

Job interviews

Contents

Preparations.....	1
Presentation.....	1
First job interview.....	2
Second job interview.....	3
Standard questions	3
What to bear in mind during the interview.....	4
Interview questions to prepare	6
After the job interview	14

Preparations

Like with drawing up your Curriculum Vitae and writing an application letter, there are ways to thoroughly prepare for job interviews. Although there are some factors in an interview that you cannot influence, there are also matters for which you can definitely prepare yourself. Don't miss out on a job because of poor preparation. If you prepare well and still don't get hired, it won't be your fault.

Start your preparations by carefully examining all the information that you have managed to acquire about the organisation (requested from the company, found on the Internet, taken from business guides, chambers of commerce). Studying relevant corporate information will reduce the risk that you be faced with surprises during the interview, and will allow you to give better answers to questions about the organisation. For example, you can often distil a company's future vision from its annual report, and by studying that vision you will be able to respond more easily to questions on that subject. If you have any questions of your own based on your information, you can draw up a list during your preparations, to avoid forgetting your questions during the interview. Moreover, asking questions means that you have thought about the job and the organisation, and for most employers that is a positive consideration.

Other factors in your preparation include the following:

- Read your letter and CV through carefully, as it may have been some time since you submitted your application. Since you should not be sending standard letters, it is important to know what you wrote in that specific letter.
- Read the advertisement carefully once more.
- During the interview, the interviewer will be looking for answers to roughly the following questions: who you are (knowledge, skills, person), what you want, what you know about the job/the organisation, and whether what you want matches the job/organisation. He or she needs to find the answers to those questions in order to determine whether you're right for the job.
- Prepare standard questions (see page 4,6 - 14). In most job interviews, 75% of the discussion is made up of standard questions, which you can prepare. The best way to do this is to write out your literal answers to those questions or say them aloud.
- Also write down questions that you find difficult or that gave you problems during previous interviews. Don't take the chance that those questions won't be asked again.
- Make sure that you know who'll be interviewing you. People's backgrounds dictate the general direction that interviews take. A human resources officer will ask more general questions about yourself as a person. Someone who is more familiar with the job itself will ask more questions about expertise and experience/skills. Search engines can also sometimes provide interesting information about interviewers.

Presentation

- Make sure that you're wearing clean, neat clothes. Match your outfit to the culture and

dress conventions of the organisation. In many cases, you're not required to wear a three-piece suit or matching skirt and jacket. At the same time, though, denims aren't appreciated everywhere. If in doubt, it's better to be slightly overdressed than underdressed: that will at least show that the interview is a serious occasion for you.

- Make sure that you're on time. Take the possibility of traffic jams and delays with trains into account. To make sure you're on time, take a train earlier. If you're early, explore the area or have a cup of coffee: don't arrive more than 10-15 minutes before the interview is scheduled to start.
- Bring to the interview: your letter and CV, a writing pad and pen, your list of questions, addresses and names of references, the invitation for the job interview, if applicable, whatever material you've acquired about the organisation, relevant theses, your own publications and products about which you might be asked. Only bring diplomas if specifically asked to do so in the letter inviting you for the interview. Carry these documents in a presentable bag or briefcase, not a plastic bag or scruffy rucksack/linen bag.
- Make sure to present yourself properly from the moment that you first enter the premises. Receptionists are sometimes asked to observe applicants while they're waiting. Be sure to examine the display with the organisation's products with interest. Read the folders and annual reports in which the organisation presents itself: they're generally there for a purpose. The first impression is not formed during the interview, but much earlier, when you enter the building and when you're taken in for the interview.
- For the first impression during the interview, it's important to make sure that your handshake is firm and that you make eye contact. Speak clearly and smile. Don't be too hesitant or shy, but neither should you be too dominating. Convey that you appreciate having been asked for an interview, and that you're looking forward to it. Don't sit on the edge of your chair, but don't lean back or lounge. Sit up straight, use the entire seat, make sure that you only feel the backrest against the lower part of your back, keep your feet next to each other on the ground (to give you the most grounded position), lean your upper body forward a little. This creates an active, come-and-get-it-I'm-ready impression.
- Don't smoke during the interview. If you don't want coffee or tea, just say so. Ask for water if you want.
- When answering the questions, don't only look at the person who asked them. He or she is asking the questions on behalf of the entire committee. Look at everyone when you're answering. Make sure not to overlook the people sitting at a corner, on the outside. People may easily feel like they're being excluded or ignored. Moreover, you don't know who will have most influence on the decision behind the screens: that's not automatically the person asking the questions/heading the interview. It might be the person you structurally ignored because he or she didn't ask as many questions or has a less important job. As a rule, direct co-workers will have a great deal of influence, being the people with whom you will be dealing on a daily basis.

First job interview

The first meeting is always exploratory, and is sometimes called an exploratory interview. Make no mistake, though: it is indeed a job interview. The exploration applies both to the employer and to yourself. Both parties form an impression of each other, which determine how matters proceed from there. If the employer has a positive impression of you, you will, in many cases, be invited for a second interview. If the employer has a negative impression of you, conversely, you will certainly be rejected. However, that does not mean that you should try any means available to create a positive impression of yourself. You will also be forming an opinion of the employer, and if you decide during the interview that that organisation is not for you, it is advisable to withdraw your application. An employment contract signed with reservations is no good to anyone.

The general structure of the exploratory interview is standard. It starts with some small talk to put you at ease, but also to allow the interviewers a moment to relax and switch over from the previous interview. ('Did you have any difficulty finding it?' is often used to

open the conversation, but unusual hobbies or an interesting surname are also used to break the ice.) Next, you'll be provided with information about the organisation, the department and the position, to make sure that you understand properly what awaits you if you start to work there. They then focus on obtaining as much information about you as possible, in order to judge whether or not you meet their requirements. They generally quickly discuss your CV, ask about experience, knowledge and skills, and test your motivation (for the company and for the job). As the interview comes to a close, you'll be given the opportunity to ask your own questions, assuming that they haven't already been addressed earlier. Finally, arrangements are agreed about the follow-up procedure.

Second job interview

At the second job interview, if you're invited to one, the questions will be less tentative. The purpose of a follow-up interview is to choose from the remaining applicants. As such, these interviews are sometimes referred to as selection interviews. Whether three, four or five applicants are left, they will have made a favourable impression on the employer. As a result, the employer will be making the selection based on what are often minimal differences, which means that the questions will be harder and more businesslike. You should prepare for questions such as why you didn't complete a particular study programme, or how your career switch came about, or what the precise level of your professional expertise is, or how you think you'll handle particular problems. You should have your answers prepared. Making notes of possible questions and answers in advance can be a useful aid.

It is also advisable to go through your list of work experience, extracurricular activities and education details once again, if only to refresh your memory and make it easier for you to answer questions about your employment record.

You may also be presented with cases during this interview. You will be asked how you would respond in a particular situation. The interviewers will be concerned with, on the one hand, the answer or solution, and on the other on your approach: do you adopt an analytical and systematic approach, or do you try to find the answer by trial and error? Do you remain calm when answering this case, even if further facts are added, or do you panic or become stressed? Generally, the purpose of a case is not to find the right answer, since multiple solutions are often possible, but to see how you approach the problem.

During the second interview, salary and fringe benefits will generally also be discussed. Never make the error of asking questions about salary, leave days, required relocation or other conditions too early in the interview. Such questions are best left until the employer indicates that he or she wants to do business with you. Only then do you have a negotiating position and can you ask about such matters as promotion to a higher salary bracket. However, don't make absurd demands, and remain realistic in your negotiations.

Standard questions

Not all job interviews run along the same lines, but as a rule it is advisable to prepare for several standard questions. As such, the following list includes a series of standard questions with suggested answers.

- 'Tell us about yourself.'
Give a short and businesslike explanation of what type of person you are, and refer to a number of elements from your Curriculum Vitae; avoid lengthy discourses about your personal background, don't get lost in details, and switch to a different subject if the employer shows signs of becoming uninterested or bored.

- 'Why are you applying for a job with us?'

Explain your reasons for working for that particular organisation, and specify what aspects of the job appeal most to you.

- 'So why do you want to leave your old employer?'
Don't be afraid to tell the truth. If your contract is coming to an end or if your job isn't secure because of a reorganisation or downsizing, you can simply say so. No employer will think that is unusual. However, matters are different if you're involved in a conflict with your employer. In such a situation, you might explain that you're interested in moving on to a different company, but under no circumstances should you be too critical of your old employer. That is impolite: stay formal, and don't become emotional.
- 'What duties do you think will give you the most problems?'
Mention one or two less strong points, but try to give your response a positive slant. For example, you might explain that you have difficulty delegating work, because you prefer to bear full responsibility for your duties, or you could say that your command of English isn't perfect, but that you intend to bring it up to standard in the near future.
- 'What are your strengths?' or: 'What are you really good at?'
Specify one or two strengths, but don't exaggerate. Mention qualities that you're proud of, or talk about your accomplishments. Provide one or two examples to explain your answer, but don't lose yourself in minor details.
- 'What are your long term plans?'
Talk about what you hope to achieve in the long term, but lead your answer around to the short term again as quickly as possible. For example, you might explain that it's your ambition to occupy a managerial position in a number of years, but that you first want to master the duties for which you're currently applying.

Naturally, you can also practise job interviews with a careers advisor or with a friend: you can learn from other people's experience.

What to bear in mind during the interview

- Make sure you know what your strengths and weaknesses are. Prepare examples to back up your strengths: for example, what shows that you work well under pressure? Take as many of those examples as possible from your work experience (preferably recent). However, examples from sports, volunteer work and hobbies may serve very well to demonstrate your qualities.
- Don't elaborate too much about your weaknesses. Mention them briefly, and try to conclude on a positive note by explaining how you've learned to deal with those weaknesses, what strength you have that compensate for the weakness: in other words, what you can offer in exchange. Sometimes, you can phrase a weakness differently, to make it sound less negative. 'I'm rather shy' creates a different impression than 'I prefer to await developments first.'
- Feel free to take some time to think about your answers. Take a sip of coffee to give yourself that time. Don't hesitate to admit if you really don't know something, don't try too hard. Admitting that you don't know something can also be seen as a strength.
- If you're really very tense before and during the interview, it can be wise to discuss that. If the interviewers can already see that you're nervous, you should simply say that you are. Just mentioning this fact may remove some of that tension. Moreover, you may ask yourself how bad it is that your interviewers see that you're nervous. Firstly, people even expect some degree of nerves. Secondly, it will tell them that the interview is a serious matter for you, that you take the application and the job seriously. Thirdly, it takes courage to place yourself in a vulnerable position, and that courage is often appreciated.

- At the end of the interview, the applicant is usually given the opportunity to ask questions. Always make use of that opportunity. Make sure that you've prepared some questions at home. This makes you look motivated and well prepared.

Asking questions if you're turned down

Applying for lots of jobs, and carefully selecting the jobs that you apply for, will increase your chances of finding work. However, you will also be turned down for positions before you're offered a job. It's always unpleasant to be turned down for a good job, but you can learn from it. It's important to find out why you were turned down. You can use that information when you go for other job interviews.

When you call the employer, he or she might initially give a vague standard answer, because it's unpleasant to have to give someone bad news. Keep asking, until you get the information that's of interest to you. Some examples of vague answers are given below, with questions you can ask in response.

Employer: *'One of the other applicants was just that bit better.'* Keep asking:

- In what respects was the other applicant better?
- What factor was decisive for me?

Employer: *'The other applicant had more experience.'* Keep asking:

- With what responsibilities did the other applicant have more experience?
- What was the most important experience factor that I lack?

Employer: *'Of course this is subjective, but the other applicant fits better in our team.'*

Keep asking:

- What qualities did the other applicant have that fit better in the team?

Finally, ask some further questions:

- Do you have any tips about my letter or my presentation?
- Will any positions open up with you in the future for which I might be suitable?
- Could you keep my CV on file for future job openings, and if so, may I call you back in the future?
- Explain the areas about which you feel uncertain, and ask the employer about them.
- What was your impression of me?

Interview questions to prepare*

Before going to an interview, you should prepare properly. Applicants who don't prepare properly are unlikely to stand out in a positive sense during job interviews. This section discusses what you can prepare:

- a. your job vacancy analysis, your letter, your CV and any other information that you might have (such as the organisation's annual report);
- b. the standard questions;
- c. the questions that cause you problems.

A. Your job vacancy analysis, your letter and your CV

When you go for an interview, you should be familiar with your job vacancy analysis, your letter and your CV. Go through them again with the following checklist:

- Go through your selling points again;
- Consider the substantiation of those selling points as well;
- Read through your motivation for the job and for the organisation;
- Read through your own letter again, identify the selling points and motivation, and ask yourself what the questions will be about;
- Read through your CV, and here too ask yourself what the questions will be about;
- Ask yourself what you hope to achieve in the interview, what you will put forward as your strongest ace, and what you definitely want to discuss, etc.

B. Standard questions that are usually asked¹

Many questions are standard questions. That means that you can prepare your answers. Before every job interview, read the questions listed below. With each question, consider what you'd reply, and on a separate sheet of paper make notes of your answers (since your answers will be different for each different job).

1 What did you do in your previous working environment?

Explain what your previous job involved, and devote particular attention to the following factors:

- the knowledge and experience that was required and that you acquired;
- machines/equipment that you used;
- your responsibilities;
- the people with whom you had dealings;
- the duration (if you spent a long time there);
- your career, if you were promoted;
- the tasks you carried out that are of particular relevance in connection with the job for which you're now applying.

2 Why did you leave your previous employer?

People leave jobs for a variety of reasons. Only specify reasons that work to your advantage. Try not to say that you were thrown out or fired, that you had a disagreement, etc. If such matters nevertheless arise, reassure the employer that those problems will not occur with the job for which you're now applying.

Some commonly occurring reasons:

- It was only a temporary job/seasonal contract;
- It was only a part-time position;
- The organisation closed down;
- I was made redundant;
- The salary wasn't enough;
- I had to travel too far/work too many hours;
- I have decided to make a career change.

¹ *succesvol solliciteren*, published by Landelijk Bureau Arbeidsvoorziening.

If you left because of health reasons, you should explain them briefly, and you should always make sure to point out that you're completely healthy now and are capable of doing everything that the new job requires.

3 Have you done this type of work before?

When answering this question, bear the following in mind:

- Always try to phrase your answer in a positive fashion;
- Describe your experience in such a manner as to show that you know what the work involves and that you're suitable for the job;
- If you don't have much experience, describe other experiences to demonstrate that you're a quick learner, or emphasise your enthusiasm and inquisitiveness.

Specify:

- relevant work experience;
- other work experience;
- diplomas/vocational courses
- relevant interests/hobbies;
- applicable personality traits;
- the speed with which you learn new things;
- your enthusiasm;
- projects in your study, in which you worked together in a group;
- extracurricular activities that you organised.

Example:

You would like a job as a policy maker, but you've never worked in the field of policy before. You could mention the following: the knowledge that you acquired in the field of policy formation during your studies, your excellent written and oral communication skills, study projects for which you wrote documents resembling policy memos, the fact that you're treasurer of an association, the fact that you're a people person, the fact that you enjoy working with numbers, the fact that you're a quick learner, the fact that you can't wait to get started, etc.

4 Why do you want to work here?

The employer is looking for positive reasons that show that, you want to work particularly in 'his' company, not any company, but 'this' particular company. Your reasons should be exclusive for this company/organisation (also read the handout about the application letter).

Possible reasons:

- The organisation has a reputation for being proactive ... explain;
- You're particularly interested in the work, because ... explain;
- The job seems ideal to you, because ... explain.

5 Why should the employer choose you rather than someone else?

Make sure that you have prepared your answer to this question, at least. If you yourself aren't sure why you're the right person for the job, how can you expect someone else to know? Essentially, this question is an open invitation to put forward your selling points for this position once again.

6 What are your principal strengths?

This is another opportunity to list your selling points (remember to provide examples to prove your claims):

- professional expertise;
- experience;
- interest;
- enthusiasm
- reliability;
- efficiency
- ability to interact well with people;

- desire to do a good job.

7 What are your weaknesses?

Everyone has weaknesses: don't deny them, but don't give the employer any reason to reject you for them. So prepare the answer to this question at home!

Name a weakness that:

- is a strength for that job (e.g. you're impatient);
- doesn't cause a problem in that job.

8 Could you tell me a little more about yourself?

This open question offers you an opportunity to tell the employer something about your private life. *You should try:*

- to explain what your interests are beside your work;
- to emphasise the link between your hobbies and your work;
- to connect with the employer by discussing shared interests.

What you could talk about:

- hobbies, interests, leisure activities;
- clubs, associations of which you're a member;
- responsible positions that you hold;
- a short story of your life: where you were born, where you studied and where you have worked (possible including side jobs).

9 What was your previous employer's opinion about you?

- Always give a positive answer;
- Try to give examples of matters about which your employer was very pleased
- Try to emphasise certain aspects, such as, *'I was always regarded as an efficient employee who could always be relied on and who was always conscientious in his work'*;
- If possible, always provide the employer with a reference or letter of recommendation from your previous employer, or explain that he or she is willing to provide a reference;
- Don't criticise your previous employer: it is impolite to do so, and the interviewer may assume that you'll criticise his or her organisation later as well.

10 Questions about your age

If you're asked this question, the employer is worried that you're too old or too young for the job. Your answer should, therefore, remove any objections that an employer might put forward, and instead stress the benefits of your age.

If you're older than average, you could say that:

- you're not set in your ways, and that you adjust easily;
- you plan to carry on working for a long time;
- you have a great deal and variety of experience and possess extensive professional expertise;
- you have a mature judgment and a considerable helping of common sense;
- you've learned to deal with all manner of people;
- you've developed a sense of responsibility and have always been reliable and punctual in the past.

If you're young, you could say that:

- coming straight from university, you're up-to-date on all the latest theories in the profession;
- you're eager to prove your qualities;
- you're enthusiastic, energetic and prepared to make every effort;
- you're flexible;
- you haven't picked up any bad working habits;
- you're receptive to new developments and change.

11 When will you be available?

Feel free to say 'as soon as possible', or 'as soon as you need me'. It will be early enough to make definite arrangements when you get the job. You can always try to agree on a date with the employer that suits you better.

12 Why have you been unemployed for so long?

- Emphasise the positive aspects of applying for jobs, or refer to the general difficulties on the job market: a large supply of job hunters, but a small demand;
- Explain what you've been doing during that time: studies, volunteer work, hobbies.

13 Questions about household composition, childcare, marriage plans, etc.

- Consider whether the question is relevant to the job, and ask if you're not sure;
- Give a short and businesslike (reassuring) answer, don't go into too much detail.

14 What kind of salary are you looking for?

Most of the time, you'll be given a relatively precise indication of what you may expect in terms of salary. However, sometimes your salary is negotiable. This poses you with a dilemma: if you ask too much, you might miss out on the job, while if you ask too little, you may get the job, but you run the risk of being underpaid.

Possible sources of information about wages:

- acquaintances and friends working in that sector;
- similar positions advertised in the newspapers that specify a pay range;
- the *Intermediair* website (Salariskompas).

Possible tactics:

- Don't state a specific amount;
- Specify the amount that you think you should earn/are worth, but make sure that you can substantiate it!
- Remain polite, without committing yourself:

'I assume that you'll be paying the usual salary. I can agree to that.'

After the interview, you should try to find out what other people in similar jobs are earning. If you then get the job, you'll have an idea of what constitutes a reasonable salary, and will mean that you start the negotiations from a stronger position.

15 Do you have any questions of your own?

Ideally, the employer will have told you everything that you need to know. If that's the case, you can answer, 'Thank you, but no. You've given me a clear picture of what the work involves, and I don't have any questions.'

Don't bring up details such as working hours, fringe benefits, etc. You should also refrain from mentioning salaries during the first interview: doing so might give the employer the impression that your motivation for the job depends on how much you'll be earning, rather than the work itself. Your salary and fringe benefits can be discussed during one of the follow-up interviews.

Write down a list of final questions, and ask them if they haven't already been addressed during the interview. Asking questions is a way to show that you're interested in the organisation and the job.

Other questions that are sometimes asked

- What would you like to be doing in 5 or 10 years' time?
- How would you describe your ideal job?
- Could you describe your previous boss's good and bad sides?
- What newspapers/magazines do you read?
- How many people have you had reporting to you, and what problems did you encounter?
- Are you fed up with your current work?
- What do you think is the most important part of the job for which you're applying?
- What kind of people have you had difficulty working together in the past?
- How do you relax after a busy day's work?
- What caused you the most irritation in your previous job?
- Can you describe any new initiatives that you took at work or outside work?
- What was the most difficult decision you had to make in your previous job, and what made it so difficult?
- What book did you read last?
- What appeals most to you about this job?
- What appeals least to you about this job?
- What made you choose that particular degree programme?
- Why did you take so long to complete it?
- Why did you decide to retrain?
- Why didn't you complete your studies?
- Have you applied for any other jobs?

C. Examples of difficult questions

Difficult questions and how to answer them

Too old

- lots of working experience (otherwise the organisation would have to invest extra time and money in training);
- life experience, understanding of people, more background and greater understanding, and as such more empathy;
- ability to assist/support/supervise younger employees (authority);
- appearance of reliability/credibility because of age;
- greater sense of responsibility;
- greater independence;
- more conscious choice for a particular job, more stable;
- other (proper/'old-fashioned') pattern of standards and values, which may be appealing to a firm or institution;
- great usefulness, despite age (people are as old as they feel they are);
- demand from society to keep working until retirement, which means that I have plenty of years left;
- fitting in the team is not only a matter of age, but also of personality;
- the labour market consists of more and more older workers and fewer and fewer younger workers;
- more relevant studies;
- ability to earn back the extra costs amply.

Too young

- young, with fresh ideas;
- motivation, enthusiasm;
- flexible, mouldable;
- cheaper;
- recently completed studies, which means I'm up-to-date;
- people who've been there longer also started without experience.

Absent from the job market for too long

- retrained, or willing to retrain;
- haven't been sitting still in the meantime (kept up with developments by reading books, taking courses, doing volunteer work);
- still have working rhythm, know what it is to work;
- ready to work immediately;
- possess a great deal of energy;
- had sufficient time to think about my choices;
- can be employed a subsidy measure (if applicable);
- great deal of motivation to get started.

Married

- definitely want to continue working full-time (particularly applicable for women).

Why you don't have a job yet

- the demand for work exceeds the supply, and as a result it's hard to get started. Haven't been sitting still, have a number of options open (if they ask about those options, you needn't tell them anything: organisations don't tell you how many applicants they've invited for interviews, or how many will make it through to the next round).

Too highly educated

- conscious choice to work at this level;
- am highly motivated about this work;
- won't be a threat to team members;
- ask about the future: perhaps possibilities exist for promotion. Very diverse background
- don't back down from a challenge;
- have a wide range of interests/skills;
- am enterprising, inquisitive, prepared to tackle new things;
- having considered by options, my choice fell on this type of work;
- don't want to limit my options too much;
- impossible to get a job with my previous education;
- want to increase my chances of finding a job;
- kept all my jobs for extended periods;
- more and more organisations give short-term contracts;
- try to show the similarities between the various jobs;
- followed various study programmes alongside my job.

Wrong work experience

- possess the necessary basic expertise;
- have a broader understanding;
- my experience might turn out to be useful in the future;
- this field clearly interests me.

Belong to a minority

- have a good understanding of the targeted market;
- know a great deal about the culture and language;
- qualify for a subsidy measure;
- spent a great deal of time working with non-immigrants in my previous job, and didn't have any problems.

Responsible for family

- talent for organising/improvising;
- independent children;
- ask about the possibilities for childcare;
- explain that you have discussed/considered your circumstances beforehand and have taken sufficient measures;
- explain concrete solutions for problems at home (illness etc.).

Presentation

- am aware of my limitation (such as a stammer) and have learned to cope with it.

Commuting distance

- the implications have already been discussed, and solutions created;
- am prepared to move (should that prove necessary);
- discuss the possibility to stay at a guesthouse (for the initial months/probationary period).

Experience

Too little

- possess skills that I acquired in other situations;
- possess unpaid experience doing this type of work, or have experience that matches this;
- am prepared to follow courses;
- have a good feeling about my own possibilities/want to be given a chance;
- learn quickly, am flexible;
- more dedicated and motivated;
- emotionally involved with this type of work, the activities;
- suit the organisation better (mouldable/flexible);
- limitations based on one-sided experience inapplicable;
- breath of fresh air, new way of looking at things;
- every organisation has its own specific aspects, its own style;
- acquired experience during work placement/volunteer work;
- cheaper labour;
- have the right educational background; above-average grades;
- meet all other requirements;
- am still too young to have a great deal of work experience, but as a result I cost less.

Too much

- my own choice to do this type of work (at a lower level) and am prepared to bear the consequences of that choice;
- require little training and supervision;
- am fully aware of starting at a lower level, and stand by my decision.

Salary

- appropriate pay;
- find out beforehand what constitutes a reasonable salary (for example, ask the trade union);
- make sure that this is one of the final matters to be discussed, to allow you sufficient time to make a good impression;
- indicate your willingness to earn slightly less, as long as you have prospects of a pay rise;
- agree to a probationary period with a lower salary (make sure this is agreed in writing);
- refer them to their budget, collective employment agreement;
- might be expensive, but they'll be getting value for their money (expertise and experience).

Disability

- will not be restricted by my 'handicap'/limitation in this job;
- decided on this profession based on career test/career advice/reintegration;
- thought well about the consequences of going back to work beforehand;
- ask your doctor for a statement confirming that you're ready to go back to work (full-time or part-time);

- qualify for special subsidies;
- am fully motivated to get back to work.

Insufficient/no training

- no diploma, but possess relevant work experience;
- completed a traineeship;
- possess modular certificates;
- plan to or am prepared to follow study programmes;
- capabilities will be evident in practice;
- achieved the necessary level of expertise in practice;
- have learned and applied all new developments in practice;
- provide references that may supply information about the level of your expertise.

After the job interview

To quickly determine what you're doing wrong and what you're doing right during interviews, it's important that you think about the entire interview critically when it's over. The summary below will provide you with points of reference.

Always make your summary as quickly as possible, since you will otherwise forget much of what happened.

Interview summary

Interview based on

- response to specific job opening, first interview
- response to specific job opening, follow-up interview
- network meeting, type of interview
- open application

Organisation:

Job: Interviewed

by: Date:

Location:

- overall impression
- own presentation
- have a good/poor understanding of the job
- my opinion about the organisation
- have doubts/questions about
- learning points for myself
- conclusion