Interview Techniques for Geography students
Ian Hodges
Employability and Graduate Development
What you will learn today

- Purpose of an interview
- How to prepare for interviews
- How to perform on the day
Three important points for a successful interview:
Three important points for a successful interview:

- Preparation
- Preparation
- Preparation
Types of interview

- Information based
- Structured competency based
- Strength based

- Panel interview
- Technical interview
- Telephone interview
Purpose of an interview

- For the employer:
  To see if you match the profile for the job

- For the candidate:
  To sell yourself
Structure of an interview

• Introduction
• ‘Settling in’ questions
• Main interview questions
• Your questions
Question types

• Information seeking questions
  – Why do you want this job?
    • Tasks, people, environment
  – What do you have to offer?
    • Skills, qualities, experience
  – Why do you want to work for us?
    • Reputation, training, opportunities, clients,
Question types

• Scenario or hypothetical questions

• Competence / behavioural or strength based questions
Competency based selection

- Employer identifies the competencies needed for the job
- CV or Application form to identify these in a candidate
- Interview to examine the evidence
Typical competencies

- Team building
- Problem solving
- Taking the initiative
- Planning/organisation
- Communication
- Commercial awareness
Evidence?

An employer will look for evidence of these competencies

Use examples from:

- Your studies
- Extra curricular activities
- Employment
- Voluntary work
- Year abroad
Competency based questions.....

• Give me an example of when you influenced the work of others

• Describe a challenging project, activity or event which you have planned and taken through to its conclusion

Remember the STAR technique
Structure your answers – the STAR format

- **SITUATION:** “I was part of the organising committee for the Geography Society social…”

- **TASK:** “To produce marketing materials to publicise the event….”

- **ACTION:** “I produced a marketing plan, allocated roles in the team ….”

- **RESULT** – “The material was instantly recognised by students and numbers at the event were up by 50% on last year….”
Strength based questions

What do you enjoy rather than what are you good at

eg

• What makes a good day for you?
• What energises you?
• What activities come naturally to you?
• What gets done on your ‘to do’ list? What never gets done?
• What things did you really enjoy doing when you were younger?
• When would your friends say you are happiest?
• What does success mean to you?
Other questions

• Who do you most admire and why?
• Who is the world’s best communicator?
• Give me five uses for the colour red
• Who would you invite to a dinner party?
• How would your best friend describe you?
• When have you failed at something?
• What is your biggest weakness?
Your questions

• Training
• Development of the job
• The future of organisation
• Promotion?

Avoid

• Questions answered in the literature
• Questions about conditions of service/pay
Making the right impression

- First impressions
- Body language
Body Language
Body Language – ‘dos’

- Firm handshake
- Open body language
- Smile
- Eye contact – with everyone
- Humour? - be careful
- Relaxed and professional manner
Body Language – ‘don’ts’

- Arm crossing
- Fidgeting
- Leaning forward and sitting on the seat edge
- Looking out of the window
- Looking unhappy, bored, disinterested
On the day........

- Nerves
- What to wear
- Help the interviewer
- Enjoy the interview
Further help

- DVDs on interview techniques (Streamed on line)
- Podcasts
- The Interview Experience
- Mock Interviews with Employers
- AGCAS booklet
- Talk to a Careers Consultant (phone 724493 for appointment)