

1.4 Interviews

| Skills | Criteria |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Presenting as a professional | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appears confident and is well prepared • Shakes hand and introduces self • Uses interviewee's name • Seats interviewee appropriately • Summarises focus of interview and areas to be covered |
| Questioning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions are open ended • The order of questions has a clear logic • Clarifying questions used if needed |
| Delivery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear enunciation and standard English • Pace is even, not too slow or too fast • Responses are acknowledged • Eye contact, with some taking of notes and referring to questions. |
| Closure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirms understanding by paraphrasing • Asks if the interviewee wants to add anything • Thanks interviewee and confirms the next step |

Definition

An interview is a formal meeting where specific information is sought from a person through oral questioning.

Purpose

To gain specific information or to assess a person's suitability for a position or role.

Audience

The audience is the person being interviewed (the interviewee). The interviewer will want to impress on the interviewee that the organisation for which he or she works is efficient and considerate, and the information given will be treated professionally.

Structure

There are two structures to consider. One is the structure of the total interview, which encompasses the arrival and departure of the interviewee or interviewer; the other is the structure of the questions, which fits within the structure of the interview.

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| Greetings | Shake hands, introduce self Confirm interviewee's name, check preferred name Seat interviewee appropriately, if you are the host |
| Introducing the question | Summarise what the interview is about Indicate the order of areas to be covered by the questions Outline expected outcomes and duration of interview |
| The questions | Begin with general questions Questions become specific Questions to clarify answers are added as required |
| Closure to the questions | Inform the interviewee when questions are finished Ask if the interviewee would like to add or ask anything |
| Closure to the interview | Thank the interviewee and say what the next step will be |

Language and style

Interviews are formal but friendly, so that the interviewee is at ease and prepared to respond openly and honestly to the questions.

Steps

1. Make sure that the interviewee knows the purpose, the time and the place of the interview and has plenty of time to prepare.
2. Be clear on what you want to find out from the interviewee.
3. Write open-ended questions that will elicit this information. (Open-ended questions require more than a yes or no answer. They often begin with 'What', 'How', 'Which', 'When', 'Where' or 'Who').
4. Put the questions in order, with the more general, background questions at the beginning.
5. If you are the host prepare the interview setting so that the chairs are at the same level, at an angle, and not facing the light.
6. Greet the interviewee and follow the structure above. Vary the order of your prepared questions if the answers naturally move into different questions.
7. Note answers, and check that all questions have been covered by the end.
8. As soon as practicable fill out your notes so that you have the answers clearly recorded.

Hints

Pace your questions so that all your written questions are answered without rushing. Give yourself and the interviewee time to think, to add information and to ask for clarification.