

Interviews are all about finding out information about you. Can you do the job? Do you have the relevant skills, abilities, knowledge and experience? Are you the right fit for the team/organisation?

Here are some tips on how to get ready for your interview.

## Preparation

You must research the position and the company and know how you meet the needs of both and be an asset.

Read through the application you sent to the employer. Think about the questions the employer might ask and practice how you might respond to these. Prepare a list of questions that you want to ask the employer. (*They nearly always ask this at the end of the interview.*) Do some practice interviews with friends or use [Big Interview](#) to practice, record and review your responses to interview questions.

Check the details of the interview i.e. location, time, parking, duration etc. Have some strategies in place to help you cope with any nerves or anxiety on the day e.g. deep breathing, visualisation, releasing tension by tightening and releasing muscles in your feet or hands.



*The JCU Career Development Program has a module on [Interviews](#)*

## Understand Yourself

You must understand yourself in terms of your values, strengths, weaknesses and employability skills, such as teamwork, communication and problem solving skills.

The job application will often specify the types of skills and abilities that the employer is seeking. You need to think of examples of how you have developed the skills and abilities, by thinking back to what you have done throughout university, placements, work experience and extra-curricular activities.



*[Big Interview](#) is a free, online resource for JCU students and graduates*

## Types of Interviews

There are many types of interviews that employers can use to help them with their selection process. It is important to understand the purpose of different interview techniques so that you can deal with them confidently.

- **Individual** – Conducted by one person where it is important to build rapport with the interviewer
- **Panel** – A panel generally consists of two or three interviewers. With the panel interview simply address the person asking the question and don't try to maintain eye contact with all the panel members
- **Group or Team Settings** – Organisations undertake group interviews to see your interactional and interpersonal skills in action.
- **Telephone/Video Conference/Skype** – Companies often use these methods as a first interview to deal with distance problems and minimise costs.
- **Screening** – Initial interviews for graduate positions are sometimes called screening interviews.

## Dress to Impress

Before the interview choose appropriate attire.

- Men should wear long trousers and a buttoned up long sleeve shirt and closed in shoes. It is optional to also wear a tie.
- Women should wear a blouse with trousers or knee length skirt, or a corporate knee length dress.

When in doubt, dressing more corporate than casual is best. **Dress sharp to think sharp.**

## Your Arrival

When you enter an interview the focus is on developing a rapport with your interviewer/s. First impressions do count, so appear confident and be enthusiastic.

Make appropriate eye contact and shake hands firmly. Interviewers will often engage you in small talk to help ease your nerves - be sure to participate in this process or even initiate it.

Take your cues from the interviewer/s, especially in relation to when they wish to start the interview. Be conscious of your body language, sit back in your chair with an appropriate posture, and don't fidget.

### How to Form Your Answers

Try to relate your experience and knowledge to the position and the organisation. Be able to talk about what you can contribute to the organisation.

When considering your response to questions, using the **STAR (L) model** may assist you in putting a structure to your answer as well as providing the employer with a comprehensive response. This is particularly helpful for behavioural type questions, eg. Tell me about a time when...

**S:** explain the **situation** you were in

**T:** describe the **task/problem** you were presented with

**A:** detail the **actions** that you took to undertake the task or solve the problem

**R:** provide details on the **result** that was achieved

**(L):** explain what you **learnt** from this situation and what, if anything, you would do differently next time.

### Closing

Have questions ready to ask the interviewer/s. Thank them for their time and consideration, shake hands firmly and leave confidently.

### After the Interview

It's a good idea after the interview to take just a few minutes to reflect and review your performance and

the interview process. Take a few notes on areas that you could improve on, the questions that were asked etc. This will be a valuable resource for the next interview.

Consider following up the interview with a thank-you email. If you are unsuccessful, contact the employer for some feedback on your performance.

### Our Tips

1. Arrive on time! Plan your transport/parking in advance
2. Turn off your mobile phone before the interview
3. Be truthful but don't undersell your skills, abilities, experience and knowledge
4. Prepare and practice
5. Maintain eye contact and a positive and confident attitude
6. Listen carefully to questions and instructions
7. Use your own real experiences to answer questions
8. Show passion and enthusiasm for the position
9. Have a list of prepared questions to ask about the company and position

### Resources

- [Big Interview](#) – training and practice online
- [JCU Career Development Program](#) – Interviews

### Sample Interview Questions

Below is a list of questions that an employer could potentially ask you in an interview. Try and draft some responses as part of your preparation.

- Why did you choose to study ..... (*your area of study*)?
- What have you learned from previous positions you've held? And how have they prepared you to work for this company?
- Why do you want this job? Why do you want to work for this company?
- Tell me about yourself.
- What skills will you bring to this position?
- What would you consider your strengths and weaknesses?
- What do you hope to be doing in 5 years time?
- Outline an example of when you have been a leader of a team. How did you accomplish your objective?
- Outline an example of when you were unable to achieve your objective. What did you learn from this experience?
- What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishment?
- Give me an example of a problem you have encountered and how you solved it.
- Describe a situation where you had to handle multiple tasks at the one time.
- Why do you want to be a ..... (*position you're applying for*)?
- Have questions ready to ask the interviewer/s. Thank them for their time and consideration