

Quick Guide: Preparing to Interview

A job interview may last only an hour but its consequences may last years! Preparing well is vital if you are to maximise the interview time and choose the most suitable candidate. So here are the **top ten tips** to help you prepare to interview:

- 1. Have a clear up-to-date job description (JD).** When recruiting a new person it is an ideal opportunity to check and amend the JD. Make sure it includes overall responsibilities of the job and key tasks and activities.
- 2. Draft a clear Person Specification (PS)** to analyse the skills, qualities and experience needed in the person who will fill the job. You can refer to the skills etc as essential and desirable: what they must have and what would be nice if they did have. A PS is helpful if you have to assess and decide between similar candidates.
- 3. Advertise the job** – probably over to HR at this point!
- 4. Set up an interview process** to deal with applicants quickly and efficiently. Have criteria based on JD and PS to decide who to interview, possibly interview and reject. Write standard letters for each stage of rejection.
- 5. Assess applications and CVs.** Assume a certain amount of creativity when reviewing CVs! Look for inconsistencies in the facts and note specific points of interest you would like to investigate. Draw up a shortlist of candidates to interview and arrange suitable times.
- 6. Decide the structure of the interview** making sure you allow maximum time for the candidate to be talking. Find out about them first and then tell them more about the job and your company. By doing it this way round you can adjust how much you tell them based on how good you think they are!
- 7. Write out questions** to ask the candidates. Start with some easy ones to relax them and then those related to the JD and PS to find out how suitable they are.
- 8. Review each candidate's CV** checking the notes you made earlier in point 5 and jot down the extra questions you would like to ask each candidate.
- 9. Prepare yourself to interview.** You have only an hour to assess the candidate so make sure you are ready. Remember they are looking at you as a possible new employer and you represent your company so ensure you present a professional impression.
- 10. Prepare the room for interview.** How you will arrange the seating? How formal do you want this to be? Also, ensure there are no interruptions and arrange refreshments if required. You want to get the best out of the candidate so think about how you can help them to feel comfortable.

In the next Quick Guide we will look at how to conduct the interview itself.

Related Course: [Conducting Effective Interviews](#)