

Job Interviews – the do's and don'ts

Warrick Couch, Swinburne University

Context: you have sold yourself 'on paper' via your written application, CV and supporting documents; now you have to sell yourself in person.

Do's:

1) Prepare, prepare, prepare!!

- Know **yourself**, your strengths, weaknesses and accomplishments; job interview is not the time to 'wing it'!
- Know the **institution** the job is at, the people, what they do, particularly your future boss
- Know the **interview panel** – who they are (can ask when invited to interview), what they do, their relation (if any) to the job position.

2) Dress appropriately

- Shorts, tee-shirt and thongs a no-no. Suits/ties for even academic positions recommended for guys. Other organisations – dress appropriate to the culture (a general rule for all organisations).

3) Arrive early

- To ensure you are on time for the interview and have time to compose yourself. Being late for an interview will earn you a very black mark!

4) Positive and enthusiastic body language

- First impressions are critical to overall evaluation of candidates.

5) Engage with the entire interview panel

- Say hello to all members upon arrival
- Make eye contact throughout the interview

6) Be self-confident but not over confident or arrogant

- This extends to being able to deal with challenges in the work place

7) Come prepared for key questions:

- Why are you interested in the job and working at the organisation it is at?
- Why do you think you are suited for the position?
- How does this fit into your long-term career plan (critical to have a plan!!)
- What specific skills would you bring?
- What do you know/understand about diversity and gender equity policies in the work place?

8) Answer questions effectively

- Give concise 1-2 minute answers

- Provide examples to back up your accomplishments and how you have dealt with difficult situations in the work place in the past.
- 9) Come prepared with thoughtful/probing/strategic questions for the interview panel.
- 10) Be professional
- Do not bad-mouth previous employers, work colleagues, organisations!

Don'ts

- Don't be late for your interview
- Don't be verbose in answering questions
- Don't be arrogant or over-confident
- Don't be ignorant about the position you have applied for and/or the organisation it is at
- Don't be unprofessional in terms of your dress, demeanour, and talking negatively about previous employers, work colleagues and organisations

CURRICULUM VITAE

Full NAME, Quals [BScHons, PhD], Prof memberships [MASA, MAIP]

Current Institution

Institution's postal address

Work phone number, your mobile number

Work email address (plus alternative), URL for your public webpage (if applicable)

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE – concise summary of specific things that qualify you for the job

- *Research* – years of experience and areas of expertise and the work you are particularly known for [e.g. *observational cosmology with particular emphasis on galaxy evolution and its environmental dependencies*] what you are specifically known for. Mention experience with specific techniques and approaches that are relevant to the position [VLBI, optical IFU spectroscopy; SPH simulations; galaxy population synthesis]
- *Research leadership & management* – any experience in leading and managing research projects and teams.
- *Teaching* – experience in terms of type (lecturing, tutoring), level (1st, 2nd, 3rd year uni), subject area, size of classes, as well as course development and coordination.
- *Engagement* – leadership/service to your institution and profession by way of instigating new initiatives [*establishing and leading a journal club*], sitting on internal and national/international committees [*Aus student rep on ASA Council*], and leading/participating in outreach and external activities [*Science in Schools*]

EDUCATION – matter of fact listing of degree qualifications

- **PhD** – details including university, year of graduation, title of thesis
- **Lower degrees in order of Masters, Hons, Bachelor degree** – details as per PhD, including thesis title where appropriate

AWARDS AND HONOURS – things that will distinguish you from other candidates

- Student prizes [*best student talk at ASA meeting, university medal*]
- Special PhD scholarships and fellowships [*ARC DECRA, Future Fellowship; Hubble*]
- ECR prizes, especially those for research excellence [*AIP Ruby Payne-Scott Medal*]
- Prizes that recognize research excellence [*AAS Pawsey Medal*]
- Invitations to give prestigious invited talks and lectures
- List other non-research awards/prizes only if relevant to job applied for

POSITIONS HELD – all significant/relevant positions (in reverse chronological order)

[2017- *ARC DECRA, School of Physics, University of Queensland*]

[2015-2017: *Senior Tutor, Brasnose College, Oxford*]

PUBLICATIONS – summary of publication and citation record

- Career total number of refereed journal papers (plus number as first author)
- Total number of citations and Hirsch h -index (mention source [ADS] and date counted)

----- *New page* -----

BIBLIOGRAPHY – all your refereed and conference papers, books, book chapters

- Separate into different categories (refereed, conference, books)
- List in reverse chronological order (most recent first)
- Number each paper in the order you list them (1,2,3...) so easy to reference
- Make sure to highlight **invited** conference papers

OPTIONAL EXTRAS – include/exclude in response to job ad requirements

- Ten best/most significant publications – usually accompanied by brief description of why they are significant, your contribution (for multi-author papers), and citation count
- More detailed description of specific skills and experience
- Languages spoken (important for jobs in non-English speaking countries)
- A picture of yourself (a question of taste!)

Important jobs link within LIGO:

<https://wiki.ligo.org/LAAC/JobPostings>