Managing your Interview

Market your skills, knowledge and experience!

First impressions are important in interviews – pay attention to your appearance (dress and grooming), manner and speech. Be punctual. Dress to feel confident and professional.

Positive body-language is also very important - smile appropriately, maintain good eye-contact, give a firm hand-shake and sit in a position that shows you are actively listening and enthusiastic. Try to settle nerves by slow, deep breathing.

Listen and think carefully about the question asked. Give clear, concise answers. Never answer negatively about yourself or be critical about others. Do not emphasise salary, holidays or other benefits to you.

Thank the interviewer(s) at the end of the interview. Make sure you understand the next step in the hiring process.

After the interview

Write down the questions asked (to review for future interviews) and details of contacts who might be useful for future networking purposes.

Reflect on what you learnt - about yourself and about the job. Are you still interested in the position? Are there things you can do to improve your preparation for, and management of, your next interview?

You might wish to write to thank the interviewer and confirm your interest.

If you have not heard from the employer after the agreed time, you can call and enquire about the status of your application.

If you are successful – show enthusiasm! Clarify details of starting date, salary and employment conditions – and get confirmation in writing.

If you are unsuccessful – show professionalism! Ask for feedback on the interview, thank them and express continuing interest in other opportunities.
Preparing for your Interview

Rehearse out loud – practise, practise!

An interview is an opportunity for you to persuade and convince an employer that you are the best person for the advertised position. Make the most of the 20-40 minute interview by preparing well.

Review your (successful) written application for the position. Practise ‘speaking to’ each section of your Resume (Education, Experience, Interests etc). Do the same with Selection Criteria. Practise speaking out loud. Practise speaking about your strengths with enthusiasm – practise ‘selling’ your positive achievements. This is useful preparation for questions such as the following:

- Tell us about your-self.
- What motivated you to choose a career in Social Work/HR/Marketing/Teaching?
- What are your key strengths? Your weaknesses?
- Why do you think you are suited to working in emergency nursing?
- Tell us about a successful / non-successful prac you have had - and what did you learn?
- How has your degree/work history prepared you for employment with us?

Revisit your research on the position and the organisation. Review the Position Description, look at the website again – be sure you know what the employer is looking for. Ask yourself questions such as the following and practise speaking out loud about what you can contribute:

- Why do I want to join this organisation?
- Are my values aligned with the Mission of this hospital/school/organisation?
- What are my career goals?
- What skills and experience can I offer that make me a good ‘job-fit’ for this position?

Prepare possible interview questions you could be asked - prepare responses and practise these out loud. This is particularly important if you are asked behavioural questions.

Behavioural Questions specifically relate to selection criteria skills such as team work, interpersonal skills, time management and planning, communication skills, problem-solving, working under pressure and initiative.

- The first step is to define each skill and, using initiative, understand what actions are involved in demonstrating the skill positively. For example, what is involved in being a ‘good team player’?
- The second step is to reflect on your life experience and choose examples of where you have previously experienced being part of a team to demonstrate your expertise in the area. The idea is that past behaviour is a fairly good indicator of future performance. Behavioural questions look at your past experience to provide evidence of your skills and your suitability for the position.
- The third step is to structure your answer using the EAR (Event, Action, Result) or STARL (Situation, Task, Action, Result, Learn) approach. Examples of behavioural questions include the following:
  - Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult customer/patient/student? How did you resolve the situation? What was the outcome?
  - Describe a time when you were part of a productive team. What part did you play in its success?
  - Give me an example of a time when you were under great time pressure to complete your work. How did you deal with the situation?
  - Tell me about a time when you were able to use your initiative to improve a situation. What did you do? What was the outcome?

Confirm details of the interview
Find out if there is a group component. Useful information in this regard may be information on Assessment Centres, accessible from http://acu.careerhub.com.au

Prepare questions that you wish to ask the panel at the end of the interview.