



## Tips for Optimal Interview Performance

Interviews don't need to be stressful. If you take the time to prepare and view the interview as a learning experience you will win whether or not you get the position.

Try the tips below to help you prepare for the interview, present to the panel and learn from the experience. You will never know the field you are up against; but if you have been called for interview, the panel clearly thinks you have something to offer. Be confident in yourself and above all learn from the experience.

### Preparation

#### *Research*

- ◆ Make sure you understand what DIA does and where the position fits within the organisation. You can do this by browsing the website and then speaking to the nominated DIA contact officer for the position.
- ◆ Prepare yourself in case the panel offers you the opportunity to ask questions. If you choose to ask a question it should come from your research. Never ask a question that suggests you are just winging it at the interview; and keep questions to a minimum (no more than two). Where possible, try to ask questions of the contact person before you get into the interview.

#### *Review the position description*

- ◆ Consider why the role interested you. If you can convey interest in the role at interview, you will appear more dynamic and natural.
- ◆ Articulate why you think you would be good for this role. At the end of the interview you might get a chance to make a final statement. If you have thought about what you have to offer DIA, your statement will be more compelling to the panel.

#### *Think about each of the selection criteria one at a time*

- ◆ Try to anticipate questions the panel might ask of you for each criterion. Before the interview, answer these questions to yourself out loud making sure you address the specific selection criterion. This will help you practice expressing yourself in terms of the selection criteria.
- ◆ Think of work examples where you have demonstrated competencies related to the selection criteria. Before the interview, explain the work example to yourself

out loud. This will help you practice explaining the context, your role and the outcome of these examples.

### *Develop a portfolio of work examples*

- ◆ If your type of work allows, provide examples that demonstrate the nature, complexity and quality of your work. Include a brief note outlining your personal contribution to each example. You may or may not get the opportunity to present this portfolio but just putting it together will give you insight into your work.

## **Presentation**

### *First impressions*

- ◆ Dress professionally and ensure you are properly groomed. If your hair needs cutting or your shoes need polishing, take the time to get it done before interview.
- ◆ Make eye contact (if you are comfortable with eye contact) and smile and engage the panel members; it will convey confidence and may help you relax.

### *Plan your answer*

- ◆ Listen when you are asked a question and don't think about anything except what they are saying; you can plan your response after you have heard the whole question. Don't be shy to seek clarification if there is anything about the question that is confusing.
- ◆ Once you have the question, you can take a moment and jot down the main points. For example, if the question relates to organisational skills and time pressures you can jot down those two points. Then if you find yourself getting off track you can look down at your points and get back to what the panel wants to hear.
- ◆ Sometimes a panel member will know of you and your work. Don't assume that all panel members know about you and your work. You should provide sufficient detail so that any examples can be documented in the selection report.

### *Manage your time*

- ◆ Consider the number of questions and the allotted time. For example if you have four questions in a 30 minutes interview, you should budget about five minutes for each question, unless you are advised that the questions are of different weight.

## Follow up and Learning

### *Reflect*

- ◆ After your interview, go to a quiet place and write down what you remember of the questions and how you answered them.
- ◆ If you were disappointed in your response try to understand what you did poorly so that you can do better next time.
- ◆ If nerves got the better of you, think of strategies for managing your nerves next time. For example you could take a sip of water after each question to focus you on the next question or you could look out the window and count to three before answering each question. Panels are understanding of such techniques.

### *Feedback*

- ◆ Feedback after the whole process is complete is an opportunity - don't pass it up.
- ◆ Be polite to the person giving feedback.
- ◆ Highlight your interest in learning from the feedback.
- ◆ If there is anything specific that came out of your post interview reflection, discuss it with the person giving feedback.

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Interviewing is a skill like any other skill. Skills are developed with experience. With commitment, anyone can learn to be good at interviews.

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