

CAREERS CENTRE

HOT TIPS IV - Interviews

- **Do your homework**

You need to know the role and the company you are applying to. Find out about the company's products, services and structure. Check out their website and Trade magazines. Call them and ask for some marketing literature or at the very least their Annual Report. Do you know anyone working in this type of company? What about Brookes Alumni? What are the main duties of the job you have applied for? How closely do you match the criteria? For example?

- **Tell me you have kept a copy of your Application!**

You have obtained this interview on the basis of what you wrote on the application form or CV. Go through the application at least once before the interview and ask yourself some questions about your motivation for the job, your skills and abilities. Get people to go through questions with you. People in business, friends who will not flatter, staff in the Careers Centre. Obvious questions like: Why are you applying for this role? What are your strengths/weaknesses? Why should we employ you? What is your greatest achievement? Give me an example of your team skills?

- **Dress appropriately**

First impressions count. Every company has its own clothing culture - if in doubt, go to their offices or telephone and ask. If the dress code is casual - be smart casual for your interview. (Remember, people who already work for the company are not likely to be judged on what they wear). On the day, bring a comb or hairbrush, an umbrella and a handkerchief/clean tissues. Keep away from excessive make-up, jewellery or cologne. Smelling of cigarettes is also to be avoided.

- **"My bus was late..."**

Unacceptable! Plan your journey. Find out where you are supposed to be and do everything to ensure you are going to be at least 15 minutes early (chance to 'freshen up' before the event). Take interview letter with you, plus mobile phone just in case the delay is totally unavoidable - at least you can telephone the company to let them know what is happening.

- **Bad body language and the 'fishy' handshake**
 Don't slouch or avoid eye-contact (especially important when being interviewed by a panel). Also, practise the art of the handshake with someone you know. Ask for feedback in practise interviews, especially if you think you might have annoying mannerisms. Don't forget to thank the interviewer(s) before you leave.
- **Handling those nerves**
 Perfectly natural, but get them under control. You need to come across as interested and enthusiastic. For some people, deep breathing just before the interview can help (but make sure you do this in private!).
- **The difficult questions**
 Oh yes, you will get them, no matter how well you have prepared. Questions are often based on the criteria given in the person specification. Focus on these areas and anticipate questions. For the more difficult and unexpected questions, give yourself a few seconds to think - interviewers will expect this. If you don't understand a question - seek clarification. Better than answering a question that was not asked!
 Horrible questions come in all shapes and forms. From "Sell me this product", pointing to a paper clip on the desk, to "Describe yourself in one word". They are designed to see how you react to pressure and if you can think on your feet.
- **"Is there anything you would like to ask me"?**
 Be ready with a few interesting questions to ask at the end of the interview - but not something that has just been answered or is on page 2 of their graduate brochure!
 The interview is a two-way process - really - so make sure you have prepared a list of questions you would like the answers to. OK to respond with "I was going to ask about ..., but that has been covered by the company presentation/answered by one of your graduate trainees". However, have at least one other question in reserve.
- **Finally**
 Be professional, enthusiastic and confident in your abilities - the company has already seen your potential through your application form or CV and is looking for reasons to take you on, not to reject you. Remember that you are qualified to do the job... you meet the essential criteria and probably most of the desirables. Be positive.
 However, if the result is not a job offer, try to obtain feedback and use it as a learning experience. You will improve.

