

**Master of Commerce Series:  
Ace the Interview!  
Effective Interview Preparation**



Taye Morris  
Careers & Employment

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**Key Marketing Tools**

- Resume / On-line applications
  - Cover letters
    - ‘Elevator Pitch’
    - Networks
    - Phone contact
    - **Interviews**
- Be organised and keep track!!!

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**Activity: First Impressions Count**

**Step 1:** Introduce yourself to somebody (that you don't know) - shake hands

**Step 2:** Have a chat to find out the other person's . . .

- Career goals
- Preferred employers

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**First Impressions Count!**

- Presentation
- Tone of Voice
- Confidence
- Small talk
- Handshake
- Body language
- Eye Contact
- Smiling



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**Why Interview?**

**For the interviewer(s)**

**Confirmation of their impressions**

- Accuracy of resume

**Will you do the job?**

- Attitude, Interest, Motivation

**Can you do the job?**

- Competency in key areas
- Technical and transferable skills

**Do you fit?**

- Culture, Values Personal Attributes



**For the interviewee**

- To present your abilities, knowledge, aspirations, experience
- To gain a further insight into position, employer, organisation

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**Interviews**

- Structured or Unstructured
- One to one
- Panel
- Telephone
- Case Study

**Assessments**

- Assessment Centres
- Group Activities
- Presentations
- Psychological Assessments

**Types of Interviews**



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## What are employers looking for?

- Work experience
- Academic Results
- Positive attitude
- Enthusiasm
- Communication
- Teamwork / Leadership
- Initiative
- Industry Awareness
- Flexibility



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## Interview Preparation

- Prepare a portfolio of your transcripts, references, work samples
- Research the position and the organisation
- Target the key competencies
- Find out names (pronunciation) and roles of interviewers
- Practice answering typical questions
- Prepare questions for the interviewer(s)
- Personal presentation – what are you going to wear?

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## Research

- What type of company is it?
- What current or recent projects have they been involved in?
- Have there been any recent developments (e.g. merger, restructure) I should know about?
- What is the role's purpose?
- Why is it important?
- What skills, personal qualities, knowledge, and training do they want?
- Who will I be reporting to?
- What is the company culture?
- What will my daily duties be?
- Any important terminology?

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## Interview Question Types

### Open questions

- What attracted you to apply to our organisation?
- What are your strengths? And your weaknesses?

### Situational questions

- How would you handle a difficult customer if your boss was away?
- What would you do if you thought your manager gave incorrect information in a staff meeting?

### Behavioural questions

- Describe a complex problem which you have solved recently
- Give an example of when you have contributed to a successful team

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## Preparing 'Behavioural' Answers

- Use specific examples to demonstrate your skills
- Highlight your achievements in your work, study and extra-curricular activities
- Be positive
- Use the STAR Principle



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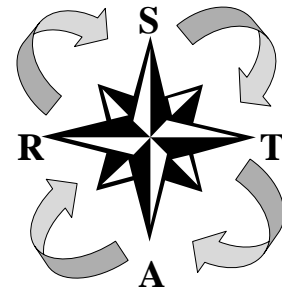
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Situation

Task

Action

Result



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**Describe a time when you have worked as part of a team. What was your contribution? What was the outcome?**

**S** I volunteered for the marketing team for the first UNSW Vacation and Internship Careers Expo this year.

**T** Our task was to come up with cost effective ways to market the event to students.

**A** I attended meetings with Careers and Employment staff, contributed ideas, and designed a flyer to market the event. As a team, we distributed over 600 flyers and put 100 posters around the university. I also volunteered at the event, assisting employers and Careers and Employment staff on the day.

**R** The event was very successful, over 1300 students attended and I received a certificate and special thanks from the Manager.

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## Preparing 'Behavioural' Answers

<b>S</b>	Communication	Teamwork / Leadership
	• Uni presentation • Customer liaison	• Uni project • Part time work • Sports • Mentoring
<b>T</b>		
<b>A</b>		
<b>R</b>	Adaptability / Learning	Innovation / Creativity
	• Learnt new software program at work in first week	• New service at work

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## Questions for you to ask

- What attributes are you particularly looking for?
- Growth plans for the organisation?
- Can you tell me a bit more about the structure of the team?
- Opportunities for career progression, training and advancement?
- What are some of the current projects being undertaken? What could my first project be?
- What do you see as the immediate goals of the position? How will you measure performance?
- Daily routine, specific demands and challenges for a graduate employee (day in the life)?

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## During the Interview

- First Impressions
- Handshake
- Eye contact
- Show enthusiasm and confidence
- Understand the question
- Draw on a range of experiences  
Study, work, extra curricular activities
- Structure your answers – STAR
- Focus on positive

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## Prepare Answers to these Questions

- Tell me a bit about yourself and why you are interested in this role?
- Describe a team project you have been involved in. What made the team work and what was your role?

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## Activity: Practice makes perfect . . .

*In pairs (ie. person A and person B)*

**Interview 1: A interviews B**

**Evaluation 1: A gives feedback to B - who listens!**

*then*

**Interview 2: B interviews A**

**Evaluation 2: B offers feedback to A - who listens!**

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# UNSW Careers and Employment

## Need a Job?

- Jobs Online
- Fortnightly e-list
- Employer talks on campus
- Careers Expo March 2007
- Graduate recruitment

## Need Career Help?

- Web info
- Daily workshops + Guest Presenter Program (employers)
- Individual Assistance
- Mock Interview
- Careers library / computer access
- Graduate Destination Survey

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