

Tips from our HR Recruitment Officer

Here are a few tips about completing an application form and attending an interview that you might find useful. These are intended as guidance only as any recruitment decision of the Institute is based on a number of factors.

1. Completing your application form

We will receive a large number of applications, so it's important that you make the right impression straight away. These tips should help you make a start:

- Read all the questions carefully and make sure that you answer the question
- Make sure you complete all sections on the application form as clearly and fully as possible. The Institute's application form is very simple and straight-forward
- Do not add lots of unnecessary information. Answer the question in a concise way, but make sure you include all your key points
- Think about what the Institute is looking for in a candidate. Consider the competency areas and keep this in mind when completing the application form
- Make sure you know about the area that you're applying for, read about it to see whether you fit the profile. Think about why you are interested in the area and why you think you are suitable for the role. If you decide that this area is not really for you once you have done your research, then it will save you a lot of time that you could have spent completing the application form and attending the interviews
- Each time that you claim something about a competency, e.g. 'good at motivating people', check that you can back it up with specific evidence
- Remember to do a spell check and check your grammar
- Keep a copy of your application form so that you can expand on it in the interview
- Don't be economical with the truth. (i.e. don't lie) as a good interviewer will probe you for details and will be able to pick up inconsistencies with your previous answers.

2. Attending the interview

Everyone will be nervous before attending an interview, whether it's your first one or not. However, a certain amount of nerves is good in a situation like this as it shows you are serious about the job, and a bit of adrenaline will help you to think on your feet.

Preparation is the key to confidence and success in an interview and its importance cannot be emphasised enough. The tips below will help you to control those nerves by knowing that you've prepared properly for the interview.

a. Know what the employer is looking for:

- Make sure you understand the accountabilities and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) from the relevant job description
- The interview will be competency based and your interviewer will be looking for behavioural evidence from your past that shows that you are strong in certain competencies
- Think of examples that demonstrate these competencies from all aspects of your life, not just academic. We are looking for bright, but well-rounded people to join us

b. What you can do before the interview:

- Make sure you know where you're going and who you're meeting
- Know what was on your application form
- Do your homework. Before the interview try to find out as much as you can about the organization. For example if you're applying to the Institute, you would be expected to have an understanding of who we are and what we do
- Know what the role is that you're applying for and why you're interested in it. Also think about why you will be suitable for that role
- Practice your examples before the interview
- Arrive early so that you have time to relax and prepare yourself. Be friendly and greet your interviewer with a smile. Try to make informal conversation with them - this will help to relax you.

c. What you can do in the interview:

Whether you have attended several interviews or only a few there are several things to remember if you are invited for an interview:

- You should act professionally but also be polite and friendly
- Dress appropriately and smartly. Make sure the clothes you wear are appropriate for the industry and job.
- Make sure you have good eye contact with your interviewer and positive body language, e.g. sit up rather than slouch
- Speak clearly and concisely
- Listen to the question and make sure that your example is relevant to the question, and the competency
- Be positive throughout the interview but not over-bearing
- You are likely to be asked a number of questions about your previous jobs - make sure you have this information clear in your mind. You will also be asked questions based on the job description and specification - make sure you are clear about the role and be prepared to show how your skills and experience match the person specification. Show an interest in the organization
- Remember to sell yourself - it might be awkward and feel as though you are 'boasting' about your achievements, but we only have the time of your interview within which to find out who you really are so it is important to give examples which show your personal contribution
- Talk to the interviewer about their role in the organization and how much contact you will have with them if you are appointed
- If you decide that you want the job then make that clear to the interviewer at the interview. Find out whether there will be any further interviews and when they will inform you
- Think about questions that you want to ask the interviewer. Remember, an interview is a two way process and you should be making a decision as to whether you want to work for us as well
- Remember to smile!

Learning to be a good interviewee comes with practice. If you're not successful first time think about what went well and what you think could go better, and make sure you put it into practice for your next one.