



## Tower Hamlets Careers Service

### Interview Skills – BE PREPARED!

Most college and sixth form interviews are about finding out if you're suitable for the course you've applied for. These interviews can be brief and straightforward. However, some competitive colleges and sixth forms use the interview as part of their student selection process; therefore **preparation is the key to success!**

#### Before the interview

##### 1.

**Research** – find out as much as you can about the college/sixth form and the course you are applying for: *visit the website, read the prospectus, attend the Open Evening.*

**How does this help?** One sure way to impress an interviewer is to show them you have taken the trouble to find out something about their college/sixth form and the courses they offer. It also shows that you have made a positive, well-informed choice, based on research.

##### 2.

**Plan your journey** – If you're using public transport you'll find help including maps, directions, train, tube and bus information on the **Transport for London Journey Planner Website**: [www.journeyplanner.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.journeyplanner.tfl.gov.uk) .

**How does this help?** It's easy to get delayed, or even lost, travelling to an unfamiliar location, planning your journey will help to reduce your stress and get you there on time in the right frame of mind.

##### 3.

**Make sure you understand the course** – The best way to do this is to read the course description in the prospectus. Make sure you are clear about the entry requirements, study arrangements, modes of assessment and level of qualification.

**How does this help?** Not only does this help you to be sure this course is right for you, it also shows the interviewer that you have taken the time to research the information and that you are making a positive, well-informed choice.

#### At the Interview

##### 1.

**Dress for success** – Knowing the right thing wear can be tricky. You know you need to dress smartly, but you also want to feel comfortable. In most cases "smart casual" clothes are acceptable. **Don't wear** jeans, trainers, hoodies or hats. Very short skirts and low cut tops are also not advisable.

**How does this help?** First impressions matter, so even before you say anything, the clothes you wear say something about you. *Make sure it's something positive.*

**2.**

**Communication** – is about listening as well as speaking. Make sure you listen to the questions you're being asked, this will help you to answer them clearly and logically. If you don't hear or understand a question then ask the interviewer (politely) to repeat it. It's better to ask than to get it wrong.

**How does this help?** Answering the questions you're asked and asking for clarification when you don't understand, avoids confusion and shows that you're listening.

**3.**

**Body language** – is sometimes called non-verbal communication for the very good reason that it can send silent messages about you. *Make sure they're positive.*

**Greet** the interviewer with a smile and the offer of a handshake.

**Sit** with your legs crossed, your back resting against the back of the chair with your hands folded on your knees.

**Eye contact**– Try to look directly at the person you're speaking to, particularly when you're answering questions.

**Tone of voice**– Speak clearly and just loud enough for everyone to hear – never mumble and never shout.

**How does this help?** Taking charge of your body language will help you stay focused on the interview and send the interviewer the message that you are confident, trustworthy and reliable.

## **Closing the Interview**

The interview is over, *phew!* But don't relax too quickly; remember you're probably still being assessed. Don't forget to:

- offer to shake hands with your interviewer(s)
- thank her/him/them for seeing you
- smile politely and say goodbye

**How does this help?** How you take your leave of the interviewing room can leave a lasting impression on the interviewer(s). *Make sure it's positive!*

**Now see: *Tough Interview Questions – and how to answer them***

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