

CANDIDATE ADVICE

Interview Advice

An aide-memoire for face-to-face interviews: preparation, what to take, how to conduct yourself and the questions to expect.

Job interviews can be a daunting prospect at the best of times. This aide-memoire gives a few pointers that should get you on the right track.

General interview advice

- Make sure you are clear about the role you are being interviewed for.
- Confirm the time and location, and try to establish who will be interviewing you.
- It is always a good idea to do a dry run, to take the pressure off finding the company on the day.
- Leave in plenty of time and report to reception at least 10–15 minutes before the start time.
- Research: find out as much as you can about the company before the interview. You may want to print some notes so you can refresh your memory in the car before going in.
- Dress code should be formal business attire, including a tie for gentlemen, unless the company advises otherwise. It is always better to be overdressed than underdressed.
- Know your own CV. The interviewer is likely to use it as the basis for their questions, and you should take at least one copy with you.
- Be positive during the interview and avoid negative comments about your current employer.

Pre-interview checklist

Take the following items with you. Placing them in a smart business folder creates a good first impression:

- Map or directions
- The company's telephone number, in case you are running late or lost
- The names of the interviewers
- Pen and paper
- Two copies of your CV
- A list of questions you would like to ask (see the examples below)



At the interview

- If asked to wait in reception, scan the area for press cuttings or notices that might prove useful during the interview.
- On meeting the interviewer, make eye contact, smile and offer a firm handshake.
- Stay focused throughout and make sure your body language is giving a good impression.
- When the interview is over, offer another firm handshake with eye contact and thank everybody for taking the time to meet you.

Questions to prepare for

Review the following questions and think about the answers you would give.

The killer question

Why are you looking to leave your current role? This question has tripped up many an experienced candidate. Keep your answer positive while being as honest as possible. It is not ideal to criticise your boss or current employer too heavily; focus on positive reasons such as enhanced career opportunities or stability.

Questions you could be asked

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why do you want this job?
- What are your long-term aims?
- What can you bring to this job and company?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What do you enjoy most, and least?
- What is your greatest achievement so far?
- What would you like to be better at?

- How would your colleagues describe you?
- Why should we give you this job?
- What attracted you to this company?
- What do you know about our business?
- How would you fit in with our culture?
- What do you think the most important qualities for this job are?

Good questions to ask

- Can you describe a typical day?
- What training does the company offer?
- What opportunities are there for development within the company?
- I read about your new product / takeover / new order / plans to... Can you tell me more about that?

Questions to avoid

- How many holidays do I get?
- When will I get a pay rise?
- What is your grievance procedure?

Preparing for an interview?

Your Sigma consultant can tell you what to expect from a particular employer's process and who you will be meeting. Call 02920 450 100, or visit sigmarecruitment.co.uk for more candidate advice.