

Activity 13. Applying and Interviewing for the Smith-Basil vacancies

Activity A. Applying for the Vacancy

You have decided to apply for a Smith-Basil vacancy by submitting a covering letter and refining/writing your CV. You will be divided into groups and given a specific vacancy to apply for. The vacancy you are allocated may not be your 'ideal' vacancy. However, it is important you gain experience of structuring your CV to a specific vacancy. Many new graduates will often gain experience in their first job before moving into an area that they find more interesting.

- Before you begin your application, read the job description carefully and try to identify the key skills or personal qualities that are required. Do not simply list the experimental techniques which you have experience of and hope that this is enough.
- Any group work you have undertaken during your course should be highlighted on your CV and mentioned (in less detail) in the covering letter. Remember to include on your CV any clubs/societies or sports teams of which you are a member as this is also evidence of your team abilities.
- Draw attention to any presentations that you have done and any report writing that you have undertaken, for example, your final year project. Any additional relevant skills that you developed during your project work or laboratory classes should also be highlighted.
- If you are applying for the technical vacancy, you should also include with your CV (as a separate page) details of modules taken and techniques developed. Ensure that the most relevant techniques for this application i.e. those asked for by Smith-Basil are clearly visible and not buried under less relevant (for this application) information.
- Always include details of any work experience and what you learned from it.

Once you have completed your application, you should submit this in a sealed envelope with your name, group number and the vacancy you are applying for on the outside. This will be passed on to the group who will form the interview panel for your interview.

Activity B. Interviewing for the Vacancy

In this activity you will be interviewed for the vacancy you applied for and also form an interviewing panel to interview others that have applied for positions at this company.

- The day before your group will be holding its interviews you should collect the CVs of those candidates you will be interviewing from your tutor. Allow yourself some time to become familiar with these applications and think about what questions you will ask.
- You should make a list of the questions you are going to ask and ensure each candidate is asked the same set of questions.
- You should ensure each member of the group has an opportunity to take the role of chairperson.
- The chairperson should introduce the panel and put the applicant at their ease.
- Some typical interview questions are included within this activity. However, your group should decide upon the questions you will ask.
- Each interview should last around 5 minutes.
- Use the forms supplied to make notes about the applicant's interview performance.
- Your group must decide which applicant to employ. You need to be able to justify the reasoning of your appointment.
- You can only make one appointment based on the information given in the candidates' CV and their interview performance.

When you are being interviewed you should:

- Create the right impression, be enthusiastic and show you want this job.
- Think in advance of some questions that you can ask. This creates the impression that you are interested in the company / position.
- Do not ask about salaries, holidays etc. at the interview, leave the details until an offer is made.

This activity provides good practice of facing a panel and answering questions to which you have not had the opportunity to prepare the answers to in advance. Also, being part of an interview panel gives you an insight into what impresses interviewers and what employers are looking for in this situation.

Interview Record Sheet

Instructions to the Interview Panel

- Put the applicant at their ease
- Introduce yourself, e.g. chairperson is
- Use fair questions
- Keep the interview flowing
- Invite questions from the candidate
- Probe CV and other qualities

Applicant 1	
Comments	strengths/weaknesses
Score/10	

Applicant 2	
Comments	strengths/weaknesses
Score/10	

Applicant 3	
Comments	strengths/weaknesses
Score/10	

Applicant 4	
Comments	strengths/weaknesses
Score/10	

Applicant 5	
Comments	strengths/weaknesses
Score/10	

Applicant 6	
Comments	strengths/weaknesses
Score/10	

The successful applicant is:

.....
Reasons

Feedback from interview and CV

Name of Applicant

Post Applying for

Please give examples of candidate's strengths and indicate any areas for possible development.



Examples of Criterion Based Questions	Possible Criteria Being Investigated
Describe a situation where you have worked in a group or a team	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was your role in the Group? • How did this role link with other team members? • In what ways were the efforts of the individual members coordinated? • What part did you play in this? 	Team working, persuasive skills. Ability to gain respect and confidence
Describe a situation where you have organised an activity that involved a deadline.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the situation? • What did you do? • What was the outcome? 	Ability to withstand pressure, planning, prioritising and organisational skills
Describe a situation where, as leader of a group you set objectives for the group, gained their commitment and led them to achieve outstanding results.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the task? • What actions did you take? • What was the outcome? 	Organisational skills, team working, delegation, listening, awareness of group working.
Describe a complex problem you have had to think through.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What steps did you take in tackling the problem? • What help, if any, did you seek? • What was the outcome and how did you feel about it? 	Analytical skills, planning / prioritising, and weighing up alternative solutions
Describe a situation where you have had to convince someone else of something that was important to you.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the issue and why was it important? • Who did you have to persuade? • What did you do and what was the result? 	Personal credibility, persuasive skills and prepared to take responsibility
Describe a project you have completed.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What problems did you meet? • How did you overcome them? • What have you learned from this? 	Planning, prioritising and realistic problem solving

Help Sheet-Common Questions Asked During Interviews¹¹

¹¹ What Next? Careers Service publication, University of Hull, 2002

Educational Record

1. Why did you choose your 'A' level subjects?
2. Why did you choose your degree subject?
3. If you could do so, how and why would you plan your academic study differently?
4. If you could make changes in your University, how and why would you do so?
5. Do you consider that your results, so far indicate your academic potential?
6. Could you explain what your project is about?
7. Do you have plans for further study?
8. What have you learned from participation in extra-curricular activities?
9. What other skills do you have? (E.g. numeracy, languages, computer skills, etc.)
10. What accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction at University?

Personal Characteristics

1. Describe your most rewarding experience.
2. Is there anything you dislike very much - what makes you feel angry?
3. How would you sum up your strengths and weaknesses?
4. What motivates you to your greatest effort?
5. How would you describe yourself?
6. How do you think a friend who knows you well would describe you?
7. Describe the most important problem in personal relationships that you have encountered and how you resolved it?
8. What is the most important mistake you've made and what did you learn from it?
9. What lessons have you learnt from holding positions of responsibility?
10. Do you prefer working alone or with others?

Interests/Activities

1. What has your membership of the cricket committee involved?
2. Have you had to deal with awkward people in organising these activities?
3. Do you enjoy being captain?

Career Motivation

1. How has the University prepared you for a (e.g. business career)?
2. Why have you applied for this kind of work/career?
3. What do you see yourself doing in five/ten years time?
4. What short-term career goals have you set and why?

Questions to the interviewer

1. How do you define the training period for graduates?
2. Is finding accommodation for young graduates a problem – where do they live?
3. What has happened to graduates you have recruited?
4. What are your plans to expand the department?
5. Does your company support or have any involvement with the local community?
6. Is there a high turnover of graduates in your company?

Meta data

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