

A photograph of a job interview. A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a light blue t-shirt, is seated across from a man with dark hair and a mustache, wearing a blue button-down shirt. They are both looking at a tablet on the table between them. The background is a wooden wall with a large green plant on the right. The overall lighting is warm and professional.

# Interview Guide

Step by step to your dream job

# The *first* goal has been achieved...



You have applied for a job and been invited for an interview? Now it's time to convince the potential employer in person. Hardly anyone finds it easy to appear completely carefree under the pressure of this situation. However, if you are well prepared and know a few tricks, you can face such an appointment more calmly. With the Hays Interview Guide, we support you step by step on your way to your dream job.

## 01 The preparation – minimise stress

Sure, unexpected things can always happen during an interview – but the good news is: a lot can also be planned and predicted. Therefore, make sure to do your homework in advance. Knowing that your clothes fit well, that you have planned a sufficient time buffer for the journey and that you already know the key data of the company history off the top of your head will help you go to the interview with much more confidence.

### Who is the company looking for?

Read the job ad again carefully. In this way, you can specifically address the requirements in the interview and show that you have studied the job profile.

### Who is who?

Search for managers and your contacts online on portals such as Xing or LinkedIn. Also, it's best to know what important people look like. This will prepare you for any potential encounters between the reception and the meeting room.

### What makes the company tick?

When it comes to the company, you should gather as much information about it as possible. Make use of all available channels – this includes social networks as well as press releases or media reports. Simply studying the company's website is usually not enough! Personal contacts are also ideal, as they can provide you with real insider information. In addition to general facts such as business areas or turnover figures, you should also look at the company's values. Make notes and take them with you to the interview.

### What questions do I need to be prepared for?

The wheel is not reinvented in every interview. Therefore, be sure that you will be asked some standard questions, so rehearse them in advance.

### Checklist for standard questions

- Why do you want to work in our company?
- What particularly appeals to you about this position?
- What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- Where do you see yourself professionally in the next three to five years?
- What are your greatest successes and failures?
- What do you do in your spare time?

### How do you handle stress questions?

An interview is not only about testing your professional qualifications for a job, but also your stress resistance and ability to solve problems. In so-called brainteasers and stress questions, applicants are often confronted with logic tasks unrelated to the subject. It is not so much about giving a correct answer but that you are able to outline a solution strategy. Popular questions are, for example, mathematical text exercises or estimation questions such as: How much does Manhattan weigh? Try to search for examples in advance and make a note of possible solutions. This gives you more confidence, even if you are asked different questions later.

### What are my most important stations?

Just as with the standard questions, you will most certainly be asked to present your CV, including the most important stations. Therefore, practise presenting it fluently in advance, preferably in front of friends or family who can give you feedback afterwards. A video recording can also help you to perfect your skills.

### What should I wear? How do I arrange the journey?

Logistical planning is also part of a successful preparation. Therefore, you should organise your journey well and allow some time for delays or traffic jams. It is best to find out about the parking situation in advance if you are travelling by car. When it comes to dress code, you should find out what the company's customs are, if possible. Make sure you have a respectable appearance. Your hairstyle, beard, fingernails should be neat, your clothes clean and tidy. The general rule is: better overdressed than underdressed.

### What do I need to bring to the interview?

Finally, you should prepare your documents. These usually include your original certificates, your CV, notes as well as pen and paper.

Usually you will be asked about strengths and weaknesses.

My tip: Start with weaknesses and end with your strengths. The last thing said tends to stick in the mind. However, be honest and open about your weaknesses. That will leave an authentic impression!

**Katharina Hain**

Head of Talent Marketing & Federal Partners



# The interview – now it's happening!



The day of the job interview has come. Now it's up to you to convince your interview partner. A little excitement is quite normal. But here too, a few simple tricks can help you present yourself in the best light and convince your potential new employer that you are the right candidate for the job.

## 02 The interview – now it's happening!

### When should I arrive at the location?

Especially in large companies, schedules are often tight, so being on time for the interview is not only a sign of politeness, but also helps to ensure that procedures can be followed. Therefore, arrive about ten minutes before the start of the interview. If you are way too early, go for a walk or have a coffee.

### How do I make a positive first impression?

It may sound trite, but friendliness always makes a good impression. Even if you are tense and concentrating, greet everyone you meet. When you arrive, first check in and – again, this may sound obvious – knock before entering a room.

### What is important in body language?

A firm handshake is the appropriate way to start when you meet your conversation partners. It's easier said than done, but also try to control your body language during the job interview. The participants in the conversation will only follow your explanations half as intensively if they are irritated by your gestures, for example because you often grab your face or play with your pen. Keep eye contact and avoid exaggerated gesticulation with your hands!

### How do I round off the conversation?

Do you have any questions? You will certainly be asked this question at the end of the interview. At this point you should still be able to ask two or three questions to round off the interview. It is best to refer to something you talked about in the previous conversation. However, prepared questions that have not yet been answered are also okay, as long as they are not too clichéd. You should also show that you have already gathered information about the company in advance.

---

You can find a checklist for the job interview and many other useful tips and tricks at [Hays Career-Center](#)



Being nervous during an interview is quite normal. It is also no problem to address this in a side note – that makes you human. Simple and effective tips against stress: take a deep breath and drink a sip of water. Your hands are best placed loosely on the table in front of you.

**Katharina Hain**  
Head of Talent Marketing & Federal Partners

### Beware the stumbling stones!

The interview is mainly about answering questions competently and truthfully. However, there are also some so-called inadmissible questions, for example about your religious affiliation or family planning, which you are legally not allowed to be asked. Find out in advance which questions belong in this category. You can then weigh them up yourself and do not have to answer them. However: Even in such cases, remain confident and calmly decline to answer.

# The Follow-up – leave an impression



Now you can take a breath, but it is not yet time to rest. After the interview, it is important to keep at it and directly ask about the status quo.

## 03 The Follow-up – leave an impression

### What does good follow-up look like?

What went well? Where did you get stuck? While the impressions are still fresh in your mind, go into self-analysis. Every interview can tell you a lot about where you can still improve, and which questions you might not have considered beforehand.

### What is the best way to follow up?

You want the job badly? Show it to the company and send a personal thank you e-mail in which you highlight what particularly appeals to you about the job as a result of the interview or what topic stuck in your mind afterwards.

### How long do I have to wait?

For some, it may be the hardest part, but after going through the whole application process, a reasonable waiting period is also part of the procedure. Usually, you will have been told in the interview when you can anticipate feedback. You should therefore check the status of your application with your contact person at the earliest one day after the mentioned deadline.

Even after the interview, it is important to show initiative. With a personal thank you e-mail, you can still promote yourself after the interview.

**Katharina Hain**  
Head of Talent Marketing & Federal Partners



# From the introduction to the employment contract – get successful with us!



We support you through the individual steps of your application process and prepare you optimally. Each of the stages, starting with a possible telephone interview through to the personal interviews, to your contract offer with your potential future employer, has its individual challenges. Together we will go through the most important points in the preparatory telephone calls and give you tips and tricks on how to conduct the conversation successfully.

## 04 From the introduction to the employment contract

### Preparing for your telephone interview (if applicable)

- The telephone interview offers you and your potential employer the flexible opportunity to gain a first impression.
- This telephone call is mostly about exchanging initial information about yourself and your career to date, as well as about the company and the vacant position.
- In our joint preparation, we give you important information about the company and go through relevant questions with you.

### Preparation for your personal interviews

- The interview is the most challenging part of the interview process for applicants.
- You have to be on point and only good preparation can help here.
- We will go through the most important tips on how to answer most questions, what information you need to get in advance and how to behave in an interview together with you.

### Your contract offer

- Congratulations, you have successfully completed your interview process and have received a contract offer from your future employer.
- Now you have to check this offer for form and content. We will continue to provide you with our expertise and support you in communicating any open questions up to the final signing of your new employment contract.

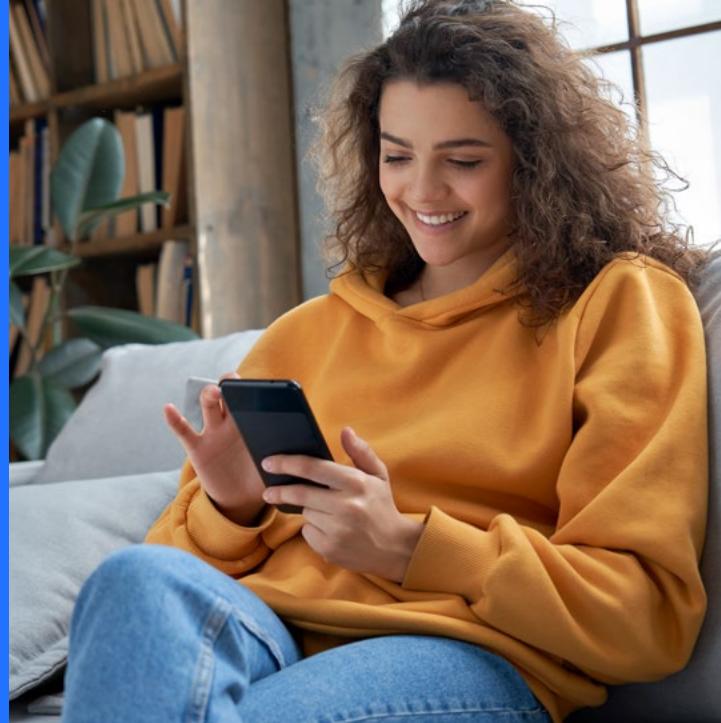
#### How do I deal with a rejection?

If you receive a rejection, take it lightly and try to profit from it anyway. If it is not apparent in the rejection letter, ask for the reason for the rejection. Ideally, you will receive detailed feedback, but for legal reasons this is not always possible. An enquiry shows interest in the company,

which can have a positive effect on a later application. So don't be puzzled by a rejection but draw a line under it. Only then can you use your full energy to prepare for upcoming conversations and score points the next time.



# Advantages for Hays-candidates



## Advantages for Hays candidates

- Custom-fit jobs and positions
- Professional application process
- Systematic career planning
- Personal support from professionally competent contact persons
- Early information about vacancies
- Comprehensive background information on jobs and companies

## Questions or suggestions?

We will be happy to assist you at any time. Whether you have questions about your current application process or about other jobs at Hays.

Simply contact your Hays consultant from whom you received this document.

### For general questions, please contact:

Telefon: [+49 621 1788 0](tel:+4962117880)

E-Mail: [service@hays.de](mailto:service@hays.de)

### By the way:

Recommendations will be rewarded!  
We welcome any candidate recommendation.



You can find more input here in our [VLOG](#).