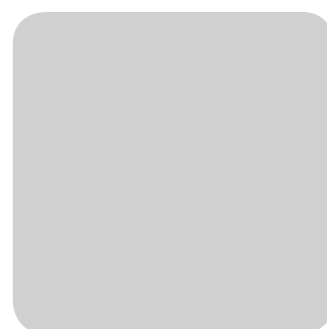
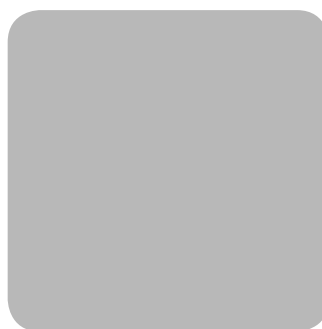
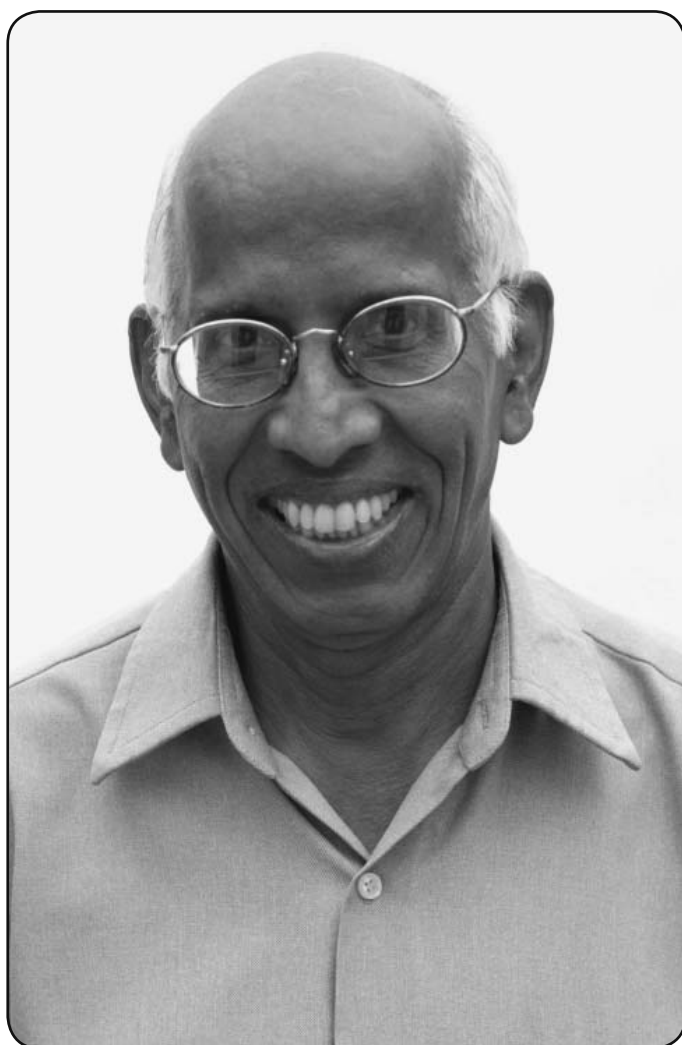


# Careers Advice PLUS



## Interviews

### Session plan for working with groups



**European Union**  
European Social Fund  
Investing in jobs and skills

Funded by:



Leading learning and skills

# Interviews

## Session plan for working with groups

### Learning outcomes:

By the end of the session participants will:

- Know what they need to consider in preparation for an interview
- Recognise the difference between types of interview questions
- Have practised responding to a variety of interview questions

### Preparation and materials required:

- Labels and name badges
- Flipchart
- Interview Quiz
- Hints and Tips
- Psychometric Test Examples
- Possible Interview Questions
- Questions to ask at Interview

## Content and timings:

Timings:	Content
10 mins	<b>Introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introductions, health and safety information, housekeeping.</li></ul>
10 mins	<b>Learning Outcomes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Outline the learning outcomes for the workshop</li><li>• Invite people to identify what they want to get from the workshop and any concerns. Write these on the flip chart</li></ul>
15 mins	<b>Quiz</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Give out the quiz, allow five minutes for people to respond individually and then go through the answers with the whole group</li></ul>
30 mins	<b>Telephone Interviews</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask if anyone has experience of telephone interviews</li><li>• Explain what telephone interviews are</li><li>• Explain when they are likely to be used</li><li>• Discuss what is expected of candidates in the interview</li><li>• Explain what is likely to be the next step of the process, ie, a face-to-face interview or even a presentation or assessments</li></ul> <b>Points to make:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Telephone interviews may be used if the job entails working in a call centre and/or where the emphasis will be on performance on the telephone</li><li>• They may also be used if the interviewer is trying to produce a shortlist from a long list of candidates. They are often carried out by an external agency</li><li>• In the current fast-paced world of recruitment, telephone interviews are increasingly being used as a preliminary selection process</li><li>• The candidate may or may not be told that they will be having a telephone interview it depends on the employer</li><li>• The interview should be treated as any other interview</li><li>• Often telephone interviews take the same form as a face-to-face interview, ie, the interviewer will ask a range of questions about the candidate's background, experience, and motivation</li><li>• Sometimes the telephone interview can seem less formal so people may get careless and forget they are in an interview situation</li><li>• Smiling at the phone and standing up can make a huge difference to how people sound on the phone</li><li>• If successful an invitation to attend a face-to-face interview may be issued</li><li>• It may be worth having a pen and paper to hand to help you to remember the key parts of each question</li></ul>

---

## Presentations

- Explain that presentations can be part of an assessment centre (to be covered next) or that they may be the first part of an interview, ie, a 10 minute presentation then a series of questions. Mention that sometimes presentation titles/questions are given in the documentation sent prior to the interview. Sometimes candidates are told (or not told) that they will be expected to do a presentation but not the topic. When they arrive for the interview they are then given 30 minutes to prepare a presentation prior to being interviewed

### Points to make:

- Any presentation should have a start - middle - end
- You don't have to do it on PowerPoint
- Have a **Key Message** for the start of the presentation
- Don't underestimate the end - this is what will be remembered
- Don't speak too quickly
- Don't read straight from slides

### Ask:

- What does the audience want to hear?
- How can I answer it?
- What message do I want to get across?

## Assessment Centres

- Ask the group to come up with what might be involved in an assessment centre
  - Write ideas up on a flip chart. Possibilities include:
    - Aptitude and ability tests:** These focus on people's abilities. The abilities assessed may include: General reasoning, verbal ability, numerical ability, perceptual ability, spatial ability, mechanical
    - Personality questionnaires:** They focus on people's behavioural style and how someone approaches a job rather than on their abilities.
    - Role play:** The candidates are given a pack that briefs them on the particular part they have to play. Assessors often play the other roles and are looking for individual contribution to the team or other relevant skills e.g. communication or management skills
    - Group exercises:** Usually a timed discussion where all the candidates work together to tackle a work-related problem. People take on roles that may be assigned and the group is observed by a team of assessors looking at and scoring the interaction between people
    - Presentation:** This may be prepared in advance or on the day. Candidates may be given a topic for discussion or have a completely free choice; The subject matter is not necessarily important. The focus may be on your communication skills and how you structure the presentation
    - In Tray exercise:** These are business simulation exercises involving an in-tray full of company memos, telephone and fax messages, reports and correspondence, or a full email inbox. Candidates are usually given information about the structure of the organisation and their role in the company. Candidates have to make decisions: prioritise; draft replies and delegate tasks. They test how candidates handle complex information within a limited time. Candidates often have to justify their decisions
-

---

## One or possibly two interviews

A second interview may be with someone different to the first interview. This could be Human Resources a senior manager or even a panel made up of several people who have an interest in the vacancy.

- Discuss briefly what each might involve - direct people to the internet if they require more information

---

30 mins

### Optional task - Psychometrics

- Give out Psychometric Test Examples and run through the differences between the range of tests available
- Ask the group if they have any experience of tests and what that experience was, how did they feel, what was easy/difficult? At this point also mention tests not included in the handout, eg, mechanical and spatial reasoning
- Go through the examples on the handout. If time permits allow people to have a go first before giving the answers

### Answers to Psychometric Test Examples:

#### EXAMPLE VR1

- 1) **(C) Cannot say from the information given**
- 2) **(A) True**
- 3) **(B) False**
- 4) **(C) Cannot say from the information**

#### EXAMPLE VR2 (A)

#### EXAMPLE VR3

- 1) **(D)**
- 2) **(A)**
- 3) **(B)**

### Numerical Reasoning Tests

#### EXAMPLE NR1

- 1) **(D)**
- 2) **(D)**
- 3) **(D)**
- 4) **(E)**

#### EXAMPLE NR2

- 1) **(A)**
- 2) **(C)**
- 3) **(D)**
- 4) **(E)**

### Abstract Reasoning Tests

#### EXAMPLE AR1 (C)

#### EXAMPLE AR2 (A)

Explain that with the Personality tests there are no right or wrong answers.

---

Break

Revisit any questions that were mentioned earlier in the workshop:

- Ask participants for examples of any interview questions that they have struggled to answer. Write these on the flip chart:  
 "What is the most difficult question you could be asked at interview?"  
 "How would you answer the following question at interview?"  
 "What 2 strengths can you bring to this job?"  
 "What is the easiest question you could be asked at interview?"
- Highlight the fact that the employer wants evidence through the recruitment process that the candidate **wants** the job **can do** the job and **fits** with the organisation. The interview is the ideal time to find this out
- Give an example of an ordinary interview question (Question 1) and a competency based question (Question 2), for example:  
**Question 1 - "How would you deal with a customer who complains about the service they receive?"**  
**Question 2 - "Tell me about time when you had to deal with a customer complaint. What did you do? What was the result?"**
- Discuss the reason for using the different styles of question:  
**Question 1** tells the employer whether you are knowledgeable about the process required and can think things through  
**Question 2** tells the employer that you have experience and skills in this area and if they are sufficient for requirements of the role
- Answer Question 1 as you would in an interview situation. Then look at the CAR process tackled in the CV workshop. Check if anyone attended that and based on the response talk it through using Question 2
- Write on the flip chart a competency based question to answer - give about 10 minutes to do this and walk round checking on the answers. Then arrange the room so that there are chairs facing each other - either across a desk or with chairs only

### **Give out one interview question to everyone in the group.**

- Arrange everyone in twos facing each other (as in a speed dating scenario):  
 Line A - even numbers  
 Line B - odd numbers
- Give everyone a number as follows:  
 All those on one side (eg, Line A) get an even number 2, 4, 6, etc  
 All those on the other side get an odd number 1, 3, 5, etc
- Start with the even numbers and when you give the signal all the 'evens' ask the person opposite the interview question they have. Allow 3-5 minutes for the answer (depending on the size of the group and time available)
- After 3-5 minutes ask all the 'odd' numbers to move one place to the right. When they have moved ask all the 'odd' numbers to ask the person opposite their interview question (allow 3-5 minutes for the answer)
- After 3-5 minutes ask all the 'evens' to move one place to the right. When they have moved ask all the evens to ask the person opposite their interview question
- Continue for as long as is practical

- 
- Wind up the exercise with a debrief about what was difficult/easy/distracting
  - Give everyone a copy of all the questions on Possible Interview Questions
  - Highlight the point that the interview is also a time to find out about the company/organisation
  - Ask for suggestions of questions that you could ask
  - Give out the handout Questions to Ask at Interview
  - Round off with these questions about rejection

**“What reasons are there for not getting the job?”**

Suggested Answers may include: Your skill set does not match that of the job role, missed closing date for application, lack of previous experience, lack of relevant/technical qualifications, and performance at interview.

**“What feelings might be associated with rejection?”**

Suggested Answers may include: anger, disappointment, frustration, uncertainty, resentment, uselessness, determination

**“Name 2 things you can do if not invited to interview”**

- Talk it through with a friend - an outside perspective can help you to reassess your approach to your next application/interview
- Preparation is the key: did you research the situation thoroughly, thinking about what the position requires, and making sure that your application covered this

**“Name 2 things you should do if rejected following an interview”**

- Ask for feedback and learn from it - find out which skills you lacked. Don't waste time blaming others - improve yourself
- Don't take it personally If you don't get an offer. It doesn't mean that the interviewers didn't like you or think you had valuable skills. It just means that someone else was a better fit. Try again and keep positive