PG Essentials: Interviews and other types of assessment

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Interviews & other types of assessment

- Preparation
- Their questions to you
- Your questions to them
- Practical points
- How you present yourself
- Other types of assessment
Preparing for Interviews

Where’s your evidence?

• Catalogue your achievements
  – Can’t always assume they realise the value of your qualifications or academic experience

• Review the skills & knowledge they demonstrate

• Practice explaining them to someone who wasn’t there when you did them
Catalogue your skills & achievements

**My skills**

- **Collaboration/Teamwork**
  - Negotiated access to facilities in different research group
  - Organised Summer Ball in a team for student society

- **Communication**
  - Poster presentation
  - Public engagement

- **Innovation**
  - Developed novel technique for project
  - New approach to student communications as student society Social Secretary

- **Data analysis**
  - Generating and interrogating large data sets for my project
  - Analysing customer problems as part of industrial placement

**Headings:**
- Skills

**Sub branches:**
- Achievements
Catalogue your skills & achievements

**Headings:**
- Achievements

**Sub branches:**
- Skills

**Sub sub branches:**
- Key details

### Key Details
- Summer ball
- Teamwork
- Organisation
- Innovation
- Student communications
- Generating/interrogating large data sets
- Developed new techniques
- Poster presentation
- Access to facilities in different research group

### My achievements
- Research Project
- Outreach with Museum open day

### Sub branches:
- Communication
- Public engagement
- Commercial awareness
- Customer focus
- Data analysis

### Sub branches:
- Organisation
- Teamwork
- Innovation
- Data analysis
- Communication
- Negotiation
Your Starter for 10 …

• Tell me about yourself …
  – Assume you are being interviewed either for
    • a specific type of job in which you are interested
    • or an academic job or PhD in your field
  – Give a 1 minute answer to the person next to you
Testing Your Motivation

• Why did you study … ?
  – Looking for passion, enthusiasm - and ability to communicate about your subject

• Why do you want this type of work?

• Why do you want to work for this employer?
  – Looking for passion, enthusiasm … and evidence of research
  – Show how what they say is important to them is aligned with what you value & can bring to them
Strengths-based interviews

Who are you really? What motivates you?
• What energises / engages you?
• What are your preferences?
• What do you choose to do?
• How do you feel about things?

(More in “Interviews: Beyond the basics”)
Convince me …

• Behavioural/competency interviewing
  – Having done something in the past is the best predictor of whether you could do it in the future

• “How” vs “what”
  – *How* you did things is often as important to an employer as *what* you did
Behavioural/Competency Questions

• Give me an example of …
  – … the most effective team effort / collaboration you’ve been part of
  – … when you’ve had to persevere to achieve a difficult objective
  – … where you have developed an innovative approach to something at work

• **Situation, Task, Actions, Result,**
  (Reflection)
Forensic Interviewing

- Level 1 - ask the question 
  *(Give me an example of an effective collaboration…)*
- Level 2 - ask for evidence 
  *(how did it come about etc)*
- Level 3 – personalise 
  *(what was your role?)*
- Level 4 – generalise 
  *(what do you think makes an effective collaboration?)*
- Level 5 – challenge 
  *(but what about? ie something you haven’t mentioned)*
- Level 6 - ask for more 
  *(give me another example)*
The Art of the Spin Doctor

• Need to present a positive interpretation of your life – even the bad bits
  – What are your weaknesses?
  – Why did you fail that exam / repeat that year / leave that job …?
  – What’s the worst … part of your masters/PhD or person you’ve dealt with?

• Think of what you learnt, how you would do things differently, how you persevered through adversity
Need to find the right balance

- How has doing research/a postgraduate degree prepared you for this job?
- Why should we take you?
- Is there anything else we haven’t covered which you would like to raise?
Other Questions

• Will you be a good investment?
  – Where do you see yourself in 5 years time?
  – What ideas do you have for further research?
  – What are potential sources of funding?
  – Which other jobs have you applied for?

• Other questions which worry you?
Your Questions

Do ask questions

– about your future in the organisation
– for academics - their research!
– highlighting the benefits you could bring

Don’t ask questions

– about salary, car parking, pensions …
– which are answered in their recruitment literature / website
– about page 43 of the annual report
Practical Points

• Plan
  – Where do you have to go?
  – How do you plan to get there?

• Check
  – Who will you see?
  – What will they put you through?!

• Practice

www.graduatesfirst.com/employers
Presentation

• First impressions are crucial
  – Punctual, unflustered, neat appearance
  – Firm handshake - no bone-crushers or limp lettuces
    – 😊 SMILE
• Eye contact
• Positive body language
• Look confident and interested
What else can they put you through?!

- Aptitude tests – verbal, numerical, logical
- Situational judgement tests
- Personality tests
- Game based assessments

Support - [www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/psychometric](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/psychometric)

- Two resources – both need UoM login to create own account
- Graduates First – practice tests, personality profile, potential interview questions and more …
- Profiling for success – personality profile, learning styles and career interests inventory
What else can they put you through?!

- Case study interviews
- Assessment centres
  - Group exercises & discussions
  - Presentations
  - In-tray/inbox exercises
- Graduates First – case study, in-tray, presentations, group discussion info – including what assessors are looking for
Careers Service Support

When you have an interview coming up

- **Book an interview simulation**
  - Give us much notice as possible
  - Upload to CareersLink a copy of your application AND details of the job for which you will be interviewed, at least a day in advance
  - We’ll prepare questions to suit

- **More support for interviews and assessment**
Careers support for Postgraduates

• Online
  – www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/pg
  – Social media: www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/services/socialmedia

• In groups - talks/events
  – www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/events
  – www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/postgraduates/events
  – CareersLink: for vacancies and events: www.manchester.ac.uk/careerslink

• In person
  – 15 minute “getting started” & drop-in appointments (30 minutes later in the semester)
  – 15 minute “Application Advice” – feedback on applications
  – Email support for queries
  – Careers Help Desk: The Atrium, 1st floor Uni Place, 9-5, Mon – Fri
  – Details: www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/services
PG Career talks – Semester 1 2019

• Finding a job this academic year  
  1.00-1.50, Tuesday 1st Oct, 
  Uni Place 2.220

• CVs/applications – The Basics  
  1-1.50, Friday 4th Oct  
  Uni Place 2.220

• CVs/applications – Beyond the Basics  
  1.00-1.50, Monday 7th Oct, 
  Uni Place 1.218

• Interviews/assessment – The Basics  
  1.00-1.50, Monday 14th Oct, 
  Uni Place 1.218

• Interviews/assessment – Beyond The Basics  
  1.00-1.50, Tuesday 22nd Oct, 
  Uni Place 1.218

• Becoming an Academic  
  1.00-1.50, Thursday 24th Oct, 
  Alan Turing G.107

Slides and podcast available after each talk – see

www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/postgraduates/events