



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

**CAREERS,
EMPLOYABILITY
AND SKILLS**

Interview Preparation Workshop

ABOUT US



TODAY'S AGENDA

- Understand how to prepare for an interview.
- Use tips to help performance.
- Know how to answer frequently asked interview questions.
- Effectively use the STAR technique.
- Access further sources of help.



WHAT IS AN INTERVIEW?

A two-way conversation with a purpose

You can...

Prove your abilities and knowledge

Show your personality.

Set yourself apart from the other candidates.

They can learn whether...

You have the knowledge & skills.

You have the motivation & interest.

Your values & personal qualities fit.

If you get to the interview stage, you have already impressed the employer on paper!



TYPES OF QUESTIONS

Small talk – the interview starts the moment you enter the building

How was your journey?

Do not be afraid to engage and sound friendly & enthusiastic!

Hypothetical - test of ability to think quickly, reason logically and produce practical solutions

How would you deal with?

They want to know your attitude and how your mind works

Motivational - test your motivation for the programme

Why do you want to study in?

Expand on what was in the application

Competency - based on the skills needed to achieve an effective performance

Can you tell me a time when you?

Use the STAR METHOD

Your Questions – have 1-3 questions ready to ask at the end

Have you got anything to ask us?

Demonstrate you've done your due diligence, avoid obvious questions

THE BEST- PREPARED (NOT BEST!) CANDIDATES GET PICKED

...SO, HOW DO I PREPARE?

THE OPPORTUNITY

Start with the original advertisement
What attracted you to this opportunity?
What type of person are they looking for?
What skills / knowledge / experience are required?
Can you see the future impact of this opportunity?

YOURSELF

Know what you have applied for
Remind yourself how you match and what you wrote
Know what you have to offer
Support what you say with evidence
Review your strengths and weaknesses
What is going to set you apart from other candidates?

THE ORGANISATION

Website: what they do, aims, awards...
Any recent news? e.g. expansion, projects
Social network: Facebook, LinkedIn, x, Instagram
Other media: press releases, trade publications
Trends affecting industry
Who are their competitors?

GET THE DETAILS RIGHT

Time / Date

- Good night's sleep the night before
- Arrive in good time to calm down and relax (10' max)
- Be polite and friendly to everyone you meet

Location

- Make sure you have directions
- Consider multiple public transport options
- Leave with plenty of time to spare



FIRST IMPRESSIONS MATTER!

A first impression is often based on the first 30"-90"

- Good eye contact, posture, handshake
- Dress to impress
- Smile (it convinces your brain AND the interviewer that you're confident!)
- Respond in an animated, enthusiastic way
- Listen carefully and ask to repeat if needed
- Some nerves are expected, but don't let them take over! Body language TED Talk

TRUST is Built on



FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Who would you rather perform your surgery?

FIRST IMPRESSIONS MATTER

Your appearance

- Dress smartly and plan your outfit in advance
- Avoid “attacking” the interviewer’s senses! Less is more (jewellery, accessories, perfume, aftershave...)
- Pay attention to personal hygiene, grooming and general cleanliness and tidiness

What to take

- Smart briefcases and bags are OK
- Your application form - avoid bringing in notes
- Phone in case of delays – switch off when there
- Avoid props such as pens, badges, cups...They encourage fidgeting & and show nerves



'TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF'

The *Present-Past-Future* formula

I'm currently studying ... at Queen's University Belfast and (highlight one or two recent, relevant achievements).

This has helped me develop skills in (highlight one or two relevant skills or areas of knowledge). and has increased my desire to (create a connection with the programme: how does it fit right now?)

In the next few years, I plan to... And this opportunity will help me achieve this goal by (again, create a connection with the programme and be specific and realistic)

COMPETENCY-BASED ANSWERS: THE STAR METHOD

EFFECTIVE STORY TELLING: direct, logical, meaningful and personalized



Do not think of new details as you answer. SAY what you had planned for & END



CHECKLIST FOR STAR ANSWERS

- Get into the mind frame of the role you are applying for: what competencies are you likely to have to evidence?
- Examples must be recent, relevant and related
- Focus on the actions YOU took – 'I' not 'we'
- "Action" should cover skills and qualities sought by the role/opportunity
- Action and Result should account for 70-80% of any response
- Ideally examples should have a positive result

Can you give me an example of a time when you have worked well as part of a team?"

SITUATION One Friday afternoon, at approximately 4 pm, my line manager rushed into the office and said that a delivery of stock was due any minute now. The delivery was scheduled for the following Friday, but the courier company had got the dates mixed up and therefore it was arriving a week earlier. This meant we had to drop everything and get ourselves prepared for the unexpected delivery.

TASK The problem was, most of us were due to leave at 4:30 pm that day, so there were not many people around to carry out the task of taking in the delivery, which usually takes at least an hour to unload and stock check.

ACTION I immediately volunteered to stay behind late to help the company out in its time of need. I set about preparing for the delivery by getting together a small group of workers who I knew would help me achieve the task quickly and accurately. Then, I handed out jobs to the people in the group, which included handling the goods, checking them off as they came through the warehouse and also stocktaking. I briefed all of the team so that everyone knew their role within the task. Once the delivery arrived, we worked hard to achieve the end goal.

RESULT Following the team's hard work, we managed to get the delivery unloaded, stocked on the shelves and cross-checked, much to the gratification of our line manager. He thanked us all for volunteering to get the task completed quickly, safely and accurately.



**WHERE CAN I FIND
MORE INTERVIEW
RESOURCES?**

Careers, Employability And Skills

UNIVERSITY DIRECTORATES / STUDENT GUIDANCE CENTRE / CAREERS, EMPLOYABILITY AND SKILLS

[Careers Events](#)[How to Use Myfuture](#)[Degree Plus](#)[News](#)[COVID-19 Update](#)[10 Reasons to Access Queen's Careers Service](#)[More options](#)

SHAPING YOUR DREAM CAREER

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CAREERS, EMPLOYABILITY & SKILLS SHAPING YOUR CAREER DREAM

The Queen's Careers Team are here to support students and graduates with all aspects of career planning and decision making.

We'll help you set career goals, communicate your worth to employers and equip you with the skills you need to stand out in the competitive global job market. The skills we help you build, will benefit you forever.

We're still here

You can still access our careers support remotely. See our [COVID-19 update page](#) for virtual resources.

Interviews

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Preparing for an interview

Common interview questions

Competency-based interviews

Strength-based interviews



INTERVIEWS

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Interviews and tests



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[The graduate's guide to job interviews](#)

i IMPORTANT: Please login below using your QUB email address and password. You must complete your enrolment and registration with Qsis before your account is activated. If you are an Employer, please go to <https://qub-csm.symplicity.com/employers/>

Sign In

Please enter your QUB username and password.

Username
(Your email address)

Password

Sign In

THE CAREERS, EMPLOYABILITY & SKILLS SERVICE CAN HELP!

Guidance appointments (30') – mock interview or general chat

Give as much detail as possible when booking on the position applying for

Bookable on MyFuture > My Appointments > Careers Guidance Appointment




QUIZ BREAK

These quiz questions are designed to test your knowledge of job interview basics.

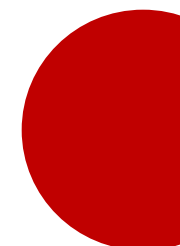

Each question will have a choice of three answers.


Type your answer into the chat box on MS Teams.



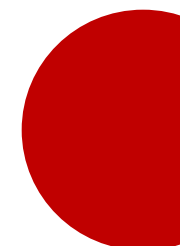



1. The interviewer says, “Tell me about yourself.” Which of these is the best answer?

- A) “I was born in London and moved to Belfast with my family when I was twelve. After high school, I attended college and worked part-time jobs.”
 - B) “I enjoy helping people and have been volunteering with the Red Cross for the past two years, learning many useful skills about organizing fundraisers. These experiences have prepared me to be a great Fundraising Coordinator.”
 - C) “I’m an outgoing person with an open personality. I love meeting other people and visiting new places. One of my favourite things to do is spend time with friends. I also like to travel. Last summer, I took a trip to Europe with a couple of buddies. We had a great time.”
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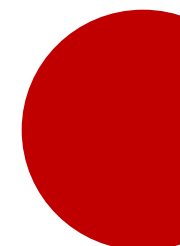
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2. You're asked a really difficult question. You don't know the answer off the top of your head, so you:

a) answer, "That's a tough question. I'm really not sure."

b) say the first thing that comes to mind.

c) take a deep breath and think of an answer while restating the question.

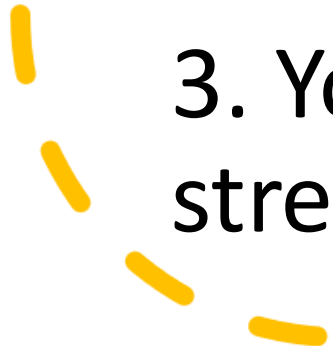
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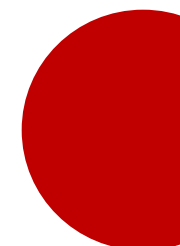

b) say the first thing that comes to mind.

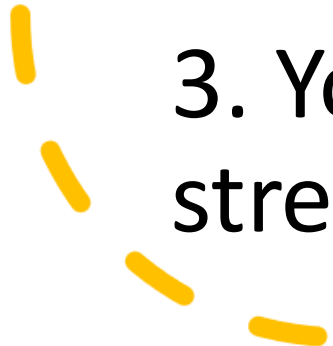
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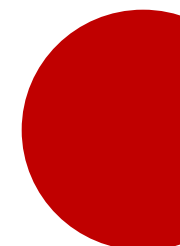




3. Your interviewer asks you what your greatest strengths are. How do you respond?

- a) By listing five or ten qualities you think are your best ones.
 - b) Give two or three strengths and concrete examples of them.
 - c) Say all the qualities and requirements that were listed on the job description.
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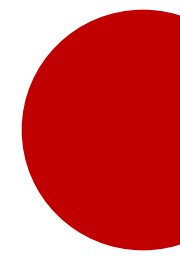




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4. When you're asked what your longer-term goals are, you say:

- a) "Develop my customer service skills by meeting with a more diverse range of clients and challenging myself to address a wider set of needs."
 - b) "I hope to one day become a manager."
 - c) "I'm not really sure, I haven't exactly thought about my goals."
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4. When you're asked what your longer-term goals are, you say:

- a) "Develop my customer service skills by meeting with a more diverse range of clients and challenging myself to address a wider set of needs."
 - b) "I hope to one day become a manager."
 - c) "I'm not really sure, I haven't exactly thought about my goals."
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- 




5. What's the safest thing to wear to an interview, if you cannot find out anything about the company's dress code?

a) A suit.

b) A collared shirt and khakis.

c) A comfortable t-shirt and jeans.





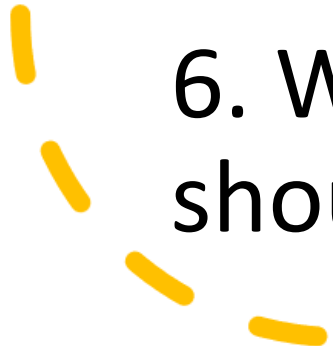
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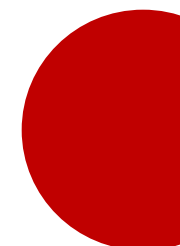

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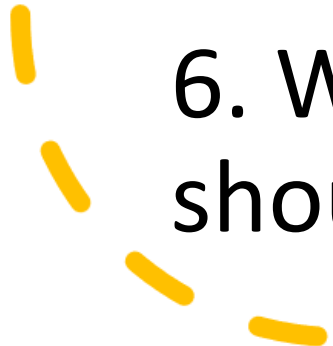
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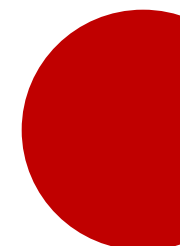



6. When talking about your past experiences, you should:

- a) only mention things that occurred at work.
 - b) only mention your successes.
 - c) not be afraid to mention things that happened outside of work or failures as long as it provides a good answer to the question.
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- a) only mention things that occurred at work.
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How did you do?



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Any Questions?



THANK YOU!

GET IN TOUCH WITH THE CAREERS TEAM
FOR MORE INFORMATION



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