

Interview Preparation Guide

1) Presentation and documentation

Attend well dressed and in suitable office attire. For example black trousers/shirt and tie/shoes/appropriate blouse/appropriate length skirt. No bright colours - think formal and professional! Even if the position does not involve wearing formal office attire still attend your interview dressed as advised above as it will show how serious you are taking your job application!

Take all relevant certificates and a copy of your updated CV (updated CV provided by Hull Business Training Centre Ltd). Take them in a neat folder and have them on your lap/on the table in front of you during the interview. They may ask to look at them or you can offer to do so if you feel this will help your application. On top of your certificates and CV place your interview notes for quick and easy reference should you get stuck or unsure in your interview (Interview notes section will explain this document). If you have them (or can get them in time) take references with you as they will strongly support your application.

When possible, take out piercings and never wear large bulky and bright jewellery as this can inadvertently make you look less formal and professional in the eye of your interviewer. As everyone has different opinions on this the safest option is to not wear any! If jewellery is to be worn it must be small and discreet. Hair should be brushed to look tidy and smart, do not use current fashionable styles and trends as guidance. Also, consider carefully before dyeing hair in bright unusual colours as this may appear unprofessional, particularly in a customer service based environment. In business, formal, neat and tidy is always best!

2) Preparation

Before attending an interview, thorough research is essential to give you the best chance of success. Hull Business Training Centre will provide you with an Interview Memorandum with all the specific details such as company name, name of interviewer, address, contact number and job description. You will also be provided with an up to date copy of your CV to take with you. You will be asked to research the company and whether you do this at our centre or at home remember to follow these steps to ensure you have prepared correctly.

Transport Arrangements

Research location and bus timetables, ring your local bus operator to help attain information on bus routes and times etc. Plan in advance which bus you will need to get to and from your interview. Also look at the schedule concerning your times of work i.e. 9.00 am - 5.00 pm - the Interviewer may ask you how you will get to work if successful. Knowing the exact times and bus services will impress them instantly! If you drive, walk or have alternative means of transport still plan your journey and potential work time journey plans in advance. If any problems arise such as concerns over transport reliability inform Hull Business Training Centre immediately.

Write down your planned transport schedule on your interview notes.

Remember that it is normal and expected to get two buses to a location (from home to interchange to work).

What do the company do?

Research the company using the website. Find out what they do, how long they have operated and perhaps a few facts and figures about them. Bullet point your findings in simple sentences on your interview notes. You will be asked at your interview what you know about the company and what they do, you can refer to these if your nerves get the better of you and your mind goes blank! A quick glance at your notes is usually enough to get your memory going and usually you can continue forwards from using them.

When researching try not to be too basic, as this will look like you have not tried very hard. On the other hand do not worry yourself trying to write everything down and memorising everything the company has ever done or intends to do. This won't work and is also not expected by your interviewer. As a guide, ten points should do, covering an explanation of what the company do and a few facts about them and their history. Remember what is equally important about this task is understanding what the company do and how it works, do as much research as needed to ensure you understand the company you are applying to work for.

Please put your findings on your interview notes.

Why should they pick you?

To ensure you are successful you need to be able to give them reasons why you would be the right person for the role. Bullet point your skills and reasons in easy to read and short sentences. List as much as possible, as you will probably use these in your interview to answer questions. You may not use them all, but the more you have written down gives you more answers and reasons to answer their questions!!! Examples areas to consider would be:

IT skills: Microsoft Office - go into a bit of detail about what you can use and how advanced you are with them.

Personal skills: Organisation, time keeping skills, enthusiasm, dedication.

Customer service skills: Team working skills, problem solving and customer facing skills.

Flexibility: Show willingness to undertake training, get involved in other things if they want that and flexibility on work hours if required.

Work experience: Even if not relevant to the role you're applying for try to link work experience to your suitability - for example I worked in a cafe for two years and never had a day off. I developed my confidence skills and learned how to deal with problems.

Remember to make everything relevant to the position you're applying for so that the interviewer does not think you are going off the point. For example when explaining a reason for your work experience at a cafe, explain what skills you have gained that you can bring to the position. Skills that can be used in various unrelated workplaces are called transferable skills, remember to write down as many of these as you can and explain why they are transferable and relevant in the job role you're applying for.

Questions to ask at the end of your interview

Always write down some questions to ask at the end, between 3 - 5 should suffice. Asking questions shows a genuine interest and even basic questions will be fine. Here are a few examples to help you get started:

The role seems really interesting, I would really like to be considered. When will I hopefully hear the outcome?

Would you allow me to progress onto my Advanced Apprenticeship or undertake further training for with you?

If I perform really well will I have continued employment with the company after my Apprenticeship?

I noticed on your website you do this (example of product). Can you tell me a little more about this?

I noticed you have grown considerably in the last 4 years. Is there a specific reason or product responsible for this?

The above will show that you have researched the company and have shown a genuine interest and understanding of them. As the interview progresses you will

probably have your own questions that will arise naturally and you may not end up using those you have prepared. Nevertheless it is best to have some prepared!

Write your questions down on your interview notes and remember to ask them at the end.

Questions NOT to ask!

- ▶ Do I get breaks?
- ▶ How long is my lunch?
- ▶ Is there anywhere to buy lunch from around here?
- ▶ What are my days off?
- ▶ What is my pay?

The above will be explained if you are accepted for the job and you will be informed by Hull Business Training Centre. You may be informed before your interview if there are specific reasons to know beforehand. Therefore never ask these kinds of questions at the interview! If you must know the answers to these beforehand (for example if you have a medical condition or religious commitment) please ask us before your interview.

3) The interview

The following guidelines will help to prepare you for the interview experience itself. Try and memorise these points before hand. Remember to take in your interview notes with all of your valuable preparation with you. They are there to refer to should you get stuck or need something to remind you of specific skills and attributes. This is why they should be bullet pointed so that you can quickly glance at them and pick up the information needed to then discuss further.

Shake hands on arrival with your interviewer with a big friendly smile. This will show confidence, professionalism and will leave a lasting impression.

Sit up straight, look attentively at the interviewer and maintain good eye contact (but don't stare at them).

Have your certificates/CV and interview memorandum and interview notes placed neatly in front of you for referral to if necessary (Your interview notes and bullet points on top).

When they are explaining things, or talking for quite some time, smile slightly and nod occasionally to show that you are interested and are actually listening.

Don't chew gum in the interview, or bring a beverage in with you. For example if you have a bottled drink put it in your bag or dispose of it before entering the building.

When answering questions don't be too brief and do not over do it by waffling on. Explain things in neat sentences that are to the point but at the same time explain your skills in enough detail. Never give one word answers.

Speak clearly and confidently whilst looking at them, do not lower your head down or speak quietly as this will make you look nervous.

If you jumble your words, calmly start again. Everybody does it occasionally and it is nothing for you to worry about.

When referring to your interview notes quick glances to read bullet points will be fine. Use the information you have written down to put into sentences as you discuss things with them. This will make it more natural sounding. Do not read your notes like a script or look at them excessively as it will look like you have not prepared or taken anything in.

Ensure you are always uphold a positive, friendly, can do attitude. If anything negative is raised try and turn it into a positive - for example if you received below C grade in Maths they may ask if you struggled in this subject. A response to this could be "I can subtract and use Maths in a business context easily/ I always use a calculator to double check my work and will be undertaking my Functional Skills with Hull Business Training Centre Ltd to improve my Math skills". This should be more than sufficient and shows what you're intending to do to improve your skills.

Explain you can easily get to them and if they have not asked already explain the details of your travel arrangements. This will put doubts as to your reliability to rest, even if you do live quite far away.

Remember to ask your questions before leaving hand over copies of references and ask if they want to see your certificates (if you feel this is appropriate).

Remember

For help and support whilst working through this please contact a member of the Recruitment Team who will be more than happy to assist you.