**A guide to acing your job and/or apprenticeship interviews**

Prepare, prepare, prepare!

Prepping may not seem fun or necessary – how do you prepare for something when you don’t know what they will ask? But it can be your secret weapon and give you confidence when going onto your interview. It will show the company you are interested in them and care about the job you are applying for.

How to prepare:

1. Research!

Don’t just read the job description and think that’s enough. Look at the company website, read their mission and values, find out about other community projects they may be part of, follow their social media and blogs to learn more about their culture.

Consider, what makes this company unique? You will likely be asked why you want to work for this company, so it good to have specific things you can highlight. It can also give you questions to ask in the interview as well.

1. Find out what they are looking for

Many interviews use ‘skill-based questions’ which means they want you to prove that you have the right skills for the job. Use the job description to highlight 5 key skills they are after (this may already be in t eh description for you) you could also use unifrogs career library to search the role and get some more ideas <https://www.unifrog.org/student/careers>.

You need to understand exactly what they are hoping to see demonstrated In your answers.

1. Match your experience to the job

Think over your experiences to date and try to find examples of how you have demonstrated key skills. Think outside the box – anything from helping out at college to work experience. Use your CV for inspiration (the employer will likely base a few questions around this anyway).

Be specific, have concrete examples so you don’t panic when asked the question or answer vaguely, you can show you are confident in your abilities.

1. Prep other common questions

In addition to skills-based questions, you might be asked something that has nothing to do with the job your applying for (see example later on). Don’t overthink it, there’s no ‘right’ answer. Use your instincts and don’t take yourself to seriously.

1. Ask questions of your own

Nearly every interview ends with the interviewer asking you if you have any questions for them. It’s always good to have at least one question for them. Don’t waste their time but you could ask things such as:

* What’s one thing you think someone starting this job should understand going in?
* What does successful performance look like?
* How would you describe the company culture? what is your work/life balance like?
* If it’s an apprenticeship – how many apprenticeships have successfully completed the programme? What employment opportunities will there be at the end of the apprenticeship?
1. Final steps

Once you have prepared your answers, you may wish to set up a mock interview with the college career adviser. This will help you to get used to answering unexpected questions and keep calm.

Plan your route to and from the interview, allowing yourself plenty of time in case of traffic etc. make sure arrive slightly earlier than your interview time.

On the day….

* Dress smartly and appropriately
* Take a copy of your CV and your prepared answers – you may have to wait so this is a good opportunity to go over your notes
* Set off half an hour earlier than you need to – just in case
* In the interview, keep an eye on your body language – smile, shake hands, avoid slouching, keep eye contact. It’s ok to take notes but ask first
* Don’t rush your answers – take time to think about them and get a clear answer first

After the interview is over

If you feel the job isn’t right for you, you don’t have to accept it. Be polit, but don’t feel guilty or think you need to make excuses.

If you don’t get the job, you can ask for feedback, so you know how to improve next time. Every interview is good practice, so just keep going!