Interviews are a crucial part of the job-seeking process. Preparation is the key to a successful interview. This Quick Tip describes how to make the most of this opportunity to impress an employer and win the job.

What is the Purpose of the Interview?
The interview is about promoting yourself to an employer and convincing them that you are the best person for the job. It’s your role to convince the employer that you have the right skills, strengths and qualifications to do the job. Furthermore, the employer will also be interested to learn about your attitude, aptitude and motivation during the interview when assessing you to work for their organisation. Employers will also look closely at your dress and personal presentation, your ability to answer tough questions under pressure and the level of confidence you convey.

Different Types of Interviews
There are several types of interviews including one-on-one interviews, panel interviews, behavioural interviews, group interviews, screening interviews and case study interviews.

Behavioural Interviews
Behavioural questioning is the most common technique used in interviews as a way of trying to predict a candidate’s future behaviour in the workplace. An effective approach to answering these questions is to use the STAR L technique. Describe the Situation and/or Task, the Action (what you did), the Result or outcome, and what you Learned from the experience. Try to use recent examples that will be easier to recall in detail. Use examples from a range of experiences—work experience, academic work and extra-curricular activities. Use specific examples and don’t generalise. If using group activities as examples, talk about what you contributed to the group.

Prediction, Preparation and Performance
Try to predict what an employer is looking for and set aside time to prepare for the interview. The interview could then be viewed as a performance. Your performance on the day of the interview will rely on your energy, effort, honesty and skills to convey to an employer that you are the person they are looking for. It might help to think of an interview in 3 parts:

— prediction
— preparation
— performance

Predict what the employer is looking for and what questions they might ask at the interview. Questions are likely to be based around the key selection criteria. Prepare a list of possible general and scenario questions that could be asked at the interview and think about how you might respond to these questions. You will also need to think about what questions you could ask the employer. This is essential as it shows you have thought about the job and that you are interested in that particular company or organisation. In addition, you need to prepare a folio of relevant documents that you need to take to the interview and put some thought into what you are going to wear on the day. You will certainly need to research the organisation, think about your employability skills (see Quick Tip: Employability Skills) and plan how you will demonstrate those employability skills at the interview.

Performance involves thinking about how you can make a good impression in the first moments of the interview, as well as using good verbal and non verbal communication strategies throughout the interview to impress the employer.

Handy Hints
— Arrive 10–15 minutes early to give yourself time to settle down.
— Greet the interviewer with a smile and a firm handshake.
— Wait until offered a chair before sitting down.
— Maintain good posture throughout the interview.
— Remember to smile.
— Be attentive, listen and be aware of good non-verbal communication skills.
— Maintain good eye contact.
— If you don’t understand a question, ask for clarification rather than rushing your answer.
— When answering questions, try to use examples to emphasise important points.
— Think of the importance of conveying your sincerity and conviction in your responses.

**Things to Avoid**

— One syllable answers, for example ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Always explain your responses. Research says that the best interview answers last somewhere between twenty seconds and two minutes in length.
— Fidgeting during the interview process.
— Interrupting the employer when you are being asked a question.
— Lying.
— Overpowering cologne or perfume smells, bold jewellery and heavy make-up.
— Criticising a previous employer or past teachers.
— Expressing yourself as a ‘know-it-all’. Find the right balance of modesty and humility when conveying your strengths and experiences to the employer.

**Example Interview Questions**

Try to think of how you might respond to these types of questions. What examples of your skills, qualifications and strengths can you offer in your responses?

— Why do you want to work for us? What do you know about this organisation?
— Why should we employ you instead of someone else?
— What did you learn from your field placement experiences?
— Tell us about some of your goals that are related to this industry?
— What aspects of your specialty interest you?
— Have you had any supervisory experience? Tell us about that.
— What influenced your decision to specialize in — — ?
— How do you feel about shift work?
— What is your greatest strength/weakness?
— How would you describe your working style?
— Can you think of any projects or activities you initiated on your own? Tell us about them.
— Tell us about a time when you had to act quickly in a crisis. What happened?
— Describe a time when you experienced conflict in the workplace and how you handled it?
— Tell us about a time when you had to work under pressure. What happened?
— Why do you think you would be an effective member of our team?
— How would you deal with a problem you had not encountered before?
— We all miss deadlines from time to time. Can you give us an example of when you missed a deadline? What were the causes and how did you deal with the situation?
— What gives you job satisfaction?
— What would you do if you realised you were out of your depth?

**Questions You Might Ask the Employer**

— Induction and training programs.
— The culture of the company.
— Reporting relationships.
— Changes happening in the industry or field of work.
— When you might expect to hear if you have been selected for the job.

Career Consultants are available by appointment to assist you with preparation for an employment interview. You can be asked some questions and provide feedback about your performance, providing tips for improvement.

**To prepare for the appointment:**

— Check CareerHub for the latest employment seminars or to attend an interview preparation seminar or workshop.
— Review the material you have about the job you are applying for and try to anticipate questions you may be asked. Think about examples from your course, work experience and extra-curricular activities that could demonstrate your skills and experience.
— Think about possible answers using STAR-L.
— Practice answering interview questions by using the interview simulator in the Careers Toolkit.

**The mock interview:**

— If you are preparing for a specific job, upload a copy of job related information through CareerHub when making your appointment. The careers consultant will use this information to choose questions related to the selection criteria.
— If you would like feedback about your interview attire, you may choose to dress as you would for the actual interview.

**Further Information**

Visit the Careers toolkit website for more tips, a global job search engine, videos and other careers information. www.rmit.edu.au/careers/toolkit