Interview FAQs

Types of questions
- You can be asked a variety of questions depending on the industry/role you are applying for. Some common types of questions have been listed below:
  - **Basic information**
    - Asked to find out more about you and to see if you are a good fit for the company/role.
    - Examples:
      - Tell me about yourself?
      - Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
      - What is your biggest achievement?
  - **Competency-based**
    - Asked to assess your ability or potential to do the job and to check that you meet the criteria.
    - Examples:
      - Tell me about a time when you worked in a team?
      - Do you have any experience that prepares you for this role?
      - How do you manage your time effectively to meet all your targets?
  - **Industry knowledge**
    - Asked to check if you have done your research.
    - Examples:
      - What's the biggest challenge currently facing our company?
      - What do you think are the key skills needed in this role?
      - Why do you want to apply to this company?

How to structure answers
- The STAR technique is widely praised for answering questions in an application - especially interviews. The STAR technique is a useful structure to follow when answering questions as it allows you to concisely highlight any key experience and skills that the employer is looking for. This technique is most suited to competency-based questions that are along the lines of 'tell me about a time when...'
- The STAR technique:
  - Situation (describe the event)
  - Task (explain the task you had to complete)
  - Action (describe what you did)
  - Result (what was the end result?)
- If you can't think of an example:
  - Come up with an example of what you would do in a hypothetical situation.
- Don't be afraid to pause or ask the interviewer to repeat themselves! It is a lot better to check what the question is/take your time than answering the question wrong or badly.
- Focus on actions, not situations. The interviewer doesn't care about the weather on the day of your group project (unless it's relevant of course!).
- Don't forget your result - if it wasn't a perfect result, you can talk about what you would do differently next time.
- Don't forget to talk about yourself - it can be really tempting to talk about 'we', particularly in teamwork questions, but it's you they want to hear about.

How to prepare for interviews
- Research the company and role - make sure you feel confident discussing both, you know what the job involves and it matches your skillset. It's so important for the company to see that you know what you are applying for and are genuinely interested in the role/company/industry.
- Make sure you know your key skills/strengths - it's really good to make note of some of your key strengths and skills that are relevant for the role/industry you are applying to and examples of you showcasing them! This is helpful as it is likely that they will ask you about your strengths and how your skills prepare you for this sort of role.
- Make sure you have some key experiences that you can talk about, whether it is a Work Experience Day with Uptree, volunteering, a placement etc. This shows that you have gone out of your way to get (relevant) experience. You want to be able to back up each experience with what you learnt/gained.
- It could be helpful to also think of some potential weaknesses in case they ask (it's a question that can be asked) - you obviously want to come across well, something like 'I need more experience in x' is good.
  - It is good to highlight how you intend to make a weakness a strength. For example, if you say that you are quite nervous when presenting in front of an audience, you should then say what you are doing to try and develop your confidence and improve your presentation skills.
- Be yourself! This is a great opportunity for the company to get to know you more and see if they think you will fit in with what the company needs.
- Dress appropriately (even for online interviews) as it helps you get into the right mindset and also is more professional.
  - You can try and research the company's dress code or see if they have any pictures of staff on their 'about us' page.
  - You may not need to buy/wear a suit! There are some charities that can help you if you do not own one.
  - Wear a nice and professional top/shirt and bottoms.
  - Dresses are fine but ideally one that covers your chest/shoulders/knees.
  - Wear an outfit that you feel comfortable and powerful in!
- Practice with friends, family or teachers. Or even in front of the mirror! Don't memorise answers though - you want to sound genuine, not that you're just regurgitating learnt information.

Tips for online interviews
- Check that you have received the correct links before the interview. Don't forget to check that they work and you've downloaded the correct software!
- If you have any questions or concerns and want to clarify some details, email your contact before the interview, the earlier the better.
  - Send the email as early as possible to ensure that the interviewer has enough time to get back to you.
  - Be polite: 'Dear X', 'Yours sincerely Y'.
  - Introduce yourself and give them some details about why you are emailing them: 'My name is Z and I have an interview with you next Tuesday regarding the Technology Degree Apprenticeship. I would like to clarify some details...'
- Dress appropriately for the interview. You do not need to necessarily wear a suit, but wear a nice, smart top to make a good first impression and to also help you get into the mindset of the interview.

- Have a drink with you. We recommend something with a lid so you don't spill it!
- Have paper and a pen with you in case you need/want to make notes.
- Have your camera and mic on, if you are experiencing technical difficulties then let the interviewer know.
- Have any notes you have prepared next to you. You shouldn't be reading off your notes during the interview but it may help make you feel more comfortable knowing that they are there.
- Fun tip: find something small to put above your camera or something to focus on behind your camera to help you 'make eye contact' with the interviewer. Staring at your camera can feel unnatural and you may be tempted to look at your image in the corner of your screen, however it makes you seem more confident if you stare at/close to the camera.
- Read our Ambassador blog on pre-recorded interviews for more information!

Good questions to ask the interviewer
- You should always try to ask the interviewer some questions as it shows how interested you are in the role/company. The interviewer will likely ask you if you have any questions towards the end of the interview, however, if they do not, then you can still ask a couple of questions.
- It's really useful to prepare some questions you would like to ask before the interview, this is much better than thinking on the spot as these questions will have more value to you!
- Example questions that are suitable to ask:
  - What has been your highlight so far working in this industry?
  - What would a typical day in this role look like?
  - What is the biggest challenge you have found working in this industry?
  - What do you wish you knew before you started working in this company/role?
  - What made you choose this company/industry?
- You can also ask about any aspects of the role or process which are unclear, e.g. what are the next steps I need to take? Or, who would be line managing this role?
- Make sure you check the company website and job advert clearly to make sure you're not asking for information you clearly have access to, otherwise it shows poor research skills!

Any other questions? Email educationteam@uptree.co