

Questions employers might ask

Employers are not looking for a standard response to the questions they ask. There is no right or wrong answer. Rather, each question is an opportunity to show the interviewer what is distinct and unique about you. You may find it valuable to have answers prepared for some of the following common interview questions:

- Can you tell us a bit about yourself?
- Why do you think you are suitable for this position?
- Why would you like this job?
- What are your strengths/weaknesses?
- Do you work well with others, as part of a team?
- What have you got to offer us?
- What do you know about this organisation?
- Are you a member of any clubs or organisations? What do you enjoy about this?

If you do not understand a question, politely ask the interviewer to rephrase it.

Try to use action words such as *achieved*, *managed* and *improved*.

Answer the questions in a positive way that shows you are the best person for the job.

Questions you might ask

At the end of the interview, the interviewer will often ask if you have any questions for them. Be ready for this — asking questions is one way of showing that you are well prepared and interested in the job. Try to keep your questions to the point and short, and always acknowledge and listen to their response.

Some of the things you might want to know about are:

- what the job actually involves, including details such as daily duties and hours of work
- what the prospects are for advancement and training and whether training is on the job or after hours
- what the next step in the selection process is and when applicants can expect to hear whether they have been successful or not.

After your interview

It is important to restate your interest in the position. Thank the interviewers for their time, by name if possible. If the interviewer offers their hand, shake it firmly and sustain eye contact.

Follow up

If you have not heard from an employer after a reasonable time, it is a good idea to follow up and ask if they have reached a decision. It shows you are still interested in the position. If you were not successful, try to get feedback about your interview performance, as this will help you next time. If an employer is willing to give feedback, try to find out what you could have done differently or better. Use this information to learn from each interview and develop a better interview technique.

Step 4: Reviewing your progress

What if you do not get the job?

If you do not get an interview after sending in an application, or do not get a job after attending an interview, think about whether you need to improve your cover letter, résumé or performance at the interview.

Some of the questions you might ask yourself are:

- Did I present my qualifications well and try to relate them to the job?
- Was my appearance too casual or untidy?
- Was I too forward or too timid?
- Did I appear enthusiastic and committed?
- Did I know enough about the company?

- Did I speak clearly when answering questions?
- Were my references suitable?
- Was I late for the interview?

Despite all your efforts, there may be times when you cannot find a job. Do not despair. Your job search may take time and require patience. The more applications you write and the more interviews you have, the better you will perform. Be persistent and stay positive.

While you are looking for full-time work, you may wish to consider part-time, casual, voluntary or unpaid work. Being in the workforce helps your self-esteem and adds to your skills and employment record. It also means you are out in the workforce being noticed, which can make you more attractive to a potential employer.

You should register your name through your local Centrelink Service Centre and start looking for a job as soon as you leave school. You can ask your local Centrelink Service Centre about income support and/or other assistance that you may be eligible for. See the 'Study, work and career support' section for further details.

What if you do get the job?

Information about wages, employment conditions and contracts Before starting any sort of work it is very important to find out about and understand the employment conditions. Your employment conditions are governed by laws, and the way in which these laws affect you depends on whether you are working as an employee or as a sub-contractor. You need to be clear about which arrangement applies to you because they have different terms and conditions.

To find out more, call the Department of Employment on 1300 363 079 (national office) or your state or territory office on 13 33 97, or visit the website at <http://employment.gov.au>.

The following organisations can also give you information about your employment or prospective employment.

Fair Work Ombudsman: For information about employment issues, including wage rates, working conditions, employment contracts, recruitment and dismissal, visit the website at www.fairwork.gov.au or phone 13 13 94.

National Association of Community Legal Centres: For legal rights information, visit the website at www.naclc.org.au or phone (02) 9264 9595 to find the closest Community Legal Centre to you.

Australian Human Rights Commission: This is an independent body that investigates and conciliates complaints of discrimination and breaches of human rights affecting employment. Visit the website at www.humanrights.gov.au or phone the Complaints Infoline on 1300 656 419.

Further contacts in the ACT

Legal contacts

Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS) — NSW/ACT

The ALS provides free legal advice and assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in criminal law matters. Opening hours are Monday to Friday from 9 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 5 pm. Appointments must be made for an interview. Contact the Canberra office on (02) 6249 8488.

Welfare Rights and Legal Centre

The Welfare Rights and Legal Centre can help with a range of legal problems by offering advice and assistance. Contact the centre on (02) 6218 7900 or visit www.welfare-rights-act.org.

Women's Legal Centre

The Women's Legal Centre provides legal information, advice and referrals for women and can help with a wide range of legal problems,