RMIT Career Development and Employment Educators Notes

Interviews and Assessment Centres

- Types of Interviews
- Interview Questions
- The Interview Process
  - Preparation
  - The Interview
  - After the Interview

1. Purpose and types of interviews
A great way to commence teaching the topic Interviews and Assessment Centres is by firstly explaining the purpose of an interview, the different types of interviews and the assessment (or selection) centre. (To find out further information, go to the Quick Tips, view the sample PowerPoint or the online resources)

2. Behavioural interviews and Assessment centres
You may wish to discuss assessment centres and behavioural interviews in more depth. Discuss the combination of group and individual activities, and assessments which may be used in an assessment centre. Introduce behavioural interviews and the STAR (situation, task, action, result) technique as a means of effectively answering behavioural questions. Excellent resources for these topics are The Assessment Centre and Making an Impact streamed DVD’s on the Career Development and Employment website.

3. Questions
Questions are an integral part of the interview. Explore with the class the different types of questions they are likely to be asked, what the interviewer is looking for in their answer, and how they can demonstrate they have the required skills or experience. It is useful to cover general questions, behavioural questions, questions about themselves and questions about the job itself. Some typical examples are on the Quick Tips for Interviews flyer.

A useful activity is for students working in pairs, to each ask and answer some of the questions listed on the Quick Tips for Interviews. Ask them to identify both general and behavioural questions through a ‘Question, Answer, Feedback, Swap’ Process. Alternatively a third person may act as an observer giving feedback on responses, strength of examples and body language.

4. Interview process
It is useful to divide the interview process into three parts: Preparation, The Interview, and After the Interview.

Preparation
Introduce the importance of preparation as a valuable factor in interview success, the benefits of confidence and the pitfalls of interview anxiety and so forth can be elaborated upon. A discussion about preparation may include: Identifying the type of interview, identifying the key selection criteria, identifying their skills and examples which demonstrate these, drawing examples from a wide range of experiences-study, work experience, extra curricular, qualifications and experiences relevant to the key selection
criteria, and the importance of researching the organisation. Preparation on the day may include punctuality, appearance and what to take.

It is good to emphasise the 3 P’s of Practice, Practice, and Practice: Practising answering questions, mock interviews, out loud into the mirror etc. You may suggest your students practise with a friend or using Career Track Selection Techniques or Be my Interviewer.

The Interview
Introduce your students to the general interview format of: An ice breaker to put you at ease, ‘about you and the job’ questions and the interview close. It may be useful to remind them that this is their opportunity to market themselves in the best light possible. It is good to cover correct and incorrect interview etiquette, the importance of verbal and non verbal communication, and tips for answering questions, such as length of responses, asking for clarification if needed, answer the question succinctly without ramble and so forth. Remind them it is best to be themselves so they appear confident and believable.

You may wish to also address the need to demonstrate their teamwork skills in a group interview. Employers will be looking for their ability to interact effectively with other people, also that they demonstrate the skills and attributes of intellect, interpersonal skills and adaptability, communication style, cooperation and negotiation, as well as business sense and drive.

After the Interview
It is useful to end with a reminder that after the interview it is really important to analyse how they felt they performed; what they did well, what could be improved, how they handled any difficult questions and any unexpected challenges. This will be really useful information for when they are next preparing for interview.

Background Reading and Resources
Quick Tips
- Interviews
- Assessment Centres
- Selection testing

DVD’s
- Making an Impact
- The Assessment Centre
- Behavioural Interview

Going Global is accessible with your RMIT logon from the Career Development and Employment website (Students/International experience/Working Overseas) and offers job search and interview advice for a range of different countries.