



Tower Hamlets Careers Service

Tough Interview Questions – *and how to answer them*

Remember – be prepared

1. Tell me about yourself.

Since this is often the opening question in an interview it can be tricky. Don't go into too much detail. Keep your answer to a minute or two at most. Cover three or four topics: education, interests, career ideas what you learned from your work experience. Remember that this is usually a warm-up question. ***Don't tell the interviewer your life history.***

2. What do you know about our organisation?

With this question you could talk about the organisation's products or services, reputation, image, business goals, history or philosophy – all that information you've gleaned from your research. But don't act as if you know everything about them. Your answer should show that you have taken the time to do some research, but make it clear that you want to learn more.

3. Why do you want to work for us?

Here, once again, a good answer comes from having done your homework. You might say that your research has shown that the company is doing things you would like to be involved with, and that it's doing them in ways that interests you. If the company has an award for customer service, this will be on their website and you may could to refer to this in the answer. In fact you could mention any recent company success as a reason for wanting to be a part of their team.

4. What do you find most attractive about this position? What seems least attractive about it?

Be careful when answering a question like this – always emphasise the positive. For example you could list three or four attractive features of the job, and mention a single, minor, unattractive aspect; or you could list the three or four attractive features and then say something like "*At this point I feel so positive about this job*"

it's hard for me to consider any unattractive features'.

5. What do you look for in a job?

Your answer should focus on opportunities at this organisation. Talk about your desire to perform and be recognised for your contributions. **Direct your answer towards opportunity rather than personal security or pay and conditions.**

6. Why are you leaving (did you leave) your present (last) job?

Be brief, to the point, and as honest as you can without hurting yourself. If you were laid off as a result of cutbacks say so; if you decided to change jobs due to career or personal development explain your reasoning.

If you were dismissed from your last job explain this, but remember when dealing with potentially negative information about yourself keep it *short and sweet – not long and bitter*. Tell the interviewer that you recognise the mistakes you have made. Try not to blame others. Don't talk about personality conflicts. *Remember that your references are likely to be checked, so don't concoct a story for the interview.*

7. In your current (last) position or at school, what features/subjects do (did) you like the most or the least?

Be careful and be positive. Describe more features that you liked than disliked. Don't talk about personality problems with colleagues, teachers or managers. If you make your last job sound terrible, an interviewer may wonder why you remained there or (worse) whether you contributed to a negative atmosphere.

8. What are your long-term goals?

Once again your research will pay off. Relate your goals to those of the company: 'In a firm like yours, I would like to...' Try to show that you have positive plans for your future that are in tune with this organisation. **Don't answer,** "I want the job you've advertised." or "I would like to move on after a couple of years" or "I see this job as a stepping stone to something better"!