



Workseekers Guide

2023

Introduction

This document has been developed by NICRO at the request of our beneficiaries. It is being made available to the general public as part of our crime and violence prevention service. Individuals and organisations may make use of this document for non-profit and educational purposes.

Preparing for a job interview can feel overwhelming, but with some guidance, you can be ready to impress potential employers. This guide will help you, as a young adult, prepare for a job interview step by step. Remember, the key is to be confident, present yourself well, and showcase your skills. Let's get started!

Checklist To Help A Young Person Start Looking For A Job

1. Identify your interests and goals:

- Determine the type of job or industry that aligns with your interests, skills, and long-term goals.

2. Research job opportunities:

- Explore job search websites, company websites, and professional networking platforms to find job openings in your desired field.
- Take note of the qualifications and skills required for the positions you're interested in.

3. Prepare your CV and cover letter:

- Create a well-structured CV that highlights your education, relevant coursework, volunteer experience, and any transferable skills.



- Write a customized cover letter for each job application, emphasizing your enthusiasm and how your skills align with the role.

4. Develop your online presence:

- Create or update your LinkedIn profile to showcase your skills, education, and interests.
- Clean up your social media profiles, ensuring that they present a professional image.

5. Build a network:

- Reach out to family, friends, teachers, and mentors to let them know you're seeking job opportunities.

6. Practice interviewing skills:

- Prepare responses to common interview questions and practice them out loud.
- Conduct mock interviews with a friend or family member to gain confidence and improve your interview skills.

7. Apply for jobs:

- Start applying to relevant job openings, submitting your tailored resume and cover letter.
- Follow the application instructions provided and keep track of the jobs you've applied for.

8. Prepare for interviews:

- Research the company thoroughly and familiarize yourself with their products, services, and values.
- Prepare thoughtful questions to ask the interviewer to demonstrate your interest in the position and company.

9. Stay persistent and positive:

- Job searching can take time, so stay motivated and persistent in your efforts.
- Stay positive and learn from each experience, adapting your approach as needed.

Remember, job searching can be a process, and it's important to stay patient, persistent, and adaptable. Use this checklist as a guide to help you navigate the job search journey and increase your chances of finding a rewarding job opportunity.



Links To Job Posting Sites

- NICRO hosts a list of job search websites on our Resources page. [Click here.](#)

What To Do While You Are Looking For Work

It is important to keep motivated and avoid becoming depressed and apathetic about looking for work.

1. Take online courses and programmes

- a. Adds content to CV
- b. Keeps mind active
- c. Acquire new skills and knowledge

2. NICRO hosts a list of websites that offer free online courses. [Click here.](#)

3. Join the local library and read a fiction and non-fiction book once a month

- a. Develop language skills
- b. Develop general knowledge
- c. Keeps mind active
- d. Acquire new skills and knowledge

4. Join a local club or society

- a. Develop interpersonal skills
- b. Opportunity to be in a leadership position
- c. Adds content to CV
- d. Keeps mind active
- e. Acquire new skills and knowledge

5. Volunteer at a local charity or community development project

- a. Develop interpersonal skills
- b. Opportunity to be in a leadership position
- c. Adds content to CV
- d. Keeps mind active
- e. Acquire new skills and knowledge
- f. Acquire work experience
- g. Acquire contactable references
- h. Develop good citizenship skills

6. Take up a hobby or an interest

- a. Adds content to CV
- b. Keeps mind active
- c. Acquire new skills and knowledge

7. Look for part time or casual work (anything so long as it is legal, even if it does not pay well)

- a. Develop interpersonal skills
- b. Keeps mind active
- c. Acquire new skills and knowledge
- d. Acquire contactable references



- e. Adds content to CV

8. Take unpaid work if it will get you skills and experience

- a. Develop interpersonal skills
- b. Keeps mind active
- c. Acquire new skills and knowledge
- d. Acquire contactable references
- e. Adds content to CV

Things To Avoid Doing When Unemployed

Here is a list of some things people should avoid doing when unemployed:

1. Not keeping busy
2. Spending time with negative people
3. Wasting time
4. Turning down work because it does not pay much or it is not the kind of work they want (too basic, too junior etc).
5. Staying at home every day.

Personal Action Plan

You should create your own personal development plan. NICRO has created a template you can use. Download the template [here](#). Review your plan weekly. Make sure you are using your time effectively while you are looking for a job.

There are 100 000's of people looking for work in South Africa at the moment. In order for you to have the best possible chance of getting a job, you need to make the best use of your available resources.

1. Use your spare time wisely
2. Invest and develop yourself as a person
3. Develop your skills
4. Build connections with people
5. Stay active on job websites
6. Make the best possible use of the opportunities and resources available to you.

Guided Steps To Preparing For An Interview

STEP 1: RESEARCH THE COMPANY

Before the interview, take some time to research the company you're applying to. Look for information such as their mission, values, products or services, and recent news. This will help you understand the company better and show your interest during the interview.

Check if the interview will be conducted online or face to face. If online make sure you have access to the platforms the company is using, that you practice with that platform



and that you have data/wifi on the day. You can go to a local library or even coffee shop with free wifi.

STEP 2: UNDERSTAND THE JOB DESCRIPTION

Carefully read the job description to know what skills and qualifications the employer is seeking. Identify the key requirements and think about how your own experiences and abilities match them. This will help you highlight your relevant skills during the interview.

STEP 3: PRACTICE COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Prepare answers for common interview questions, such as "Tell me about yourself" and "Why do you want to work here?" Practice your responses out loud, focusing on being clear and concise. This will help boost your confidence and reduce nervousness during the interview.

STEP 4: DRESS APPROPRIATELY

Choose your outfit based on the company's dress code. If you're unsure, it's better to be slightly overdressed than underdressed. Wear clean, well-fitting clothes, and make sure you look tidy and presentable. Remember, first impressions matter!

STEP 5: PLAN YOUR JOURNEY

Make sure you know the location of the interview and plan your journey in advance. Consider the transportation options available to you and leave with plenty of time to spare. Being punctual shows that you are responsible and respect the interviewer's time.

STEP 6: PREPARE YOUR DOCUMENTS

Prepare all the necessary documents, such as your resume, identification, and any relevant certificates or references. Keep them organized in a folder or a portfolio, so you can easily access them when needed.

STEP 7: BE MINDFUL OF BODY LANGUAGE

During the interview, pay attention to your body language. Sit up straight, maintain eye contact, and offer a firm handshake when greeting the interviewer. Smile and use positive facial expressions to show your enthusiasm and interest in the position.

STEP 8: ASK QUESTIONS

Prepare a few thoughtful questions to ask the interviewer about the company or the role. This demonstrates your interest and engagement. Avoid asking about salary or benefits in the initial interviews; save those questions for later stages.

STEP 9: LEARN FROM EACH INTERVIEW

Even if you don't get the job, use each interview as a learning experience. Reflect on what went well and areas where you can improve. Keep refining your interview skills, and with time and practice, you'll become more confident and successful.



How To Dress

When it comes to dressing for a job interview, it's important to make a good impression and show that you take the opportunity seriously.



Source: <https://gardner-webb.edu/student-life/career-development/interviews/business-attire-guide/>

Questions You Can Ask In The Interview

Here are some questions you can ask during a job interview:



1. What opportunities for professional development and advancement does the company provide?
2. Can you tell me more about the company's culture and how employees collaborate?
3. How does the company support work-life balance for its employees?
4. What is the company's approach to fostering creativity and innovation among its employees?
5. Can you provide examples of recent projects or campaigns that highlight the company's creative culture?
6. How does the company promote a positive work environment and team collaboration?
7. Can you tell me more about the company's approach to employee growth and career development?
8. How does the company support continuous learning and professional development for its employees?
9. What is the company's strategy for staying competitive?
10. If I am the successful candidate, what future goals do the company have in mind that I can help work towards

Remember, tailor these questions to suit the specific company and role you're interviewing for. Asking thoughtful and relevant questions demonstrates your interest in the position and your desire to learn more about the company and its culture.

What To Avoid Doing In A Job Interview

Here's a list of things to avoid doing in a job interview:

1. Arriving Late: Always strive to be punctual for your interview. Plan your journey in advance and allow extra time for unexpected delays.
2. Being Unprepared: Lack of preparation can be detrimental. Research the company, the job role, and practice common interview questions to showcase your interest and knowledge.
3. Dressing Inappropriately: Dress professionally and according to the company's dress code. Avoid wearing casual or revealing clothing that may give a negative impression.
4. Speaking Negatively: Avoid speaking negatively about your previous employers, colleagues, or experiences. Focus on highlighting your positive qualities and experiences instead.



5. **Lacking Confidence:** Confidence is crucial, but don't confuse it with arrogance. Maintain a positive attitude, make eye contact, and speak clearly and confidently.
6. **Rambling or Talking Too Much:** Be concise and to the point when answering questions. Avoid rambling or going off on tangents. Listen attentively and respond thoughtfully.
7. **Interrupting the Interviewer:** Let the interviewer finish speaking before responding. Interrupting can be seen as disrespectful and impolite.
8. **Failing to Ask Questions:** Always have a few well-thought-out questions to ask the interviewer. It shows your interest in the company and the role.
9. **Being Uninterested or Passive:** Show enthusiasm and interest throughout the interview. Engage actively, ask follow-up questions, and demonstrate your passion for the opportunity.
10. **Forgetting to Follow Up:** Send a thank-you note or email to the interviewer(s) within 24-48 hours after the interview. It shows gratitude and professionalism.
11. **Using Inappropriate Language:** Avoid using slang, offensive language, or inappropriate jokes during the interview. Maintain a professional tone and language throughout.
12. **Focusing Solely on Salary or Benefits:** While compensation is important, avoid discussing salary or benefits during initial interviews. Save these discussions for later stages of the hiring process.
13. **Bringing Up Personal Issues:** Keep personal issues or problems out of the interview conversation. Maintain a focus on your qualifications and the job at hand.
14. **Being Dishonest:** Always be truthful and authentic. Don't exaggerate or lie about your qualifications, experiences, or skills. Honesty is highly valued in the hiring process.
15. **Failing to Follow Instructions:** Pay attention to any instructions or guidelines given by the interviewer. Failure to follow instructions can be seen as a lack of attention to detail or disregard for authority.



Remember, an interview is an opportunity to present yourself in the best possible light. Avoiding these common pitfalls will help you create a positive and professional impression on the interviewer.

Common Interview Questions You Should Expect And Prepare For

1. Tell me about yourself.

- a. Example response: "I recently graduated from high school and I'm excited to start my professional journey. While I don't have much work experience, I've been involved in several volunteer projects where I developed skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, and effective communication. I'm eager to apply these skills and learn from experienced professionals in a work environment."

2. Why are you interested in this position?

- a. Example response: "Although I may not have direct experience in this field, I am passionate about learning and developing new skills. I have researched the company and the role, and I believe it aligns with my interests and long-term career goals. I am confident that my enthusiasm, adaptability, and willingness to learn will make me a valuable asset to the team."

3. How do you handle challenges or difficult situations?

- a. Example response: "Even without much work experience, I've faced challenges in various academic and personal situations. I approach challenges with a positive attitude and a problem-solving mindset. I believe in breaking down problems into smaller tasks, seeking advice or guidance when needed, and staying persistent until a solution is found. I am eager to apply these problem-solving skills in a professional setting."

4. How do you prioritize and manage your time?

- a. Example response: "Although I haven't had formal work experience, I have gained time management skills through my academic studies and extracurricular activities. I am proficient at setting priorities, creating to-do lists, and using calendars or planners to stay organized. I also understand the importance of being flexible and adjusting priorities as needed to meet deadlines or address urgent tasks."
- b.

5. How do you handle working in a team?



- a. Example response: "While my experience in professional teams is limited, I have actively participated in group projects during my studies. I believe in effective communication, active listening, and valuing diverse perspectives. I am open to taking on different roles, collaborating with team members, and contributing my ideas while respecting the input of others. I am eager to enhance my teamwork skills in a work environment."

6. Can you describe a situation where you demonstrated leadership or took initiative?

- a. Example response: "Though I haven't held formal leadership roles, I have initiated and organized volunteer projects in my community. For example, I took the lead in coordinating a fundraising event for a local charity, where I managed a team of volunteers, delegated tasks, and ensured the event's success. This experience allowed me to develop leadership skills, including effective communication, organization, and problem-solving."

Remember, these are just examples, and it's essential to tailor your responses to your own experiences, skills, and aspirations. Use these examples as a guide to help you showcase your potential and enthusiasm for the position, even without significant prior work experience.

Case Study: Zola's Job Interview Mishap

Zola is a recent graduate who has been invited for an interview at a prestigious marketing firm. He has prepared for the interview by researching the company, practicing his responses, and selecting appropriate attire. However, due to a series of unfortunate mistakes, Zola's interview takes a turn for the worse.

Mistake 1: Arrival Time

On the day of the interview, Zola underestimates the traffic and arrives 10 minutes late. He rushes into the office feeling flustered and anxious.

Mistake 2: Dishevelled Appearance

Due to his hasty arrival, Zola's appearance is dishevelled. His tie is crooked, and his shirt is partially untucked. His overall presentation lacks the polished and professional look that the company expects.

Mistake 3: Lack of Preparation

Although Zola had practiced potential interview questions, he neglected to thoroughly research the company's recent projects and achievements. As a result, he struggles to answer specific questions about the company's campaigns and market positioning.



Mistake 4: Rambling Responses

Nervous and feeling unprepared, Zola begins to ramble in his responses. He provides lengthy and convoluted answers, often deviating from the original question. This leads to confusion and frustration on the interviewer's part.

Mistake 5: Overconfidence in Skills

To compensate for his lack of knowledge about the company, Zola overstates his abilities and experiences. He exaggerates his expertise in certain marketing techniques, leading the interviewer to doubt his credibility.

Mistake 6: Lack of Engagement

Throughout the interview, Zola fails to actively engage with the interviewer. He appears passive and uninterested, lacking enthusiasm and failing to ask thoughtful questions about the company or the role.

Mistake 7: Ignoring Non-Verbal Cues

Due to nervousness, Zola fails to notice the interviewer's subtle non-verbal cues. He interrupts the interviewer and doesn't allow them to finish their questions. This behaviour reflects poorly on his communication skills and professionalism.

As a result of these mistakes, Zola leaves a negative impression on the interviewer. The company decides not to extend a job offer to him. Zola learns a valuable lesson about the importance of thorough preparation, professionalism, and active engagement during job interviews.

Lessons Learned:

1. Arrive early for interviews to avoid unnecessary stress and show respect for the interviewer's time.
2. Pay attention to personal appearance and ensure it aligns with the expected level of professionalism.
3. Conduct thorough research on the company, its projects, and recent achievements to demonstrate genuine interest and knowledge.
4. Practice concise and focused responses to interview questions, avoiding rambling or veering off-topic.
5. Be honest about skills and experiences, avoiding the temptation to exaggerate or misrepresent qualifications.
6. Stay engaged throughout the interview, actively listening, and asking relevant questions.
7. Pay attention to non-verbal cues and demonstrate strong communication skills, including active listening and appropriate timing when responding.

By learning from Zola's mistakes, future job applicants can better navigate the interview process and increase their chances of success.



CV Template

1. Your Name
2. Contact Information: Address, Phone Number, Email
3. A brief statement outlining your career goals or objectives
4. Education:
 - a. Degree/Major, University/Institution, Location, Year
5. Experience (most recent first):
 - a. Job Title, Organisation Name, Location, Dates
 - b. Description of responsibilities and achievements
6. Learnerships/Internships:
 - a. Organisation Name, Location, Dates
 - b. Description of your role
7. Volunteer Experience:
 - a. Position/Role, Organisation Name, Location, Dates
 - b. Description of your role and achievements
8. Skills:
 - a. List relevant skills, such as technical skills, language proficiency, or certifications
 - b. Use bullet points to highlight your key skills and strengths
9. Additional Information:
 - a. Languages: List languages and proficiency level
 - b. Computer Skills: List software, programming languages, or tools you're proficient in
 - c. Certifications: List relevant certifications or courses completed
 - d. Publications/Awards: List any publications or awards you have received
10. References:
 - a. Name, company, role, email and cellphone number

Remember to customize the CV template to fit your own experiences, skills, and achievements. Use clear and concise language, and organize your information in a logical and easy-to-read format. Proofread your CV for any grammatical or spelling errors before submitting it.

Link To Online CV Template

Click [here](#) to open a CV template in Word that you can download and edit.

