

Mock Interview Program Resource

Mock Interviews - Introduction

This document is intended as a guide for teachers, trainers and other practitioners who work with young people facilitating their transition into employment, to assist them to plan and conduct mock interviews.

We recommend mock interviews as one of the most important things you can do to help an applicant prepare for their interview. The purpose of conducting mock interviews is to familiarise applicants with the process, and give them experience in having a challenging conversation with someone they have never met before.

What is an interview?

An interview is a conversation between two people (the interviewer and the interviewee) where questions are asked by the interviewer to obtain information from the interviewee.

The two primary types of interview are the employment related interview and the information search interview (i.e. journalist interview).

Within this planning guide our main focus will be on employment related interviews though we firmly believe that the information search interview is an important component in developing interview skills within a candidate job seeker.

What is a mock interview?

A mock interview is an emulation of an interview used for training purposes. The objective is to **resemble a real interview as close as possible**; this is especially relevant to the employment based interview where the final stage should be as realistic as possible, **authentic to workplace conditions**.

We recommend that mock interviews be conducted over three phases of a person's learning with varying degrees of time and resource investment required at each stage. These are:

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www.worklinks.com.au

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Phase one – general information mock interview to assist the learner to develop the skills required to share relevant information about themselves

A) peer role play

Phase two – career based mock interview to assist the learner to develop the skills to communicate relevant occupational or career based information about themselves

A) peer role play

B) adult mock interview

Phase three - employment based mock interview to assist the learner to develop the skills to communicate the benefits their employment will provide to a prospective employer

A) peer role play

B) industry mock interview

C) prospective employer mock interview

This process provides participants with a total of six different points of assessment to develop and demonstrate their competency in being interviewed. While this process is ideal it is not essential to complete all phases.

What is in it for stakeholders?

Although the primary function is to develop a key employment skill within students, conducting mock interviews provides meaningful benefits for all stakeholders:

- **Students**— the opportunity to develop skills and meet with their potential future employer
- **School/Training organisation** — the opportunity to directly network with Industry/Business and showcase the school
- **Parents**— the opportunity to be better informed and interact with their children’s future
- **Community**—the opportunity to engage with and contribute to the education of youth
- **Business/Industry**— the opportunity to engage with their potential future employees or clients and network with schools/parents and students promoting their products or services.

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The organising and planning team

Like most activities, conducting successful mock interviews is dependent first and foremost on having some able and enthusiastic leadership, along with a core group of four or five motivated organisers who are well connected with the local area, training and employment opportunities etc. So where can you find this group?

Internally – identify key stakeholders from the various departments within your organisation including:

- Careers Advisors
- Industry Liaison Officers
- Employment Officers
- VET Trainers/Teachers
- HODs from other curriculum areas (e.g. Social Sciences)

External

- Partnership Broker

The organising team will need to answer a few questions from the outset to inform the roll-out of the program. The answers will give a structure to the project planning and can be used to inform those you wish to engage in the event. The key questions are:

Why?

The organising team needs to establish why you want to run mock interviews, what is the purpose of the program. This will be the foundation for the project and a reference point to ensure the project stays on track.

Who?

This is the stakeholder analysis. The organising team needs to ascertain who are the key players and - this will inform who you promote to and which phase you are seeking participation for. These could include (refer to Appendix 2):

- service clubs in your area; Rotary, Lions, Quota, etc
- organisations who could benefit when your students articulate to their next phase of learning

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- ◇ TAFE and other local training organisations
 - ◇ tertiary training providers
 - ◇ Australian Apprenticeship Centres
 - ◇ Job Services Australia providers (including disability)
 - ◇ Private recruitment companies
- Group Training Companies
 - Other training providers or Schools
 - local employers
 - local retailers
 - previous/current employers of graduates
 - work experience hosts
 - industry associations
 - parents and friends of the School/RTO
 - local community radio, newspaper and journals

The key questions to ask are:

1. Who benefits (what's in it for them)?
2. Who are the key players and why?
3. Who would make a great partner in the venture?

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Suggested Mock Interview Plan

Phase one – General Information mock interview

A) peer role play

In this session participants will engage in role-play with their peers conducting a general information mock interview and drill. The learner will:

- demonstrate questioning and listening skills
- demonstrate positive interview behaviours in role-play
- demonstrate clear communication processes

Suggested teaching strategy

- explanation and presentation of interview purpose and intent
- modelling and demonstration of interview techniques
- guest professional(s) to address the group
- paired/grouped research activities by subject of interest (e.g. sport, hobby, cultural)
 - ◇ identify a suitable topic
 - ◇ research additional information of interest
 - ◇ research relevant interview questions
 - ◇ prepare questions
- in pairs students conduct
 - ◇ a general information interview with each other
 - ◇ incorporate back-to-back verbal drills with partners to improve the student's listening comprehension by not allowing visual reinforcement as English is spoken
 - ◇ assessment/feedback

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- ◇ discuss feedback

Suggested materials

- pens or pencils and paper
- interview techniques handouts
- markers and white board
- computers with internet connection
- video & player

Suggested stakeholder resources

- guest professionals from relevant occupations
 - ◇ journalist
 - ◇ communications expert
- Peers

Phase two – career based mock interview

Career based mock interview to assist the learner to develop the skills to communicate relevant occupational or career based information about themselves.

A) Peer Role Play

In this session participants will engage in role-play with their peers conducting a general information mock interview. The learner will:

- demonstrate questioning and listening skills
- demonstrate positive interview behaviours in role-play

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- demonstrate clear communication processes

Suggested teaching strategy

- explanation and presentation of interview purpose and intent
- modelling and demonstration of interview techniques
- guest professional(s) to address the group
- paired/grouped research activities by occupation or career path
 - ◇ identify a suitable occupation and career
 - ◇ research required employability skills (refer Appendix 1)
 - ◇ research relevant interview questions
 - ◇ prepare questions
- in pairs students conduct
 - ◇ a career information interview with each other
 - ◇ assessment/feedback
- discuss feedback

Suggested materials

- pens or pencils and paper
- interview techniques handouts
- markers and white board
- computers with internet connection
- video and player

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Suggested stakeholder resources

- ◇ service clubs in your area; Rotary, Lions, Quota, etc
- ◇ organisations who could benefit when your students articulate to their next phase of learning
 - ◆ Australian Apprenticeship Centres
 - ◆ Job Services Australia providers
- ◇ Group Training Companies
- ◇ industry associations
- ◇ parents and friends of the School/RTO
- ◇ local community radio, newspaper and journals

B) Adult Mock Interview

In this session participants will engage in career based mock interviews with industry representatives. The learner will:

- demonstrate positive interview behaviours in role-play
- demonstrate questioning and listening skills
- avoid negative actions that affect the interview and the employment prospect

Suggested teaching strategy

- mock interview to be conducted
 - ◇ within the learning environment
 - ◇ by an external person with previous industry experience
- discuss feedback

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Suggested materials

- suggested interview questions to be provided to the interviewer (refer to Appendix 4)
- interview feedback sheet to be provided to the interviewer (refer to Appendix 5)
- interviewee suggested questions (Appendix 7)

Suggested stakeholder resources

- interviewers with relevant career experience
 - ◇ retirees or semi retired members of service clubs in your area; Rotary, Lions, Quota, etc
 - ◇ organisations who could benefit when your students articulate to their next phase of learning
 - ◆ TAFE and other local training organisations
 - ◆ tertiary training providers
 - ◆ Australian Apprenticeship Centres
 - ◆ Job Services Australia providers (including disability)
 - ◇ Group Training Companies
 - ◇ Other training providers or Schools
 - ◇ parents and friends of the School/RTO

Suggested Mock Interview Plan

Phase three - employment based mock interview

Employment based mock interview (role play) to assist the learner to develop the skills to communicate the benefits their employment will provide to a prospective employer.

Peer Role Play

In this session participants will engage in role-play (mock interviews) and drill with their peers. The learner will:

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- demonstrate career research skills
- demonstrate positive interview behaviours in role-play
- demonstrate clear communication processes

Suggested teaching strategy

- explanation and presentation of interview purpose and intent
- modelling and demonstration of interview techniques
- guest professional(s) to address the group
- paired/grouped research activities by occupation of interest
 - ◇ identify a suitable company vacancy
 - ◇ research required employability skills
 - ◇ research relevant interview questions (refer Appendix 4)
 - ◇ prepare questions
- in pairs students conduct
 - ◇ an employment interview with each other
 - ◇ Incorporate back-to-back verbal drills with partners to improve the student's listening comprehension by not allowing visual reinforcement as English is spoken
 - ◇ assessment/feedback
- discuss feedback
- interview techniques handouts

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- chalk/markers and black/white board
- computers with internet connection
- video & player
- newspapers, magazines, catalogues with clothing pictures

Suggested stakeholder resources

- guest professionals from relevant occupations
 - ◇ Group Training Companies
 - ◇ Other training providers or Schools
- Peers

B) Industry Mock Interview

In this session participants will engage in mock interviews with industry representatives. The learner will:

- demonstrate positive interview behaviours in role-play
- avoid negative actions that affect the interview and the employment prospect

Suggested teaching strategy

- mock interview to be conducted
 - ◇ within the learning environment
 - ◇ by an external professional with relevant industry experience
 - ◇ with reference to a fictional advertised position
 - ◇ with reference to a fictional company

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- discuss feedback

Suggested materials

- fictional advertised position to be provided to the interviewer and the participant
- fictional company profile to be provided to the interviewer and the participant
- suggested interview questions to be provided to the interviewer (refer to Appendix 4)
- interview feedback sheet to be provided to the interviewer (refer to Appendix 5)
- interviewee suggested questions (Appendix 7)

Suggested stakeholder resources

- interviewers with relevant career experience
 - ◇ retirees or semi retired members of service clubs in your area; Rotary, Lions, Quota, etc
 - ◇ organisations who could benefit when your students articulate to their next phase of learning
 - ◆ TAFE and other local training organisations
 - ◆ tertiary training providers
 - ◆ Australian Apprenticeship Centres
 - ◆ Job Services Australia providers (including disability)
 - ◆ Private recruitment companies
 - ◇ Group Training Companies
 - ◇ Other training providers or Schools
 - ◇ parents and friends of the School/RTO

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C) Prospective Employer Mock Interview

In this session participant will engage in mock interviews with industry representatives in the workplace. The learner will:

- demonstrate career and employment research skills
- effectively plan and make the appointment for an interview
- present themselves in a professional manner with adequate supporting material (resume, portfolio)
- demonstrate positive interview behaviours in role-play
- avoid negative actions that affect the interview and the employment prospect
- receive and implement recommendations from feedback

Suggested teaching strategy

- mock interview to be conducted
 - ◇ within a workplace
 - ◇ by an external professional with relevant industry experience
 - ◇ with reference to a fictional advertised position
 - ◇ with reference to a fictional company
- written feedback to be provided to the student by the interviewer for review
- discuss feedback with the group

Suggested materials

- fictional advertised position to be provided to the interviewer and the participant
- fictional company profile to be provided to the interviewer and the participant

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- suggested interview questions to be provided to the interviewer (refer to Appendix 4)
- interview feedback sheet to be provided to the interviewer (refer to Appendix 5)
- interviewee suggested questions (Appendix 7)

Suggested stakeholder resources

- Interviewers with current relevant experience
 - ◇ Group Training Companies
 - ◇ local employers
 - ◇ local retailers
 - ◇ previous/current employers of graduates
 - ◇ work experience hosts

Appendix 1

USEFUL WEBSITES	
<p>My Future www.myfuture.edu.au</p>	<p>myfuture is Australia's career information & exploration service</p> <p>The Facts - Access information on career related topics. Select a topic and search, browse or read through detailed information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers • Work and Employment • Education and Training • Funding • Skills. <p>My Guide is your personalised career exploration service. Do activities to build your career profile, explore career ideas, consider career options and develop your career plan. You can revisit your My Guide account at anytime to update and review your information.</p> <p>Access resources for parents, career advisors and teachers.</p>
<p>MyCareer http://mycareer.com.au</p>	<p>Find the latest Australian employment and career opportunities with MyCareer. Job search made simple.</p>
<p>SEEK www.seek.com.au</p>	<p>Employment and career opportunities</p>
<p>JobSearch http://jobsearch.gov.au</p>	<p>JobSearch is Australia's largest free online jobs website. It is funded and operated by the Australian Government as a free service to assist job seekers into employment and connect employers with quality staff.</p> <p>Job Services Australia providers and public employers upload their job vacancies to JobSearch and search for potentially suitable staff.</p> <p>Job seekers can search for jobs via the map on the homepage by choosing their state, local area and occupation category. The advanced search function includes more detail in searching criteria.</p> <p>Everyone is welcome to use JobSearch to search for vacancies. It's free to register and take advantage of the complete range of services.</p> <p>Vacancies displayed on JobSearch come from many different sources, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public employers • Job Services Australia providers • newspapers • the Australian Public Service • the Australian Defence Force • the Harvest Trail.

Appendix 2

STAKEHOLDER CONTACT DETAILS	
Service clubs	Lions Australia - http://www.lionsclubs.org.au/about-lions/ Rotary Australia - http://www.rotaryaustralia.org.au/ QUOTA INTERNATIONAL - http://www.quota-spa.org/
TAFE	P: 1300 308 233
Universities and Colleges	University of Queensland—p: (07) 3365 1111 University of Southern QLD— p: 1800 007 252 Australian Agricultural College— p: 1800 888 710 http://education.qld.gov.au/students/higher-Education/qld/uni/about.html (for a list of QLD Universities)
Apprenticeship Centres	www.australia.gov.au/australianapprenticeships
Job Services Australia Providers	1800 805 260 (hotline to search for providers in your area)
Group Training Organisations	P: 1800 819 747
Local retailers	Try to choose a business which is large enough to have a dedicated administration or HR Manager such as one of the chain stores. Large franchise businesses such as IGA supermarkets are also suitable.
Qld Police Recruiting	P: (07) 3364 8000
Defence Force Recruiting	E: CPTQLD@dfr.com.au
Qld Fire and Rescue Services	(07) 3635 2289
Local Council	Ipswich City Council —Human Resources and Recruitment - t: (07) 3810 6666 Logan City Council— Call Centre—t: 1300 156 426 Lockyer Valley Regional Council—Call Centre—t: 1300 156 426 Somerset Regional Council—Call Centre—t: (07) 5424 4000 Scenic Rim Regional Council—Call Centre—t: (07) 5540 5111
Department of Education and Training	Metro West Regional Office (Ipswich and West Moreton) - t: (07) 3259 8730 South East Regional Office (Logan) - t: (07) 3259 8733
Industry associations	Australian Industry Group - Tel: 07 3244 1777 Chamber of Commerce and Industry Qld - 1300 731 988 Local chambers of commerce
Parents and friends of the School/ RTO	Consider the following: placing a request in the newsletter seeking primary carers who were or still are in industry to participate place a tick box in the involvement pledge section of the enrolment form

Appendix 3

Portfolios

Why Create a Portfolio?

An employability portfolio is an effective tool used by educators who are serious about meeting their obligation to prepare students for entry into the world of work. Most of us are familiar with the concept of a portfolio, especially as it relates to creative endeavours such as art, photography and design. The artist collects samples of his best work for display or to demonstrate his skills to prospective clients or employers. This same concept may be adopted by anyone including trades people, professionals and even high school students.

An effective portfolio should assist students demonstrate their employability skills for a specific position and is beneficial in providing them with confidence during the interview process.

What to Include

A typical portfolio contains: a resume, certificates, awards and letters of commendation or reference, report cards, photos showing involvement in activities, samples of academic work and examples of projects from practical and vocational subjects. This compilation is a foundation. The critical component is the student's ability to communicate the significance of the portfolio contents.

Employability Skills

First, students need to recognize the importance of fundamental skills such as: math and numeracy, literacy and communication, reliability and responsibility, leadership, problem solving, creativity, critical thinking, tolerance and working with others.

How to Use the Employability Portfolio

Next, students must be able to specifically relate portfolio items to particular employability skills. For example, regarding high performance and/or commendations in English, the student will be able to talk about their ability to organise ideas. Pointing to grammar and writing style is an opportunity to discuss communication competency. Reviewing difficulties encountered during the writing illustrates effective problem solving. The interviewee could, as well, claim computer skills and typing proficiency.

The Beauty of the Portfolio

Someone who is practiced and confident in an interview might make any sort of unsupported assertion. The beauty of the career portfolio is that it shows tangible proof of skill and success. It enables the student to demonstrate effective oral communication as they present portfolio items. Another advantage is that it serves as a memory prompt and confidence booster. By flipping through the pages the student is reminded of their own accomplishments.

Appendix 3 Continued

as a memory prompt and confidence booster. By flipping through the pages the student is reminded of their own accomplishments.

Finally, a carefully constructed and professionally presented employability portfolio, when understood by students is a proven confidence builder, effective interview resource and an excellent method for helping young people transition from school to career.

5 KEY POINTS TO A PORTFOLIO

1. Ensure the portfolio looks professional
2. Ensure the content is relevant to the position being applied for, or that the relevancy can be explained
3. Do not have superseded academic results
4. If you are applying for an apprenticeship try to have photos of projects you have built or helped build, if an apprentice chef position meals you have prepared and plated
5. Try to have at least two written references – preferably work related (even baby sitting) or spot related and from a tangible third party

Appendix 4

10 of the most common job interview questions

Here are 10 of the most common job interview questions that form part of general exploratory questioning:

1. Tell me a little about yourself
2. What do you know about us?
3. What have been the most significant accomplishments in your life so far?
4. What did you like and dislike most about School?
5. What was your favourite and least favourite subject at School and why?
6. What sort of work have you undertaken before (even chores around the house)?
7. Tell me about the role you are applying and why you would like to do it?
8. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
9. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
10. Why should we hire you?

The golden rule for answering is always to find a way to present and promote:

- your desire/passion to be doing this type of job
- your current capabilities
- you are willing to work hard
- that you will be a good fit in their organisation and/or team in which you'll be working
- that you are willing and have the capability to learn

5 KEY POINTS ANSWERING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Practise by rehearsing so that it sounds natural
2. Always answer in the positive (e.g. a weakness I have is that sometimes I can be intolerant of lazy team members)
3. Ensure your answers are relevant to a strength for the position (e.g. don't mention video games unless they are relevant)
4. Give answers that demonstrate you know you have to work hard to succeed (paid work, chores or even sport)
5. Demonstrate in your answers that you are always seeking to learn new skills

Appendix 5

SIMULATED EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW						
ASSESSMENT						
Participant Name:						
Position Applied For:						
Date and Time of Interview:						
VG=Very Good	G=Good	S=Satisfactory	U=Unsatisfactory	P=Poor		
Performance Criteria			VG	G	S	P
1. Participant clarified time and place of interview, as well as person to contact on arrival prior to the interview						
2. Participant was punctual						
3. Participant was dressed and groomed appropriately for the position being applied for						
4. Participant had considerable knowledge of the position being applied for						
5. Participant had suitable documentation which supported their application and referred to it (e.g. portfolio)						
6. Participant responded to questions in an informative, courteous, concise and relevant manner						
7. Participant demonstrated pre-interview research into enterprise/organisation activities via comments and questions						
8. Participant used active listening and questioning techniques when required (eg. to clarify interview question)						
9. Participant used positive 'body-language' to support their responses to questions						
10. Participant asked suitable questions at the conclusion of the interview to clarify						
11. If you had a vacancy available similar to the one for the mock interview would the participant have been successful in obtaining the position?						
Assessor Name:			Position and company:			

Appendix 6

ELEMENT	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
preparing for the interview:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. clarify time and place of interview, as well as person to contact on arrival ii. identify and address personal presentation standards appropriate for the position and the enterprise/organisation iii. prepare for any assigned selection 'tests' that may need to be undertaken, eg. word processing accuracy and speed iv. predict questions and plan answers in relation to questions that could be asked by the interviewer(s)
undertaking the interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. be punctual ii. be dressed and groomed appropriately iii. have required documentation (eg. portfolio of work), if applicable iv. respond to questions in an informative, courteous, concise and relevant manner v. demonstrate pre-interview research into enterprise/organisation activities via comments vi. and questions vii. use active listening and questioning techniques when required (eg. to clarify interview question) viii. ask relevant questions when appropriate ix. use positive 'body-language'
utilising feedback from the interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. seek both positive and negative feedback from the interviewer(s) ii. use feedback for self-evaluation purposes
<p>Elements of personal performance to be evaluated must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. punctuality (ie. arriving in plenty of time for the interview) 2. personal presentation (ie. dressing appropriately for the interview, including personal grooming) 3. interpersonal and communication skills 4. responding to questions in an informative, courteous, concise and relevant manner 5. using active listening techniques and asking relevant questions 6. using positive body language during the interview process and demonstrating awareness of non-verbal cues in assessing progress of the interview 7. demonstrating pre-interview research into enterprise/organisation activities via comments and questions 	

Appendix 7

Appropriate Interviewee Questions For The First Interview

1. What are the main challenges that need attention in the position?
2. What qualities are you looking for in the candidate who fills this position?
3. What skills are especially important for someone in this position?
4. What characteristics do the achievers in this company seem to share?
5. What do the current employees like best about their jobs/positions?
6. What do you like best about your job/company?
7. Who will be my supervisor?
8. Does your company encourage further education?
9. Could you tell me about your training programs for new employees?
10. What is the next step in the interview process?

Appropriate Interviewee Questions For The Second Or Third Interview

1. In what ways is a career with your company better than one with your competitors?
2. Who sets the priorities for this position?
3. Who will my direct supervisor be (as well as anyone else I may have to report to regularly)? What is the style of supervision and leadership of that person?
4. Please describe the advancement opportunities that I might have and what is the typical time frame for these advancements?
5. How will my performance be evaluated and by whom?
6. What is the wage range for employees in this position?
7. How would I best learn the practices, policies, and expectations that will enable me to function successfully?