INTERVIEWS AND ASSESSMENT FOR POSTGRADS

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CAREERS SERVICE
What I’ll cover

- Preparing for interviews
- Tricky interview questions
- Improve your interview performance
- What else can they do to you?!
What is the employer looking for?

The ad or person specification can help you predict the questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
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Being a smaller consultancy, we pride ourselves on taking a more involved and hands-on approach to our consulting advice to clients. We have a very friendly, collaborative company culture - your voice will always be heard!

We're looking for:

- Someone who has an entrepreneurial flair - our company has a start-up feel, so we're looking for candidates who can get stuck in with all aspects of running a business!
- Someone who has strong interpersonal skills, as this is a client-facing role
- An avid problem solver who takes initiative
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Want to know your strengths?

www.jobmi.com
Interview prep: What are my strengths or skills?

Describe examples of what you've done

Get a friend to help

Friend picks out strengths/skills you were using

Review strengths/skills needed for jobs you want

Easier to move from concrete examples to abstract concepts
Preparation: Think bullet points not scripts
Three questions to practice

Tell me a bit about yourself …

Why are you interested in this role?

Why are you interested in working for us?
## Different Styles of Interview Questions

<table>
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<th>Strength</th>
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<td>✓ Tell me about a time you faced a difficult challenge?</td>
<td>✓ When are you at your best?</td>
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<td>✓ Describe a time when you persuaded others to your way of thinking?</td>
<td>✓ What do you enjoy doing outside your study/work?</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Give an example of when you dealt with conflict in a team?</td>
<td>✓ What are you good at?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ What do you need to be better at?</td>
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**Situation**
Describe the situation you were in

As a volunteer at the local foodbank one evening a week...

**Task**
The specific task you worked on

... I needed to ensure the food donations were processed and available for customers as soon as possible so ...

**Action**
The actions YOU took. Be specific. What, how, why

... working in a team of three, I identified shortages, prioritised unloading to meet the clients' immediate needs etc ...

**Result**
Outcome/impact of your actions.

As a result, our team met the target of processing four donations per shift.

**(Reflect)**
What you learned or insights gained

I realised you can achieve a lot in tight timescales, if you organise effectively, the team understands their role and you communicate with your team when things change.
What are your key skills/strengths?

RSTAR

“I like pushing boundaries.
For example, recently I opted to create completely new materials for an interview skills course. I already had tried and tested - but old - materials
... I think this new approach better reflects current and emerging recruitment practice.”
Other Questions

What is your main weakness?
– Something that used to be a weakness but you’ve worked on and fixed?

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?
Your Questions

**DO ASK**
- ✓ About future prospects in the organisation
- ✓ For academics – about their research
- ✓ About training and learning opportunities
- ✓ The interviewer to describe what they enjoy about the organisation

**DON’T ASK**
- ✓ Anything answered in their literature
- ✓ About ‘paragraph 2 of the Financial Report’
- ✓ Salary, working hours, holiday or benefits
Online live interviews: 
Set yourself up for success

✓ Remove potential for noise
  Flatmates, children, pets, phones
✓ Dress for an interview
  All the way down (in case you do get interrupted and have to stand up)
✓ Review what’s in shot behind you
✓ Plug in or charge your laptop
✓ Close applications; turn off notifications
✓ Light your face - smile - ACTION!

The University of Manchester Careers Service
Recorded video Interviews

✓ Usually 3-5 days notice – practice!
✓ Check camera, microphone, lighting
✓ Talk to the person *behind* the camera
✓ 30 seconds (average) reading time
✓ 2 minutes (average) to answer
✓ Make notes during your prep time
✓ Keep your notes beside screen
✓ Smile, keep energy levels high
What else can they put you through?

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

Support:

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

Support:
Graduates First
Case study, in-tray, presentations, group discussion info – including what assessors are looking for
Further help and advice
We’re here for you

www.manchester.ac.uk/careers

‘Practice’ video interview software access
Interview simulations with careers professionals
Online live workshops and Q&A
Recorded workshops

Graduates First:
Test and assessment exercises, information and practice

Good luck!