Interview Preparation

Sandra Yee
Career Adviser
UniSA Career Services

Dr. Shashi Nallaya
Language and Learning Coordinator
L3 Language Literacies and Learning
Commonwealth of Australia
Copyright Act 1968

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Session outline

• Key objectives of a job interview
• Guidelines in preparing for an interview
• Three main types of questions
The interviewer’s purpose

To determine:
- **CAN** you do the job – your skills, knowledge and qualifications
- **WILL** you do the job – interest in the position, organisation, industry, overall motivation to perform the role, work ethic etc
- **FIT** – personality, values, communication style, likeability, appearance & dress
Your purpose

• Assess the opportunity against your needs and preferences – the organisation, job role, ‘fit’, remuneration & working conditions
• Demonstrate your interest, capabilities and potential contribution
• Make a positive impression
• Qualify for the next stage of the selection process
Interview stages

Beginning
First impressions

Middle
Questions from employer, and opportunity for candidate to ask questions

End
Opportunity to reinforce suitability
Interview preparation

• Research the industry and organisation
• Find out who are the interviewers, do some research on them where possible
• Check out the location, and other logistics e.g. travel time, parking availability
• Review the advertisement, selection criteria, your
• Take a folder with this documentation to the interview
• What you are going to wear
• Anticipate questions, prepare answers, practice
How meaning of a message is achieved in face to face communication

7% Verbal – the words we use.
38% Vocal – tone of voice, diction, inflection, rate of speech etc.
55% Visual – facial expression, gestures, posture etc.
Introductions & first impressions

• Eye contact and smile
• Maintain good posture
• Firm handshake
• Try to use the interviewer’s name during introductions and during the interview
• Wait to be directed to your seat
• Maintain relaxed, upright posture during the interview
• Avoid distracting mannerisms
Types of questions

**General** – clarifies your background and how you meet requirements
   *e.g. Tell us about yourself?*

**Behavioural** – explores past behaviour, as indicator of future job performance
   *e.g. Describe a situation where you had to work with others to resolve a problem.*

**Situational** – uncovers your response to a hypothetical situation
   *e.g. A colleague has unfairly criticised your judgement several times, and has obviously been talking to others in the team about this. What would you do?*

**Your questions** – where you need further clarification related to the role, however leave out questions about salary and working conditions.
   *e.g. What are you looking for in an ideal candidate for this role?*
Tips for answering

• Be honest and positive

• Describe strengths in terms of benefits for employer, and provide relevant examples

• If you can’t provide relevant information, then demonstrate your transferable and employable skills e.g. volunteer work, extracurricular activities

• Use the STAR Model where possible to structure answers
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>In addition to my role as a part time call centre operator at Rhapsody Communications, I am also on the social club committee.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Last spring I was allocated the responsibility of organising the office party before the Christmas break. The Human Resources Officer had previously organised the event, but on this occasion he was on sick leave for an extended period.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| A | Action    | I co-ordinated the following activities:  
• surveyed staff about their preferences for a celebration  
• researched potential options  
• costed and evaluated the most desirable venues and activities  
• allocated tasks in delivering this event |
| R | Result    | The celebration organised was a weekend brunch at a popular beachside cafe. This worked well as it was cost-effective, the menu catered to a wide range of dietary requirements, and the timing allowed people to bring their families. Overall, the office celebration was a huge success. My colleagues ranked it the best social event in years. Additionally, the activity gave me an opportunity to lead and manage a project, and it was significant in improving office relationships. |
Prepare a response to ‘Tell us about yourself?’

Your profession or area of specialisation
Your key area of professional interest
Brief description of relevant work experience (if applicable), or summary of key experiences to date
Your strongest skills
A related achievement or two, of which you are especially proud
The industry and/or role you are seeking
Can you provide an example of how you would use a Social Work theory to help a client who is experiencing domestic violence?

Can you explain how you would use a cultural responsive approach to help a client who is of indigenous background and suffers from isolation, failing health and grief?
Difficult questions

Legislation prohibits certain types of questions that have the potential to discriminate. For example, those relating to age, marital and family status, and religious belief.

Answering options:
- ask why the question is relevant
- refuse to answer
- answer the question
End of and post-interview

• Find out about next steps
• Leave interview on positive note – have a strong closing statement
• Make brief notes about the interview – the role, employer requirements
• Evaluate your performance
• Brief your referees if applicable
• Consider sending a follow up letter or email – recover from a poor answer, emphasise your interest, sell your the contribution
• Make contact if you haven’t heard
Deliver your closing statement when any of the following happens:

• You are asked if you have any more questions e.g. ‘I don’t have any more questions but I would like to say in closing....’

• You are asked if you have anything more to say e.g. ‘Yes, I would like to conclude by saying....’

• When the interviewer indicates the interview is finished and when people are getting up to shake hands e.g. ‘Thank you for this interview opportunity, I would like to say in closing that.....’
Effective communication

During the interview, your role is to communicate that you:

• can do the job;

• have the necessary communication skills;

• are likeable; and

• do not pose the agency any risks.
Communicate effectively

You can communicate effectively when you:

• speak clearly and at an even pace;
• pronounce words correctly;
• place the word stress in the right places,
• use the correct intonation; and
• state grammatically correct sentences.
Improve on your speaking skills

Pronunciation:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/grammar/pron/sounds/
http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/colleague

Speaking fluently: Pausing and chunking; Word stress and Intonation

Work on your grammar
Get your tenses right

Past
- Simple
- Continuous
- Simple Perfect
- Perfect continuous

Present
- Simple
- Continuous
- Simple Perfect
- Perfect continuous

Future
- Simple
- Continuous
- Simple Perfect
- Perfect continuous

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Simple forms</th>
<th>Continuous</th>
<th>Perfect forms</th>
<th>Perfect Continuous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>take(s)</td>
<td>am/is/are taking</td>
<td>has/have taken</td>
<td>has/have been taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>took</td>
<td>was/were taking</td>
<td>had taken</td>
<td>had been taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>will/shall take</td>
<td>will be taking</td>
<td>will have taken</td>
<td>will have been taking</td>
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University of South Australia
Education

When talking about your education:

You would use the past tense if you are referring to all your previous qualifications.

e.g. I obtained my Social Work degree from the University of Malaya.
     I graduated with first class honours from the University of Adelaide.

You would use the present tense if currently studying.

e.g. I am currently doing my postgraduate studies in Social Work.
     I am attending some community-run English language classes.
Experience and Qualifications

When talking about your work experience:

You would use the past tense to describe any previous employment.

e.g. I \textbf{was employed} as a Social Worker by the Time for Kids non-governmental organisation for three years.

I \textbf{worked} in an aged care facility from 2010 to 2014.

You would use the present perfect or present perfect continuous when you describe your current employment (if applicable).

e.g. I \textbf{have been employed} as a Social Worker from 2014 by an organisation that provides respite for children.

I \textbf{have been helping} out in an agency that delivers human services to aboriginal people.
Goals and future aspiration

When talking about future goals and aspirations:

You would use the present continuous tense.
e.g. When I complete my studies, I am going to find a position in the Department of Health and Ageing.

or

You could use the future tense
e.g. I shall be a skilled Social Worker helping clients in regional areas.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Powerful Phrases (at the beginning)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good idea to have your resume so that you can refer to it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You’ve introduced yourself. Now transition into specifics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give a thorough description of exactly what you did, how you did it, whom you did it for and how successful you were</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source adapted from: Beshara (2014, pp. 44-46)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Powerful Phrases (ability to do the job)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Describe in detail what you are studying.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is the most difficult part of your postgraduate studies?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What do you know about this agency?</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source adapted from: Beshara (2014, pp. 71-72)
Sample questions: Placement

Why are you interested in doing a placement in this agency?

What do you know about this agency?

What do you want to learn on placement?

What have you learned so far in your course?

Why are you studying social work?

What are some social work theories that you have studied?
Summary

• Prepare for all parts of the job interview
• Three main types of questions
• Base your responses on how you align with the role/employer
Career Services support

• Learning and Teaching Unit on your campus
• Individual career consultations
• Our website: info, advice, employers, events
  http://www.unisa.edu.au/careers/
References

Bashra, T 2014, *Powerful phrases for successful interviews: over 400 ready-to-use words and phrases that will get you the job that you want*, American Management Association, USA.