

# THE INTERVIEW –

## Questions you may be asked

### **What made you apply for this position?**

State your interest in the position and the company.

### **What do you know about the company?**

Make sure you have done your research before the interview so you can answer.

### **Why should we hire you?**

Relate your studies and experience to the requirements of the *position*. *Make them aware that you are capable of doing the job.*

### **What are your interests and hobbies?**

Remember to keep it simple. (If you say *'reading'* make sure you know the name and author of the last book you read.)

### **What kind of person are you?**

Choose qualities that are attractive to the employer – Don't lie!

### **Are you an introvert or an extrovert? Why?**

I would be more likely to describe myself as eg balanced, out-going, friendly.

### **Are you a good listener?**

They want to identify if they are going to have to tell you things ten times. Ideally they want someone who gets the point the first time and if unclear they'll ask.

### **Tell me about yourself.**

Be brief, positive, relevant and not too personal.

### **Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend/husband/wife/children etc.**

Yes/No. If asked for more information, politely ask them how this relates to your application for the position.

### **How do you work under pressure?**

The employer does not want people who crack under pressure. Some people thrive under pressure and if you do, tell them so. Others cope and use strategies to cope. Tell them about the strategies that you use so that you don't crack under pressure.

### **Are you well organised?**

Talk about how you manage to get assignments done, study, keep appointments etc. Mention tools that you use like *"to do"* lists, diary, notes on the fridge etc.

### **How would you handle the situation if you didn't get along with a co-worker?**

They are looking for someone who can try to maintain a good working relationship, despite any personal clashes.

### **Where do you see yourself in two years?**

Keep your answer career focused, not *'backpacking around Europe'* for example.

### **What are your strengths?**

Be honest and positive, but don't brag or be arrogant.

**What are your weaknesses?**

Never list more than one. Turn the weakness into a positive eg *I tend to keep to myself. Some people think I am unsociable but it helps me really focus and complete my work on time.*

**Could you see yourself working for this company?**

Tell them what you see as the company's strong selling points as an employer.

**What were your best subjects at school/college?**

Try to relate these to the position requirements.

**What kind of student were you?**

If there are some very negative issues don't mention them.

**When did you decide that you wanted to be a ....?**

Avoid statements like – when I heard you can get paid \$25.00/hr.

**Do you have any plans for further study?**

Remember you are applying for a job and they want your priority to be that job. Showing your commitment to professional development will be valued but it should not impact adversely on your job performance.

**What types of work have you had?**

It all counts and deserves a mention - paid work, volunteer work, work experience.

**How do you think you have benefited from this experience?**

For example, developing a work ethic, learning about employee responsibilities, ability to work in a team plus any skills you have gained.

**Why should we consider you given your lack of experience?**

Draw from your studies and other experiences. Explain in a non-defensive manner how your skills are transferable. Demonstrate a 'can do' attitude. You can say that everyone needs to get their first start and that they would not regret giving you your first start.

**What are you looking to gain from this job – job satisfaction, money ...?**

Job satisfaction, consolidation of skills, development opportunities, etc.

**Are you ambitious?**

Be careful here. Remember they will want someone who is ambitious but is happy to settle in and learn and master this job first! You also don't want to appear as a threat to the interviewer.

**Do you intend to travel overseas?**

If you do want to travel maybe you could say, *"maybe a short trip in the long term, but I'm more interested in establishing myself in a career at the present time"*.

**How is your health?**

If you have some pre-existing condition or disability, be honest about it and reassure them that it will not affect your ability to carry out your duties or explain your needs and how it may affect your ability to do the job.

**What kind of person do you find annoying?**

Stay safe here and say that you don't rush judgement on anyone but be honest and mention one or two traits that annoy you eg late, tardy work, lying, *"I know"* attitude.

**Can you provide recommendations from previous employers/clients?**

# TARGETED SELECTION QUESTIONS

Many 'trained' interviewers structure questions which ask you to use examples from your past experience. Looking at the way you have done things in the past is seen to be a window into how you would operate in the future. To prepare fully for this style of questioning we suggest that you study the following questions – and rehearse answers before an interview. The more you practice the more confident you will be.

## Written communication skills

- What kind of written proposals or submissions have you prepared? Give me an example.
- Tell me about the content and the outcome when it was reviewed.

## Energy

- What do you do with your spare time?
- What do you do for exercise?

## Career ambition

- What do you see yourself doing in five years' time?
- What self-development have you undertaken during the past year?

## Creativity

- Can you think of a recent problem in which old solutions wouldn't work? How did you solve it?
- What is the most imaginative or innovative thing you have done in your present position?

## Work standards

- How do you determine that you are doing a good job? Give me an example.
- What is the difference between a good employee and an average employee?

## Keeping up to date

- How do you keep informed about what's going on in other parts of the organisation/industry?
- Describe an article of particular interest that you have read recently?
- What is the most important change going on in the organisation/industry?

## Stress tolerance

- Under what conditions do you work best?
- Do you feel pressure in your job? How do you deal with it?
- How do you relax or get away from it all (relieve work tensions) after a hard day at work?

## Listening skills

- How good are your listening skills? How do you know?

## Leadership

- Tell me about a position of leadership that you have held.
- Do you consider you have leadership qualities? Why?
- What sort of leader would others say you are?

## Motivation for work

- Why did you choose this career?
- Give me examples of experiences on the job or in your study that you felt were satisfying?
- What do you like least about your job or your course?
- What event or who has been the most important in influencing your career development?

### **Persistence**

- What is the biggest obstacle you overcame to get to where you are today?
- Describe an experience in which you felt you gained something because you persisted.
- Describe a situation where you gave your all, but failed? What did you learn from this incident?

### **Initiative**

- Have you ever found any way to make your job easier or more rewarding?
- What did you do to prepare for this interview?

### **Independence**

- Describe an incident in which you disagreed with your supervisor. How was it settled?
- Why did you go to the particular TAFE you attended?
- Why did you decide to leave your most recent job or studies?

### **Planning and Organisation**

- How do you schedule your time? Set priorities?
- What were your objectives for the last year? Were they achieved?
- What are your objectives for this year? What are you doing to ensure that they are achieved?

### **Integrity**

- In order to make it in the world, people have to bend a little bit. What is the farthest you have had to bend your standards in order to succeed?
- Sometimes we have to bend the truth a little when dealing with people. Can you give me an example of when you have had to bend the truth?
- Everyone has to break some rules sometimes. Can you give me an example of an occasion when you have had to do so?

### **Ability to learn**

- When starting a new job/course how did you learn the technical aspects of it?
- How do you like to be taught a new task/skill?
- Are you a quick learner? Give me an example.

### **Resilience**

- What was your biggest disappointment? How did you cope with it?
- How do you pick yourself up after a disappointment?

### **Job Interest and Suitability**

- Why did you apply for this position?
- Why do you think you are the best person for the job?
- What aspects of the job do you think you will find the most difficult?
- What interests you about this company?

### **Skills**

- What skills do you have that directly relate to this position?
- Do you have any other skills, which could be an asset to this company?
- In your previous job was there a skill that you were lacking and what did you do about it?