

PHONE INTERVIEWS

Many companies use telephone interviews in the early stages of the recruitment process. You should prepare for them in the same way as you would for a face to face interview, but there are additional things you need to do.

Plan to be somewhere quiet on your own with your phone fully charged at least 15 minutes ahead of your interview time. If you have caring responsibilities try to arrange help. If a quiet room isn't available at home, your LAES Case Officer can organise use of office space for you.

Remove distractions from the room such as pets and ensure there is no background noise from TVs, radios etc.

Prompt cards and your CV can be laid out before you to remind you of points you want to make.

Tell the interviewer if the line is bad or if you cannot hear properly.

Speak slowly and clearly and wait until the interviewer has finished speaking before you begin your answer to avoid talking over each other.

Listen carefully to the questions and ask the interviewer to repeat the question if you have not heard it correctly.

Answer questions with enthusiasm. Try smiling as you speak to give your voice an upbeat tone.

Thank the interviewer for their time and tell them that you are interested in the position. You can ask when you can expect to hear back from them.

VIDEO INTERVIEWS

Many companies use online interviews. You should prepare for them in the same way as you would for a face to face interview, but there are additional things you need to do;

Technical preparation should be done well in advance, ensure your internet connection is good and charge your equipment. If you can, use a computer or laptop rather than a tablet or mobile phone.

Know how to use the software, including how to start and end the session, mute your microphone and turn on/off your camera. MS Teams, Zoom and Skype are commonly used.

Location choice is important, sit somewhere where there is good natural light and choose a background that is plain.

Present yourself as you would for a face to face interview and choose clothing that is plain. Sit up straight with good body language. Smile and look interested.

Keep good eye contact by looking at your camera rather than at the screen.

Follow all other tips for face-to-face interviews.

Ask your LAES Case Officer if you need access to a computer for your online interview and this can be arranged for you.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Reflect on the questions that you were asked and note any of those that you had difficulty answering. You can review these with your LAES Case Officer.

Outcome whether you have been successful or not, you can discuss the outcome of your interview with your LAES Case Officer. If you have received a job offer your Case Officer will help prepare you for starting work. If you have been unsuccessful, try not to be too disappointed as it is common to attend a number of interviews before being offered a job role. Your Case Officer will help you to reflect and prepare for the next one.

Remember before you attend an interview, your LAES Case Officer will support you in many ways including:

- Interview preparation and mock interviews to help you practice.
- Access to a quiet interview space for online and telephone interviews.
- Access to computer facilities if your interview is online.
- Financial support if needed.
- Assistance in applying for the Jobplus grant which encourages employers to recruit unemployed people.
- Help to access supplementary welfare allowance while you are waiting for your wages.



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INTERVIEW PREPARATION

An interview is a structured conversation or meeting between two parties, conducted to assess suitability for a specific job, training course or employment scheme. An interview maybe in person, on the phone or online. As interviews are generally formal and follow a similar format, there is a lot you can do in advance. It is important to spend time preparing and the tips overleaf will help you.

In addition to this guide, your Case Officer in the Local Area Employment Service (LAES) is more than happy to assist you to prepare for interviews.



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BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Check the details of the interview including time, date and location. You might visit the location in advance so you know where you are going and how to get there. If using public transport look up the timetable in advance. Give yourself plenty of time - factor in delays, finding a carpark space etc. If the interview is a virtual one, ensure you have access to the correct equipment and the technology needed. Check this in advance.

Read the job description very carefully and find examples from your own CV and past work experience, including labour market programmes/schemes and volunteering that match the duties listed on the job description. Rehearse these examples so you can talk about them confidently in the interview.

Practice answers to common questions many of which are typical to most interviews. You will find these listed on many job related websites such as www.jobsireland.ie in the jobseeker's section.

Review your CV and know it inside out so you can discuss all aspects of it at interview.

Company websites are good sources of information. Most interviewers will ask you what you know about their company. It is important that you demonstrate your interest by being able to tell them about their organisation. Generally, this is one of the first questions asked and by doing your research you can get off to a good start.

Dress appropriately and take time in advance to decide what you are going to wear to the interview. Choose an outfit that is appropriate for the industry and organisation. Select clothing that is comfortable and tidy. Dressing appropriately for your interview shows that you value the opportunity to meet with the company and its representatives.

Mock Interviews provide a good opportunity to practice for interview before the real thing. Your LAES Case Officer will be happy to arrange one for you.

THE INTERVIEW



Arrive 15 minutes in advance of your interview time

Nerves are normal for even the most experienced interviewee, breathing techniques can help to relax you. Knowing that you have done your preparation will give you a confidence boost.



Turn off your phone so it doesn't disturb the interview.

A Positive Attitude is important and you can demonstrate this by open body language and by showing enthusiasm for the role.

Interview Questions once the interview starts you will be asked a number of questions relating to your experience and the role. This is where the preparation you have done in advance pays off. Take your time and if you don't understand the question, it is ok to ask the interviewer to repeat the question. While you can't predict what questions will be asked of you at the interview, there are a number of common ones that you can prepare in advance.

Typical interview questions include:

- Tell me about yourself
- Talk me through your CV
- What do you know about our company?
- Why do you want this job?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- What have you been doing since your last job?
- What achievement are you most proud of?

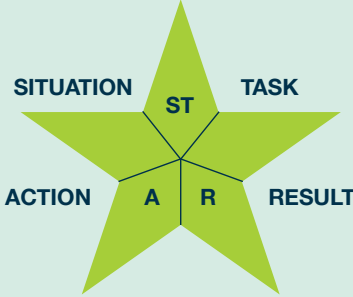


Other questions will describe a scenario and ask you for an example of when you encountered a similar situation. They often begin with "tell me about a time when.... **or** how did you deal with **or** give me an example of when you? These types of questions are referred to as behavioral or competency based and you can prepare for them in advance. It is advisable to structure your answers to these interview questions using the STAR method.



THE STAR METHOD

The STAR method can be used to describe a specific experience or situation you have been in and how you handled it. Think of **actual** situations that took place in the workplace, work experience or while volunteering. Planning responses in advance using the STAR method should be part of your interview preparation. The example below will assist you.



- **Situation:** describe the situation you were faced with
- **Task:** give details of the task you were given
- **Action:** describe the action you took
- **Result:** what happened as a result of your action and what you learned from the experience

EXAMPLE

Give me an example of when you dealt with an unhappy customer. How did you handle it?

Situation – When I worked as a Shop Assistant in my local bakery, we had an order for a large birthday cake for one of our regular customer's 30th birthday. I finished icing the cake, wrapped it up and delivered it to the party venue. When the customer opened the box, she was very annoyed to see that the birthday message read happy 50th birthday instead of happy 30th birthday. She began to panic as her guests were due to arrive in the next hour.

Task - I had to apologise to the customer and tell her that I would take the cake back immediately to the shop and correct the message and return it to the venue before her guests arrived. I knew I was cutting it fine as it was rush hour.

Action - As I didn't have much time to spare, I rang ahead to the shop to ask them to have the icing mixture ready. With the help of the head baker, I was able to change the numbers on the cake without spoiling it. I re-wrapped the cake. With the head baker's permission, I took a dozen cupcakes with me as compensation for the inconvenience.

Result – the customer was grateful that I had acted quickly. She appreciated the box of cupcakes. She continues to return to the bakery regularly for bread and cakes.