



Southern Cross
University

Preparing for an interview

Congratulations! You have made it this far in the selection process, and now it is time to develop your interview skills so you can truly shine.

Purpose of a job interview

The job interview helps the employer to discover whether your skills, qualifications, motivations, attitude and ambitions are a good fit for the job, the organisation, and the organisation's mission. It is also your opportunity to make sure that the organisation and role align with your expectations.

Common interview formats

- Online platform such as Zoom, MS Teams, etc.
- One-on-one
- Panel
- Group
- Assessment centre

You should always enquire about the structure and process of the interview in advance.

Interview tips

- Be prepared – research the organisation beforehand.
- Arrive at least 15 minutes before the scheduled interview time.
- Turn your mobile phone off.
- Dress appropriately – usually this means clean, ironed, business attire. Do not chew gum or smoke.
- Given the increase in video interviews, tips to present well on camera include ensure sufficient light, no interruptions, camera is in focus, think about a plain, professional background.

- Find out who will be interviewing you, their name and title –check pronunciation of their name if in doubt.
- Greet the interviewer by name, making eye contact with a firm handshake (if appropriate).
- Smile! Be friendly, positive and enthusiastic.
- Sit upright in your chair and watch body language throughout the interview.
- Listen attentively.
- Do not waffle – answer concisely, only including relevant information.
- Feel comfortable with silence – it is perfectly okay to take a little time before answering a question so you are clear about what you want to say before talking.
- Don't be afraid to ask the interviewer to repeat the question if you are unclear about what they are asking.

Things to avoid

- Answering a question with just 'yes' or 'no' – always elaborate to highlight your suitability for the role.
- Interrupting the interviewer – always wait until they have finished speaking.
- Bad-mouthing or criticising a past employer or previous teacher or work colleague.
- Exaggerating your abilities or lying about your previous experience and skills.
- Avoid disfluencies eg. ums, ers. Practise the pause!



Careers and Employability
scu.edu.au/careers | careers@scu.edu.au





Preparing for an interview

Types of questions

Open: 'Tell us a little about yourself...'

Broad questions such as this provide an opportunity to highlight your strengths, motivation and how you meet the selection criteria.

Hypothetical/scenario based: 'What would you do if...'

These will assess your ability to think on your feet. Think about relevant strategies you've learned and related situation or experiences you can draw on.

Leading: 'The person in this role is required to have good communication skills – do you have good skills in this area?'

Do not just give a yes/no response. Give examples to support your response.

Behavioural questions: 'Tell us about a time you...' or 'Describe a situation where you had to...'

Come prepared with examples of how your experiences have helped you develop specific skills related to the job requirements.

Using the STARR model (that you may have also used when writing your answers to the Selection Criteria) can help you stay on track when answering interview questions:

S ituation	Describe the situation
T ask	What was required of you?
A ction	What did you do?
R esult	What happened as a result of your actions?
R eflection	What learning was gained?

At the end of your STARR response, relate your skills/experience etc back to the role you are applying for.
e.g. I am confident that my experience will be beneficial to...

Your questions

The opportunity to ask questions at the end of an interview is your chance to show how much you have researched this position and how well you fit with the organisation.

Think of questions you might have about:

- Projects you might work on
- Immediate priorities you might need to address
- Current challenges you would be required to tackle
- Opportunities for growth in the role
- Changes in the industry
- Induction and training programs
- The next stage/s of the selection process
- Do not ask about the pay and benefits of the role!

Interview 'prep sheet'

Help yourself by preparing a single page interview prep sheet. Write your answers to the following questions and take them with you to the interview:

- Important facts about the company
- My relevant career/job history
- Examples of my relevant achievements
- Examples of my competitive advantages (knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes)
- Questions to ask
- 3–4 STARR stories to share your experience



Careers and Employability
scu.edu.au/careers | careers@scu.edu.au



Career fact sheets
[View and download our fact sheets](#)