

## Unit3

### Job interview

**Topics: Job interview process**

**Skills: job interview skills, giving advice, CV & cover letter writing**

The **job interview process** starts with the **assessment** and **selection** of the job applications sent to the employer before the closing date. The HR managers assess applications against a selection criteria and rank them according to a scoring system. The potential candidates are short-listed and invited to attend an interview. The **human resource manager/personnel manager** in the **personnel department** or the recruiter calls you in for an interview and makes an **appointment** with you. However, it can also happen that candidates must go through some stages before they get the job.

**Pre-interview stage:** More and more companies and recruitment agencies arrange **first round/screening/HR interviews** to 'screen' the candidates by phone, computer (Skype) or in-person to tell apart the potential candidates from the less suitable ones. Candidates may be asked to rate themselves or respond to an assessment survey. Fair or not, at this stage interviewers can also obtain some personal information from search engines (e.g. Google, Yahoo), blogs, and even social networks (e.g. LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter), which can influence their decisions. In other words, on first impression candidates will be judged and **short listed**.

**Interview stage:** Following that, the selected candidates are called in for the classical **job interview**, if there is a large number of candidates the **first-level job** interview will be followed by a **second-level** one or many subsequent interviews. It usually takes place on the company premises as employers want to meet candidates face-to-face to find out more about their motivation, professionalism as well as hard and soft skills. It's often said that hard skills will get you an interview but you need soft skills to get (and keep) the job and to get promoted or make a career hard skills will matter again.

**Hard skills** (which can be learnt from books, experience and are related to IQ) are:

- a) **job-related skills** (related to one specific profession) e. g. as qualification, education, practical experience,
- b) **transferable skills** (technical skills which can be used in any occupation) such as language knowledge, presentation skills, driving skills, computer literacy, etc.

**Soft skills** (which are related to EI – Emotional Intelligence) are:

- a) **personal skills/personal qualities** and
- b) **interpersonal skills/people skills** (skills used in interaction with people).

The meeting can be arranged between the candidate and the employer, the head of department and HR manager or an interview panel. At the **warm-up stage**, after greeting and a short small talk candidates are asked to introduce themselves e.g. 'Tell me about yourself.....' The interviewer mentions some basic facts and information about the company itself. The next stage involves **information exchange** about the candidate's professional experience, qualification, goals etc. The candidate is shown around and introduced to the staff. In the **wrap-up stage**, candidates are asked if they have any questions concerning the job or the company to see their interest in the company and



motivations. In the end, before shaking hands and saying goodbye, the candidate thanks the interviewers for their time and may ask for a business card for future contact. In Anglo-Saxon countries it is common to write a short **thank you card** to the interviewer to remind them.

Job interviews can take various forms such as:

- one-to-one interview
- panel interview
- group/open interview – candidates are interviewed at the same place for the same job e.g. in an assessment centre
- long distance interview candidates attend it in another city, region or country
- lunch interview –takes place in a lunch setting
- internal -the job is advertised only for people working for the same company
- external-applicants are selected outside the company
- behavioural interview –questions are asked how candidates reacted in certain situations in the past:
  - situational interview –candidates’ reactions are tested in certain situations
  - problem solving
  - stress interview- to find out how candidates can cope with stress
  - informational –candidates meet people who can have a positive influence on
  - structured interview: the same questions are asked interviewees in the same order to stay objective
  - unstructured: the questions can be changed depending on the interviewee’s answers
  - puzzle interview, used first by Microsoft in the 1990s, the applicant is asked to solve puzzles or brainteasers (e.g., “Why are manhole covers round?”) or to solve unusual problems.

**Post-interview stage:** Before signing the work contract, details of employment are discussed and agreed on such as **responsibilities, starting salary**, training opportunities, the **working hours, fringe benefits/perks** and the amount of paid holiday. Most **newly employed** will be **put on probation** and subsequently be **taken on the permanent staff**.

**Exercise 1: match the skills with the related sentences and make complete sentences with them.**

Example: A realistic person is down-to-earth and has a practical way of thinking.

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1. organisational skills | you care for things, take responsibility for your job                  |
| 2. assertive             | other people can rely on you, trust you, count on you                  |
| 3. responsible           | you know your rights, you can get others to accept your point or ideas |
| 4. realistic             | adapt oneself to changes, fit in easily, flexible                      |
| 5. punctual              | can make decisions easily, make up one’s mind fast                     |
| 6. adaptable             | sympathetic, understanding,  |
| 7. reliable              | produce results without wasting time, energy or money                  |
| 8. decisive              | have imagination, creative, innovative                                 |
| 9. well-versed           | knows one’s job inside out   |
| 10. imaginative          | you can plan, coordinate and arrange things, set priorities            |
| 11. empathy              | you have a down-to-earth, practical way of thinking                    |
| 12. reliable             | give support to colleagues, help them to improve and overcome problems |
| 13. coaching skills      | have a head for figures, are good at maths                             |
| 14. accurate             | precise, rarely make errors  |



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- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 15. coaching skills         | have good stamina, fit  |
| 16. analytical skills       | analyse problems, finds reasons and makes logical connections               |
| 17. physical strength       | can co-operate and get on well with colleagues, work in team spirit,        |
| 18. negotiation skills      | can negotiate with success, discuss things                                  |
| 19. customer service skills | can plan, set long-term goals, objectives                                   |
| 20. computer literate       | serve clients politely, can settle conflicts                                |
| 21. strategic thinking      | speak one's mind, express one's opinion openly                              |
| 22. selling skills          |   |
| 23. team worker             | good at using software programmes, proficient with text processing, typing, |
| 24. honest                  | can persuade customers to buy, make good deals                              |

**Part 2: state which category these nouns belong to (soft or hard, personal or interpersonal, job-related or transferable)?**

**Part 3: Name some jobs which require some of the above mentioned skills. Give your reasons.**



## Speaking

### Dialogue1: Advice for first-time job applicants

**Role A:** You are Ivana/Ivan Kovac with an economic college degree. You are specialized in marketing. You have just graduated from the University of Economics and submitted your application to a large company. You have been invited for a job interview. You would like to go there well-prepared. Ask the recruitment expert of your local employment agency for practical advice:

- introduce yourself, tell the expert about your situation and ask for help
- the interview will take place with the HR manager at the headquarters of the company
- ask about preparations to make before the interview (things to take with you, about appearance etc)
- ask for tips and strategies during the job interview
- inquire about which topics to avoid (taboo topics)
- ask what to do at the end of the interview

You are starting the dialogue.

**Role:B:** You work as a recruitment expert at the local employment agency. A first-time job entrant is visiting you and asking you for practical advice on job interviews. Act out your role in the following order:

- offer the client your help as the person in charge
- ask what type of interview is to be expected
- give advice on preparation for the interview (background research, mock interview etc.)
- give some general guidelines about interview etiquette (clothing, behaviour)
- advise strategies during the interview

Your partner is starting the dialogue



## Supplementary information

### tips for the job interview combined with advising strategies

- **You should** bring your portfolio (extra copies of your cover letter, a list of references, a notepad and pen in a folder), **You ought to** read them through again and **You had better** be prepared to explain details (experience, gap in your employment).
- **I (strongly) advise/(highly) recommend you to** do some background research, **I recommend/advise** collecting information about the company and write some company-related questions. Be prepared to answer questions such as "What do you know about our company"? and "Why do you want to work here?"
- **I suggest that you should** check how professional your social network image is and remove anything that will influence negatively your chances./I **suggest checking**....
- **How about/What about** practising a mock job interview at home with a friend?
- **You (really) must** leave the gadgets (cell phone, blackberry, etc.) at home or turned them off in your bag or briefcase (strong advice).
- if you don't know the dress code at the company, **remember that/keep that in mind that** its better to over dress than under dress.
- **I think you should** stay calm, confident and smile, which will make you look more relaxed.
- **It is important/vital/crucial to** make a positive and professional first impression, give a firm handshake to each interviewer
- body language: keep eye contact but don't stare, watch out for nervous habits
- ask questions about the position and the organization, but avoid commonplace questions whose answers can easily be found on the company Web site.
- **If I were you,/If I were in your shoe/If I were in your position, I would** avoid asking questions about salary and benefits unless a job offer is made.
- finally, ask your interviewer for a business card, thank the interviewer for their time, shake hands and say that you look forward to hearing from them. As a follow-up, **it is advisable to** send a short thank you note the next day

## **Dialogue2: first-time entrant job interview with the HR manager**

**Role A:** You are Panni/Pál Epres with an economic college degree. You have just graduated from Budapest Economic College and submitted your application for the job of financial analyst. You have been called for a job interview with the HR manager of the company. Answer the his/her questions about

- Your qualification, job experience, internship
- Language knowledge
- Transferable skills and personal qualities
- Your motivation and career plans

You also have to ask about the opportunities and incentives the company can offer.

Your partner will start the conversation.

**Role B:** You are the Human Resource manager of the Hungarian subsidiary of TATA consultancy services. You are looking for the most suitable candidate for the financial analyst position. You have invited Panni/Pál Epres to a job interview. You are greeting the applicant and him/her that you have found his/her application interesting and now you would like to find out a bit more about him/her in person. Although you have already read his/her letter of application you want to get some information about the following:

- The candidate's qualification, job experience, internship
- Language knowledge
- Transferable skills and personal qualities
- His/her motivation and career plans

You are also supposed to tell him/her what opportunities you company can offer.

You will start the conversation

### Dialogue3: Job interview with an experienced employee

**Role A:** You are Zorka/Zvonko Bosanac, currently employed as a junior logistic manager at a medium-sized Croatian enterprise. You speak English and Spanish fluently. You graduated from the Business Academy 5 years ago and have applied for the job as a logistic project manager at a multinational logistic centre. You have been short-listed for a job interview with the HR manager of the company. Answer the his/her questions about

- Your qualification, job experience
- Language knowledge
- Transferrable skills
- Reasons for a change of workplace
- Your motivation and career plans (you are willing to work in Portugal permanently)

You also have to ask about the opportunities and incentives the company can offer.

Your partner will start the conversation.

**Role B:** You are a recruiting manager of the Croatian subsidiary of a multinational logistic centre. You are looking for an account at your Spanish subsidiary. You have invited Fanni/Ferenc Barát to a job interview. You want to get some information about the following:

- The candidate's qualification, job experience, internship
- Language knowledge
- Transferrable skills
- His/her motivation and career plans,
- Relocation: ask him/her whether (s)he would be willing to work in Portugal as an accountant in your Lisbon subsidiary

You are also supposed to tell him/her what opportunities you company can offer.

- Continuous development and career opportunities
- Attractive compensation package: a wide choice of cafeteria options, company car, flat
- Multinational environment, performance-related appraisal system

You will start the conversation.



#### **Dialogue 4: preparing for a job interview in the assessment centre**

**Role A:** You are the career advisor of the local employment agency. One of your clients has applied for a job at the local subsidiary of a multinational automotive company. Your client has been short-listed for a job interview in the assessment centre of the company. Please inform the client about how applicants are tested there. Act out your role in the given situation:

- congratulate on your client's success
- speak about the types of tests candidates usually undergo
- give your clients some practical hints

Your partner is starting the dialogue.

**Role B:** You have applied for a job at the local subsidiary of a multinational automotive company lately and have been short-listed for a job interview in the assessment centre of the company. You are unfamiliar with this type of job interview, therefore you are visiting career advisor of the local employment agency to ask the clerk for professional advice. Act out your role in the given situation:

- tell the clerk about the good news
- ask the clerk for clarification about the nature of assessment centres
- ask for some tips
- promise to give immediate feedback after attending the assessment centre

You are starting the dialogue.

### Supplementary information:

Assessment centres are a popular way for large organisations to test short-listed applicants to determine their suitability for a particular job. The assessment process can run from a half-day to two days and usually happens away from the workplace. You'll be asked to participate in a variety of exercises, which might include:

- **Role plays** - scenarios similar to what you would encounter in the job
- **Case studies** - work tasks designed to test your planning abilities
- **In-tray exercises** - tasks designed to test your organisational skills and ability to prioritise
- **Job skills exercises** - measure particular skills you would need in the job
- **Group exercises** - test your ability to work as a member of a team
- **Psychological tests** - a pen and paper psychological test that measures your mental aptitude for the job

You'll be ranked on your own performance and compared to other candidates. If you're successful, you'll receive detailed feedback on your performance and areas where you may need to improve.

### Getting ready for assessment

Assessment centres can be intimidating, but they give you an opportunity to demonstrate your skills and abilities. They give you an idea of:

- What is expected from you
- What the work will be like
- Whether or not the job is for you

You can't study for them, but there are things you can do to prepare:

- **Review** - if you're given any materials in advance, study them carefully - they can help you figure out what the organisation is looking for
- **Get there early** - you'll feel less rushed, and you'll be able to get a feel for the location and the other applicants
- **Be yourself** - the assessors are trained professionals, and they'll know if you're being fake
- **Read the test instructions carefully** - make sure you know exactly what you're doing and that you have all the resources you need
- **Don't try to second-guess** - you can't be sure what a particular task is designed to measure, so don't try to fake it. Just do each task to the best of your abilities
- **act according to the requirements of the advertised position: e.g.** if the job requires you to be a good team player, in the group exercise not the bossy, dominant participants will make good impressions
- **Ask for feedback** - this will help you improve

## Writing: letter of application:

A **cover letter** is a letter of introduction (not longer than one page) in which applicants present themselves and wish to persuade their prospective employer. It can be the trump card to a job interview if it can convince the employer that its writer is the most suitable candidate for the job. Ideally, the cover letter and the CV should go hand in hand, tailored to the employer's needs. The cover letter should be written as a complement to the CV. Instead of repeating lines word by word, the cover letter should rephrase the facts already mentioned in the CV. Applicants should avoid using negative expressions or making unfavourable statements about previous employers. A well-written cover letter will give a personal touch to the application, highlighting the writer's strengths and suitability for the job backed up with examples. Giving the reasons why the candidate wants to work for the company can emphasize motivation. At this point, applicants can make good use of their research notes that they have researched about the employer's background and history. A recruiter that is impressed with the cover letter will pay more attention to the resume, too.

It is a rule of thumb that the letter of application should be **clear, concise, to the point** as employers' time should be respected. Full sentences, contractions or pronouns mustn't be used. Action verbs and strong adjectives are welcome. The writer should be consistent and use the same style throughout. **Attention to grammar, spelling, punctuation is a must, too. Proof-reading** has to be done more than once. It is also advisable to use a **font** style that is simple, clear and commonplace, such as Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri. Cover letters can be grouped in many ways and many types have more than one name:

- **job-specific cover letter/ad response:** the classical type and the most widespread too. It is sent for an advertised position.
- **response to a recruiting agency:** contains information that would not normally go into a cover letter, such as salary requirements (a range, not a specific number), whether or not the candidate is willing to relocate. When responding to recruiters or agencies, it is important to keep in mind that the recruiter is working for the company that has job openings, not for the candidate. **cold-contact letter/cold-call letter/letter of inquiry/blind cover letter:** is written 'out of the blue' and sent to a company, which has not advertised open positions.
- **referral/recommendation/network letter:** is used when the applicant has been referred to the employer by a common acquaintance. The person's name should be mentioned within the first paragraph of the letter.
- **follow-up/report back letter:** thank-you letter with references is written three or more days after an interview to thank the recruiter for the interview. It must be fresh and original instead of repeating word by word from the cover letter.

**Paragraph 1:** a positive, formal introduction outlining how you heard about the job opportunity, where you saw the job advertisement,

**Paragraph 2:** educational background, experience, qualification

**Paragraph 3:** highlight your key skills and experience, personal qualities, suitability





**Paragraph 4:** Thank them for taking the time to consider your application, request a meeting or personal interview, mention that you will contact them to schedule a personal meeting

**Lead-in:**

I am writing to apply for the post/position of ....advertised in yesterday's issue of.....newspaper.  
I am writing with regard to you advertisement in ..... weekly journal of/dated 14th February 2012.  
I am writing in connection with the vacancy in your Marketing Department as advertised in your website.

I am currently employed as.....  
I have been working for (company name) as a..... for x years/since 2010.  
At present I am working as/I hold the position of.....  
I am responsible for.....  
I am supposed to.....  
My duties include.....  
Previously,/earlier I used to work as.....for X years/from.....to.....

as for my studies/qualification, I graduated from (university/college) in ..... with bachelor/master degree in marketing.  
as outlined in my CV/resume, I obtained a degree at .....University/College in (year).....  
I qualified as.....  
I got my certificate/diploma.....  
I have received training in.....  
I attended a course on.....  
I have successfully completed a course in  
I served my internship at.....from.....to...../I was a trainee at.....  
I completed an apprenticeship..... rse in.....at.....recently.  
I have/gained extensive/long-year experience in.....during my career.  
I am an experienced.....

I am generally noted for my organisational and managerial skills.  
I believe that I would be a suitable candidate for the advertised position as I have the necessary knowledge/qualification and professional experience....  
During my time spent at..... I obtained a valuable insight into multinational working practices/sl gained a comprehensive/a wide knowledge in/an overview of international markets/the domestic market.  
I am familiar with.....  
I am well versed in the needs of .....

I have a number of good business contacts ....  
I am mobile/ I am willing to relocate at short notice/I am willing to commute from my home.  
I enclose my CV and photograph as requested and I would be glad to supply/provide you further details about me. I thank you for considering my application and am willing/am ready to attend an interview any time.



## Writing Task

**Write a letter of application.** You are Krisztina/Kristóf Kovács, an economist with a college degree. You have been working in your profession for over ten years. In the hope of a higher salary and better career prospects you would like to prove yourself abroad. You found the following job advertisement in a professional magazine. Write a 'winning' cover letter considering the requirements of the job:

### Assistant Management Accountant

Vacancy Summary	
<b>Job Title :</b>	<b>Assistant Management Accountant</b>
<b>Job Type :</b>	<a href="#">Temporary Jobs</a>
<b>Job Location :</b>	<a href="#">RCT (Mid Glamorgan, Wales, United Kingdom)</a>
<b>Job Salary :</b>	10-12 Per Hour GBP10.00 - GBP12.50 Per hour + Holiday Pay
<b>Start Date :</b>	ASAP
<b>Contract Period :</b>	3 Months +
<b>Job Description :</b>	<p>NOW Accountancy are seeking a strong <b>Assistant Management Accountant</b> for a reputable client based in the RCT area. The role has arisen due to a period of sickness and is expected to last 3 months with a strong possibility of an extension. Reporting into the Financial Controller you will be required to deal with a variety of tasks within the finance department.</p> <p>Key responsibilities include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Control of the general ledger to ensure accuracy and monitoring of sub ledgers</li> <li>2) Calculation of month end holiday pay accrual</li> <li>3) Preparation and maintenance of the cashbook and petty cash</li> <li>4) Dealing with all intrastat reporting requirements</li> <li>5) Travel expenses</li> <li>6) Tracking costs for new projects to ensure various departments adhere to budgeted costs</li> <li>7) Track changes and any costs as a result and present to project teams on a monthly basis</li> <li>8) Ad-hoc reporting with Advanced Microsoft Excel skills</li> <li>9) Any other duties required by the FC</li> </ol> <p>The ideal candidate will have a good understanding of accounts and be flexible enough to pitch-in where needed in the business. Our client will consider Part-Qualified studiers and QBE's and salary will depend upon qualifications and experience. Manufacturing and SAP experience would be an advantage. Now Accountancy are currently receiving an overwhelming response to our jobs, and therefore we are unable to reply personally to every application. Please note, if you</p>



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have not received a response from us to our job adverts within 3 working days, this indicates your application has been unsuccessful on this occasion. Please check the Now Accountancy website for other positions which may be more suitable



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