

Interview skills: Skills for life

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Three themes //

Two ways

- *Mindset
- *Know your(nervous) self
- *Prepare in many ways



Mindset

Mindset - Formal interviews

- Board members are pulling for you and we want you to succeed.
 - We have tried to be fair to all candidates and will do our best to help you shine within the rules of fairness for the process
 - Take the questions literally - no trick questions
 - We are marking against a grid - be explicit (we can't mark your resume) make the link between your answers and the competencies tested.
 - We know that you can be nervous and will try to help you shine regardless
 - You can ask that a question be repeated or skip a question and return to it. Please attempt to answer all questions - you may not be able to pass overall if you skip one. Guess if needed.
 - Please remember to manage your overall time.
- Treat this as a conversation or audition with potential employers
 - Bringing your A-game - this means bringing your most professional self: be polite and professional if things go wrong, be on time, follow instructions or clarify if you are unsure about the rules, be timely if you are asked to follow up with references.
 - All parts "count" for this type of conversation (interactions to set up the interview, the warm-up, the informal discussion after the process).
 - A colleague showed up for the feedback (informal discussion) after she didn't pass a process. The manager was so impressed with her engagement that he found a way to hire her later on.
- Preparation will pay off - maybe not in the way you planned though.
 - I was once asked to summarize the "Report on Plans and Priorities" for an organization. I hadn't read it and I guessed what might be in it based on my extensive study. I got the job.

Mindset - the rest of public service life

- Managers want to be helpful. You can ask anyone on the org chart for career advice. I've heard surprisingly senior people make time for this.
- Your A-game is like a suit that never goes out of style. Good performance will be noticed and your reputation will grow. The opposite is also true.
 - Being on time for meetings
 - Making thoughtful interventions
 - Volunteering for an extra task
- Preparation will pay off - even taking 2-3 mins to scan your notes from a previous meeting sets you up well as a stronger employee.

Know your (nervous) self

Know your nervous self - Formal interviews

You may get to access only a fraction of the work you have done for preparation if your nerves take over.

Know whether you get nervous and think about how to adapt to compensate.

- A key way to sink an interview is to **talk too much**
 - May lose structure of an answer and therefore lose the audience
 - May veer from clear and factual answers into speculation
 - May not answer all questions because you run out of time.
- Some will **blank or freeze**.

Suggested antidote is the same in both instances - know yourself, prepare and then adapt.

This may include engaging the board members - how are we doing for time?

Know your nervous self - The rest of public service life

Think about how your self knowledge impacts your ability to participate in meetings as one example.

If you get **very nervous and struggle to participate**:

- Prepare and think about your key points in advance if feasible
- If you can't say your points on the spot, think about sending a follow up email.

If you tend to dive in and struggle to withdraw, try to think of your interventions in one or two bullet points. You can then wait to see if more detail is needed.

Prepare in many ways

Prepare in many ways - Formal Interviews

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Book study

- The process may feel opaque but you can still prepare
 - The job poster is the roadmap and you can investigate what each competency means by using online tools [[sample competency dictionary from IRCC](#) is excellent - it takes you up a ladder of responsibility for each competency]

Deliberate practice - this means, practice, take feedback and adapt to do better.

- Highly recommend a dry run of some made-up interview questions [Alone or with a partner]
 - This gets you familiar with your answers
 - This is important for understanding if your answers will run long
 - If you are doing with a partner or coach, do this early - it's little use if you don't have time to incorporate feedback

Arrange your physical space

- Check your tech
- Put out glass of water

Manage your blood sugar - have a snack like bananas and almonds to fuel your brain.

Prepare in many ways - The rest of public service life

Deliberate practice applied to presentations or briefings or prepping for a second language exam

- Highly recommend a dry run with a trusted audience
 - Suggest you find someone to lob questions at you or ask you to skip to another part of your presentation for the practice.
- You can also practice alone - think about recording yourself.
- May wish to take media training