similar circumstances" should be noted. Employers are interested in seeing examples of how you have used the particular abilities, expertise, personal qualities, and situations you claim to have encountered in the position you are applying for. A good method to effectively respond to a behavioural question is to tell a story.

The inquiries in behavioural-based interviews frequently center on transferrable skills. The interviewer is curious about the actions you have taken and the abilities you have applied to achieve successful outcomes in the past in order to predict how you will handle specific circumstances in your new workplace.

The S.T.A.R Model

The selection criteria and job description for the role should be reflected in the interview questions. It is advised that you follow the STAR or SAO model when a recruiter gives you a behavioural interview question.

The interviewer is searching for a specific response when they ask you a behavioural interview question. They are looking for an answer that gives a concrete illustration of a time in the past when you accomplished something akin to what they hope you will accomplish in the future with their company. You can find the answers to these queries using the STAR or SAO models.

Before responding, determine which talent the employer is referring to. Then, use the technique described below:

SITUATION: You need to explain the situation you were in so the interviewer can appreciate the context in which that action takes place. You might be at university, at your part time job or completing some extra-curricular activity. It's the where, the context.

TASK: Refers to what you were required to do. It's the what.

ACTION: Refers to what you actually did. It's the how - how did your actions demonstrate your knowledge or use of the skill.

RESULT: Without the result it is impossible to appreciate whether the actions taken were appropriate. This is the most important part, the interviewees often forget about it. There should always be a result for yourself, the organisation or the client. Hard objective outcomes are often the best, but any outcome can be useful.

BEHAVIOURAL INTERVIEW Q&A EXAMPLES

Tell me about a time when you worked as part of a team and reached a successful outcome.

"In July 2016 I completed a four week work placement at Shanghai BoAi Children's Rehabilitation Centre in Shanghai, China. I worked for as a member of an inter professional team with Chinese staff and other Curtin students with children aged six months to seventeen years with Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome and Autism."

"Throughout my placement I was required to liaise with other allied health staff such as Physiotherapists, Psychologist and Speech Therapists in a co-ordinated effort to plan, implement and evaluate individual and group treatment programmes relating to each child's developmental needs."

"To work collaboratively within the allied health team, I was required to adapt my communication style to ensure mutual understanding between all team members from diverse linguistic backgrounds. I used non-verbal communication, including universally recognised hand gestures that I had learnt as part of my pre-departure briefing, as well as ensuring that I spoke using non-colloquial terms of reference and using a slower pace."

"I received positive feedback from my placement supervisor in regard to my flexibility to work within a multi-disciplinary team and willingness to learn how culture and language altered their service delivery and communication methods in comparison to Malaysian methodology."

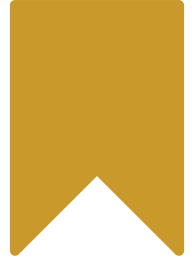
The identified key skill here is a teamwork, so the answer must focus mainly on how the applicant operated effectively in a team.

In the above response the interviewee has clearly set out the:

- **Situation:** Where were they working and what was their role.
- **Task:** What specific duties were they required to undertake.
- **Action:** What technical skills, methods of best practice, knowledge, transferable skills, personal attributes they used to work through the process.
- **Result:** What was the positive outcome and how they knew it was positive.

Not only did this answer focus on teamwork but also demonstrated some other intrinsic values including cultural sensitivity and ability to tailor language specific information to the audience needs.

See if you can easily identify where the candidate showed these additional values.



Behavioural Questions Activity

Recalling the previous activity where you linked several skills to an organisation; consider how, using the S.T.A.R. formula, you would answer the following questions:

Provide an example of a time when you used problem solving skills to achieve a positive outcome?

- Identify Skill:
- Situation:
- Task:
- Action:
- Result:

Give an example of when you experienced poor group work. How did you handle this situation?

- Identify Skill:
- Situation:
- Task:
- Action:
- Result:

Demonstrate a time when you were under pressure. What strategies did you use to get organised and achieve the required task(s)?

- Identify Skill:
- Situation:
- Task:
- Action:
- Result:

Sometimes we are confronted with frustrating customers or clients. Tell me about the most frustrating person that you have dealt with recently, how did you handle the situation?

- Identify Skill:
- Situation:
- Task:
- Action:
- Result:

Skills Identification

You must answer inquiries about your personal traits, transferable skills, technical skills, knowledge, and expertise on both traditional and behavioral tests. Your values, philosophies, beliefs, life objectives, hobbies, values, personality, strengths, and weaknesses are some examples of your personal traits.

SKILLS IDENTIFICATION ACTIVITY !

Name a few of your personal characteristics, transferable skills, and technical abilities. Think back to instances in the past where you specifically displayed these abilities or traits, or if you can't, where you first began to exhibit them.

Personal Characteristics:

Demonstrated Experience:

Transferable Skills:

Demonstrated Experience:

Technical Abilities:

Demonstrated Experience:

Equal Opportunity

Some topics should not be discussed during an interview. It's crucial to acquire the ability to handle such a situation.

Additionally, you should consider whether you want to pursue this job chance if a prospective employer asks you questions like these during an interview. Employers are not permitted to treat you unfairly on the grounds of your gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, age, marital status, or whether you are expecting a child. For instance, a potential boss is not permitted to inquire about your family plans in the near future. What is your sexual orientation? How old are you? Are you presently in a relationship?

If you find yourself in such a situation, you can handle it professionally by being assertive and persistently drawing attention away from your personal life and back to your professional position. To be effective in this position, for instance, "I would prefer to avoid answering questions about my personal life and instead concentrate on my professional abilities, experience, and knowledge."



- **Genuine Occupational Qualification**

Only in cases where the law explicitly states that it is an essential component of the job, certain positions state that you must be a Malaysian citizen or of a particular gender. For authenticity's sake, participation in a dramatic show, for instance, might call for someone of a specific race. Mammogram radiologists are required to be female.

- **Internalisation**

It is always helpful to find out if there are varying standards and practices in applying for jobs and the recruitment procedure in different countries, whether you are an international student planning to find employment in Malaysia or elsewhere or a domestic student looking for work abroad.

Additional Support

Curtin Careers, Employment & Leadership can assist you further with your resume. We offer a range of support, with some of your options listed below:



- Complete the online Interview module via the [Getting a Job Challenge](#)
- Practice your interview technique online. Answer some practice questions and receive feedback from our Careers Officer
- Book a 15 minute consultation with Curtin Careers, Employment & Leadership for personal careers advice.
- Speak to our Careers Officer about booking a 'Mock Interview' appointment with a Career Development Consultant.

Appendices

Appendix One: Hints & Tips for Telephone Interviews



Hints & Tips for Telephone Interview

TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION IN GENERAL

Keep in mind that any contact you have with a potential employer is being evaluated, so it's crucial to make a good first impression. Graduate recruiters and employment firms conduct telephone interviews with candidates as part of their initial evaluation process. It can also be used in situations where distance is a barrier, such as a job or head office situated in a different state.

Other situations could be when you called an employer to find out about a job or to look for opportunities for work experience, or when an employer calls you unexpectedly to set up an interview or perform an on-the-spot interview. Do your research on the businesses you have applied to, and keep track of who, when, and for what position you have applied.

If you're looking for work, you should always be cautious when picking up the phone because a potential boss might be on the other hand.

BEFORE YOUR TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

You can prepare just as you would for a face-to-face interview:

1. Review the actual job advertisement and all the information that you have gathered about the job and the company.
2. Read over any job application documents that you submitted for the job.
3. Consider what interests you about this job. What are your related skills and strengths? What are your values and how do they match the company's values?
4. Consider questions that you have about the position that you might like to ask at the end of the interview. It is important to have some questions for an employer as it demonstrates your interest in the position and your participation in the interview process.

The benefit of a scheduled telephone interview is that you can choose a place that is peaceful and distraction-free, gather all the necessary documents, and prepare yourself with a pen and notebook. If the chance arises, you can make notes or emphasize areas that you want to inquire about.



Remember



Find a calm area that is uncluttered and free of disturbances. Turn off any loud appliances, such as the kettle, other phones, the morning clock, etc. Keep a pen, paper, and bottle of water close at hand.

DURING YOUR TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

You don't need to dress in a suit for a telephone interview, but it is a good idea to be fresh, dressed and alert:

1. Sit at a table as you would for an interview.
2. Posture does affect our voices; use your body language as you would with a face-to-face conversation.
3. Be polite but be natural.
4. A smile does actually come across over the phone and this is where being enthusiastic comes in.
5. Speak clearly and take your time with your responses as there can be a tendency to rush speech over the telephone.

Remember



Be courteous, lively, and involved in the discussion. Active listening abilities should be displayed. It won't sound natural to hurry, mumble, or give out prepared speeches. If necessary, ask queries again for clarity.

WRAPPING UP

Thank the person for their time and inquire as to what the process's next step might be. Send an email to them thanking them for taking the time to meet you if you have their contact information.

TRICKIER SCENARIOS

Although you don't want to miss an interview, there might be instances when it's actually not a good idea. You might receive a contact from a recruiter at an odd hour. The person who called you should ask if the time of the call is convenient; if it is obviously not, they should request a time when you call them back or request that you reschedule a time for later that day, ideally not too much later. If you have a time slot available, use it to prepare for the interview.