

Interview Skills

Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources

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Welcome

At the end of this session you will:

- consider the activities and tasks you need to perform before attending an interview
- identify the different types of interview questions and their purpose
- prepare for, write and respond to interview questions
- develop your knowledge around how to avoid pitfalls and build confidence and skills to perform successfully at interviews

Session Overview

- Context
 - Recruitment processes
 - Types of interviews
- Preparing for interviews
 - Research
 - Question types and purposes
 - Preparing to respond to questions
 - Referees
- Performing at interview
 - Combatting nerves and positive communication
 - Responses to interview questions
 - Video interviews
- After the interview
- Summary and next steps

First things First!

Recruitment:

- is a highly competitive process
- follows Public Sector rules including Merit Selection Principles
- may align to criteria from the ILS system (APS recruitment process), or other identified duties for the position
- aims to match a person to a job based on suitability identified in the assessment or evaluation within the process
- can include other approaches such as cognitive testing and work sample activities and/or review in addition to traditional application and interview methods
- decisions are made by people... it is an art not a science

*If you have been invited to interview, your application materials have done their job,
now you need to persuade the panel*

Types of Interviews

- Interviews formats and methods include:
 - Panel
 - Group or individual
 - Face-to-face
 - Video conference/skype
 - Telephone
 - Video (where you pre-record your responses to set questions)
 - Assessment centres or practical activities/tasks
- When invited to attend the interview, try to find out:
 - Who will be on the panel (names and positions)
 - How long it is expected to take
 - Whether you will be provided with the questions beforehand

Advise the contact officer of any accessibility adjustments or considerations you require as soon as possible

Preparing for the Interview

Research

- Review your notes from addressing the selection criteria/application
- Reflect on discussions with designated contact person
- Research strategic direction, strategic objectives, key programs, policies and emerging issues
- Find out who is on the panel if possible (names and positions) and use contacts/networks and LinkedIn or organisation's website to find out more about them
- Ask how long the interview is expected to take
- Brainstorm questions you anticipate the panel might ask and prepare your answers in dot-points
- Prepare opening and closing statements

Interview Question Types and Purpose

- In the APS, questions should align to criteria indicated in application information (duties, selection criteria, key functions etc.)
- Establish the purpose of a question to adjust your answer:
 - Introductory (*icebreaker/put you at ease*)
 - Information-seeking (*check and test specific knowledge areas*)
 - Hypothetical (*your problem-solving approach*)
 - Behavioural (*past behaviour as a predictor of future performance*)
 - Others?
- Questioning styles:
 - Probing and contrary testing
 - Double (triple) barrelled
 - Open and closed

Preparing to Respond to Questions

PPE Notes and Matrix

1. **Purpose:** Identify the purpose of the question- what is it trying to achieve and which criteria does it refer to?
2. **Process:** What process/theory/methodology is best suited to the purpose?
3. **Example:** Select your strongest example from your Capability Database



Sample PPE Matrix

Interview Preparation (PPE) Matrix Template



Examples	Criteria (insert relevant criteria below)					
Select strongest examples from your Capability Database and identify which of the criteria they best relate to. (note these should be prompts only, your preparation notes should include complete STAR)	Professional expertise	Creates solutions	Communicates effectively	Leads with commitment	Collaborates with purpose	Accountable for quality outcomes
Training and Development qualifications and experience in delivering accredited and <u>non accredited</u> training to private and public sector over 25 years	✓		✓			✓
Manager of Training and Development, leading team of 8 people and responsible for agency wide training at Department of ABC				✓	✓	✓
Development of training workshop resources and materials for Career courses for client XYZ	✓	✓	✓			✓
In consultation with team, developed draft Operational Plan for Unit 123, aligning to division and organisational goals			✓	✓	✓	

Final Preparations

What to take with you

- A well organised one pager that you can use as a prompt for examples against the selection criteria (PPE Matrix)
- Portfolio and documentation (most jobs you won't be asked to show this, but just in case!)
- Your resume
- Your response to the selection criteria/application
- Application kit
- Notepad, pen etc.

Final Preparations

Referees

- Who should you ask?
- When to advise?
- Invite them; then help them
- Provide summary of position and application
- Provide a prompt/summary of examples of situations that they have observed you perform relevant activities- specifically the outcomes
- Request they let you know if they are contacted

At Interview- Combatting Nerves

- Visualisation strategies
- Breathing!
- Practise
- Feedback



Fake it till you make it

Positive Communication

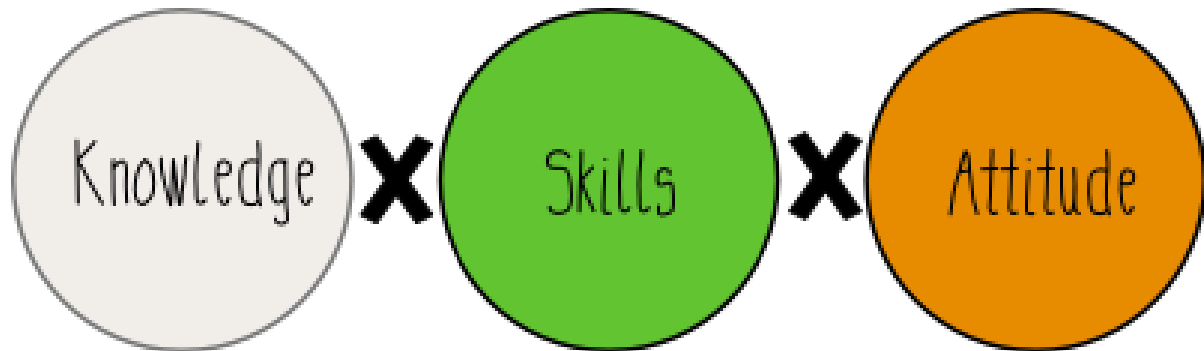
- Phone off
- Arrival time
- Appearance and presentation
- Congruence
- Handshakes
- Smile and relax
- Take your time
- Speak clearly, confidently and at an appropriate volume
- Share eye contact around the panel (not necessarily with the scribe)
- Two-way exchange: business meeting
- Remember, the panel wants you to do well!

Formatting Your Response

- Listen carefully to the question
- Clarify or check if you're unsure/it's unclear
- Acknowledge the question and your ability to respond to it
- Prepare to respond:
 1. **Purpose:** Identify the purpose of the question- what is it trying to achieve and which criteria does it refer to?
 2. **Process:** What process/theory/methodology is best suited to the purpose?
 3. **Example:** Select your strongest example from your PPE preparation
- Respond by describing your example with reference to the Purpose and Process using the STAR format
- Summary/concluding statement- and check in with the panel that your response has sufficiently answered their question

Formatting Your Response

- What if you don't have a great example?
 - Use a similar situation and explain how it could apply
 - Hypothesise
 - Draw on your transferable skills and experience



Other Questions

- In the APS, none of these is likely to be rated as part of the selection process however they will still influence the panel:
 - Opening/introductory statements
 - Closing/summary statements
 - Your questions- ask some if you genuinely need to know the answers to decide whether or not the position is right for you

Video Interviews

- Take the time to do your preparation
 - Set your camera angle to align with the top of your head
 - Do a webcam check (brightness, contrast)
 - Do a sound check (volume, echo)
 - Have a clear background
 - Lock the door behind you or put a sign on the door
 - Check your internet connection
 - Close other computer programs/tabs
 - Check the instructions carefully (e.g., security settings)



Video Interviews

- Personal presentation
 - Choice of clothing colour (e.g. choose solids; not stripes)
 - Maintain eye contact with the camera not the screen
 - Don't forget to smile
 - If you wear glasses, make sure they're anti-glare if possible
 - Maintain positive body language
 - Avoid fidgeting
 - Careful of your hand movements
 - Use anti-shine make-up
- The interview
 - Practice, practice, practice!

Post Interview Activities

- Journal your experience
 - The position, the date, the people involved, time it took
 - Key points of your preparation routine
 - Key questions asked
 - What worked well
 - What would you do different
- Follow up on any required actions (eg. referee details, copies of certificates, etc)
- Ask for constructive comments on interview performance after you have been notified of outcome (opportunity to find out what you did well/areas where you can improve)- 3 things

Choose a Question

- What is it that appeals to you about working here?
- Dealing with stakeholders isn't always easy; tell me about one of your most difficult stakeholder experiences.
- Sometimes we need to work with colleagues who are very different from us. How do you do this?
- How would your work colleagues describe you?
- What's an area where you feel you still need to develop?
- Tell me about an improvement you've made in a workplace (such as a process or customer service initiative); what were the benefits?
- What have you found most challenging in managing others?

Summary and Close

- Review
- Next steps
- One thing

