



Interview Skill

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It's not easy to feel at ease when you are being assessed for a job. The first step to a successful interview is **preparation**. Here are some essential areas that you should pay attention to before and during the interview.

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- Make sure you have plenty of time for the traffic. If you are getting late for any reason, please give the employer a call to apologize at once.
- Try to avoid having more than 1 interview scheduled for the same half day, as the interview may overrun and delay your next appointment.
- Before the interview day, check once again the interview location. Some building names and street names can be very similar. Read carefully and make sure you know where it is and how to get there. If not sure, you may need to pay a visit to the venue before the interview day.
- Arrive at the venue at least 10 minutes early. Make use of the break to refresh and compose yourself.



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Reflection



- Research the company and industry again to prepare some questions that you may ask the interviewer.
- Study the job descriptions and think about how your profile fits the job, try to predict the questions that the interviewer may ask.
- Print out a copy of your job application, including covering letter and résumé, to review once again your credentials.
- Develop a mind map about your relative competitiveness and weaknesses among students at large, and think about how to convince the employer that you are the right candidate.

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- Knock the door gently before you enter the room.
- First impression counts a lot. Enter the interview room with vitality; smile and make eye contact with every person in the room. Close the door gently after you enter the room.
- Warm up your palm before entering the room and give a firm handshake with your full hand. Hold it with confidence and considerately.
- Always stand up during the handshake.
- When you are asked to take a seat, put your bag next to you on the floor.
- Only bring your handbag, briefcase or portfolio case. Paper bags, plastic bags or other bulky belongings are considered clumsy and inappropriate.

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During the Interview

- If you are alone in the interview room, you should choose to sit opposite to the door, so that you can stand up to greet the interviewer the moment they come into the room.
- Mind your posture, gesture and facial expression.
 - ▶ Sit properly and place both hands comfortably on your thighs or on the table.
 - ▶ A nod or a smile at the right time helps suggest that you are attentive to the conversation, but do not act over.
- Always have eye contact with the interviewers to show your sincerity and confidence.
- Listen and digest carefully before answering a question. Keep your answer precise and concise.

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- If you cannot catch a question, don't be afraid to ask the interviewer to repeat, or try to articulate the question politely.
- Do not play with your hair, nails or buttons.
- If you are nervous, stay focus on the questions and then breathe slowly. A steady breath pace will help clear your mind.

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Common Etiquette & Common Sense



- If you decide to turn down an interview invitation, send an email to the employer and give a follow-up call as early as possible. Do not simply send an email to the general email account and expect that your absence would be acknowledged.
- Do not ask about salary and remuneration package.
- Switch off your mobile phone and other devices that will make a sound, both during the interview and the written test.
- It may not be a good idea for the employer to see that you have to be accompanied to the interview spot. This may imply your immaturity and lack of independence.
- Be neat and tidy – dress properly and appropriately.

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An interview is a platform for the interviewer to identify the right person who has the ability to contribute - and more importantly, someone who can work well with the existing members in the team. **Be truthful to yourself and relax – do not pretend to be someone else. You are there to look for the right job for yourself.**

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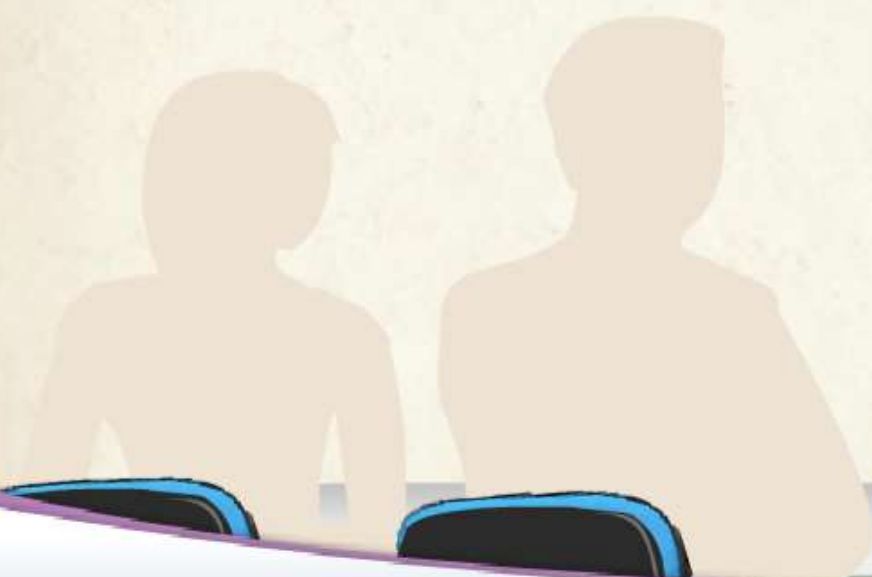
Industry Questions

Introducing Yourself

A lot of questions that are asked in the first interview are based on your résumé. Before the interview, re-read your application and the job advertisement, remind yourself the qualities that you have for the job. Their questions are predictable, and not too difficult to answer if you have thorough preparation.



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Introducing Yourself

Tell me something about yourself.

Tell me about your university life.

Tell me about your internship experience.

Why do you want to take this job and work for our company?



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Employer wants someone who is driven and passionate to grow with the company. Motivational questions can test whether you have considered thoroughly the career path that the job would offer; and how determined you are to be an achiever. Employer can also assess through your answers whether your aspiration or personal beliefs go along with the company's goals.

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What would you want your career to be in 2 years' and 5 years' time?

What is your career aspiration?

Who is your biggest inspirational figure in your life so far, and why?

What are the things that motivate you to work hard?



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What you have done in the past, in particular in recent years, gives an obvious direction to who you will be. From an occupation perspective, university students may not have a strong record of quantifiable achievements. When answering factual questions, interviewers may pay more attention to the rationale and logic of a particular choice you have made under a circumstance. So be prepared to give a logical account of your past experience, and relate your answer to a variety of skill sets.

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Why did you choose your major and your university?

What are your duties as an executive committee member in the student society?

Describe your job as a summer intern.

What was your final year project about?



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Employers are concerned whether a candidate has the essential skill sets to perform the job concerned. Competence questions are asked to see if the interviewees possess certain types of desirable skills are considered as crucial for fulfilling the job requirements. Go through your résumé once again and try to trace the various skill sets that you have gained from each work or extra-curricular experience.

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Give me an example which exhibits that you have worked effectively as a team player.

Give me an example which demonstrates your ability to multi-task and be able to meet a tight deadline.

Have you ever been in a dispute with your team mates? Can you describe the situation?

Describe the biggest challenge you have encountered in the university, and how you overcame it.

What is your biggest accomplishment as of today?



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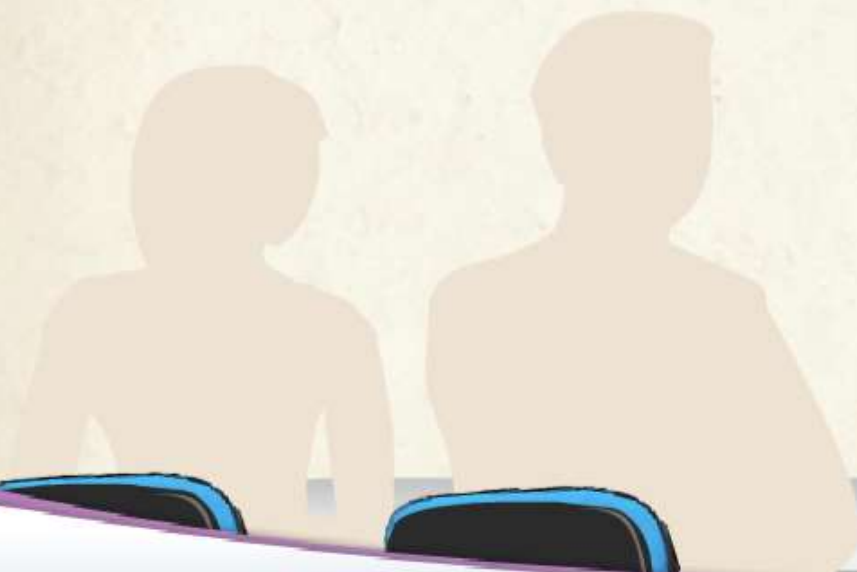
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To a lot of employers, the attitude and beliefs of a candidate topped the checklist of selection criteria. Situational question is to test your reaction under a given circumstance, which would reflect your value and decision making tendency. Situational question is also an open question without a definite true or false answer. What the interviewers want to see is your ability to think logically and your judgement behaviour.

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A client calls in angrily to your direct line to complain about the quality of work and attitude of your team mate. What would you do?

You are assigned as the team leader of a new project. After a whole day's meeting, all the team members have finalized the project concept, timeline, logistics and budget. When you present the proposal to your department head, he/she does not seem to be impressed by the whole product. What would you do?

You do not agree with your supervisor about an issue, would you move along with his/her direction or would you try to convey your idea for one last shot before execution?



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It is crucial to show that you understand the industry and the reasons that you want to be a part of it. The preparation part can be very handy as information can be easily found on websites and from newspapers. On top of the textbook knowledge, you should commensurate your answer with personal viewpoints and convince the interviewers that you have the potential to grow in the industry.

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Who are our company's competitors in the market?
How is our company different from our key competitors?

Who are the top 5 players in this industry?

You are applying for a Management Trainee position in our company, so try to describe a typical day of a trainee.

How would you explain our stock performance over the last 2 months?

Where do you see this industry moving in 5 years' time?

Suggest a product that our company should develop or an area that our company can introduce new business in.

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Many corporations invite candidates to sit for an assessment centre at the final stage of the selection process. **Candidates will participate in various activities and interviews for employers to assess their skills and abilities in an all-round approach.** Check out the typical activities that are involved in an assessment centre in this module.

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Aptitude Test

- Aptitude test comprises of numerical test, diagrammatic or logical reasoning test, and verbal reasoning test.
- Each test is timed and each question has a right answer. There will be a score for your test, which objectively reflects your ability in respective areas.
- Sometimes there will be a written test which requires the candidates to write an essay of a company or industry-related topic.
- Bring your calculator.
- Practise the aptitude test available at the career centre or use other online trial tests.

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Personality Questionnaires

- It's a type of questionnaire with multiple-choice answers that helps employer understand your traits and behavioral pattern under certain circumstances.
- The questions aim to find out your career interest, motivation, personal value, work preference and style.
- There is no right or wrong answer. You should answer each question truthfully to help employer evaluate your suitability to the company and to the existing team.
- Be truthful to yourself and do not give your answers based on your prediction on employer's preference.
- The questionnaire is usually embedded with some cross-checking questions. Employers would know if you are lying.

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Several types of activities will take place in a group context on the assessment day. The key attributes being assessed include leadership, team work and effective communication.

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➤ **Group Exercise**



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Group Discussion

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- Its typical format is to give a topic to a group of 6-8 candidates to have a 15-20 minutes' discussion.
- The topic can be industry specific or based on current issues.
- If you want to be the first one to speak, make sure that you have interpreted the discussion topic correctly before stating your point of view.
- Do not worry about the talk sequence. Being the first speaker does not necessarily give you extra score.
- If you are not familiar with the topic, you can still try to make a point by asking a logical question to stimulate a new perspective in the discussion.
- Never keep silent for too long. You must take an opportunity to speak in order to help the assessors to give you a score.
- Do not dominate the discussion and keep track of the time. Avoid interrupting others, but you may help a team member to articulate his/her view point if it is necessary.
- Think before you speak and ask yourself if the idea you are about to state is logical or relevant.
- Assessors look for logical and creative view points which can be backed up by facts and practicalities.
- Be spontaneous and relax. Pay attention to the content, absorb and analyze what have been said. This will help you make an impressive conclusion towards the end of the discussion.



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Group Exercise

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- It can be in the form of a team building or practical exercise, such as building a bridge or tower with straws, newspaper or other recycled goods.
- The whole team will be observed and assessed by the panel throughout the process.
- Key attributes to be assessed include creativity, initiatives to help, assertiveness and time management.
- Be cooperative and keep an open mind towards your team members' suggestions.
- Framework and implementation strategies are the cornerstone for success in these practical exercises, but do not spend too much time on developing the framework, which usually leaves you with insufficient time for constructing the item.
- Sometimes the assessor will require a representative from the group to give a presentation to explain the construction mechanism.

Several types of activities will take place in a group context on the assessment day. The key attributes being assessed include leadership, team work and effective communication.

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Lunch with Executives

- Often being interpreted as “Lunch Interview”. You can relax but do not let loose your attention. You may be required to wear name badge to help the company executives identify who you are.
- Participate in conversation; show that you are paying attention to and interested in meeting with the executives.
- Be prudent if you want to start a topic to talk with people sitting next to you. Some appropriate and safe topics include sports, weather, industry-specific movements and hobbies.
- Try to invite your team members to join an interesting conversation if you could.
- It is not appropriate to ask for interview tips.
- Follow the commonly known table manner.

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Case Studies and Presentation

- May be in group or individual format.
- Key attributes to be assessed include critical thinking ability, effective communication and problem solving skills, ability to analyze and structure ideas, creativity.
- You will be given a pile of raw data or background information and asked to give a solution or conclusion in your presentation. Examples include:
 - ▶ analyzing data to form a sound idea
 - ▶ formulating a marketing/finance campaign, a business plan or a project management timeline
 - ▶ researching and developing a product
 - ▶ proposing strategies for entering a new market
- In the preparation room, take your time to structure your concepts and sketch your presentation flow; define the topic, analyze the data, identify key issues; then set assumptions, develop a blueprint to address the question, formulate your concepts for researching logical conclusion.

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Case Studies and Presentation

- Adopt different business or analysis models to develop your proposal if applicable, but not forcibly- common sense is crucial.
- Remind yourself why you do not adopt alternate approaches in building your proposal. This will help you construct an intact argument.
- If you know you will be given a flip chart for the presentation during your preparation, you should decide what presentation approach would be the best for illustrating your ideas. Should you use bullet points, graphics, sketch a mind map, draw pictures or abandon the flip chart and do a monologue instead?
- Show the assessors that your proposal is intact, logical and thoroughly developed.
- There is no definite right or wrong answer in a case study assessment. The assessment is to evaluate your articulateness, logical thinking ability and problem solving skill.
- Be ready for challenging questions from the assessors.

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Interview At Assessment Centre

- It could be in the form of 1-on-1 or panel interview.
- Prepare it in advance as for your first interview.
- Review your performance in the first interview and look for room for improvement.
- Review your performance during the assessment day and particular incidents that happened, interviewers may ask follow-up questions.

