Seven Top Tips for Your Company Interview

"You need to prepare, you need to practise, and then, on the day, you need to perform."

Congratulations! Getting to the interview stage of the selection process means that your application impressed your potential sponsors; you are now close to achieving a prestigious UK Electronics Skills Foundation award. One of the final hurdles is the interview. Being interviewed by a prospective employer can be a daunting thought, however there are lots of sources of advice available to help you, especially from your university. We know that almost 40% of the applicants who were interviewed last year were subsequently offered an award. Therefore, we thought that we would ask some of those who were successful for their thoughts, and have distilled their advice into the seven top tips below. So you know that these tips work and should ensure that you perform well at the interview, and then get offered a UKESF award.

1. **Ask Questions.** Make sure you come prepared with a few questions to ask at the end of your interview. The interview process works both ways so you need to be sure it's the right opportunity for you, and to clarify anything you're unsure of. This also shows the employer that you are keen and engaged, and that you want to find out more about their company and the role on offer.

2. **Do Your Research.** Read through the company website, role profile and any literature sent to you. Be aware of any current news and technology stories related to the company; find out about their history and areas of expertise. Revise any technical topics you think you might be questioned on or that you've mentioned on your CV.

> "As I was a first year, I had to muddle through some questions that were out of my depth. I was honest that I didn't know but wasn't afraid to express my ideas, and I think this really helped."
> *Jacob, UKESF Scholar 2015–20*

3. **Be Yourself.** Employers are not only interested in your technical abilities; they also look for how well you'd fit into the team. Smile and interact with your interviewer to build a rapport and come across as someone they'd like to work with. If there are other candidates, try to be sociable with them as well; this can help you relax, and you might have to complete a task with them at some stage during the day.

4. **Think Out Loud.** The interviewers won't expect you to know everything. It is really important to explain your thought process when they ask you questions, then they can see if you have the right approach to problem solving and can think logically. Try not to panic, if you don't know an answer to a technical question have a rational attempt but tell the interviewer if you haven't studied that particular topic yet.

5. **Practice.** Ask a friend, parent or tutor to do a mock interview with you to go through some common questions and to help you to feel more comfortable. Get used to elaborating on your answers; don't just say 'yes' or 'no' and always try to expand your answers, but avoid 'waffle'.

> "They're not going to hire someone in ripped jeans and a football shirt."
> *Tom, UKESF Scholar 2014–18*

6. **Show Your Passion for Electronics.** Be enthusiastic, take in everything you're told and talk about any previous experience relevant to the role, however small. Employers are really interested to hear you talk about in any extra curricula Electronics project (or coding) that you've done on your own – show and tell. Don't forget to mention any Electronics-related updates since completing your application form and before attending the interview.

7. **Be Prepared.** Wear smart but comfortable clothing and arrive on time with your research done and some questions prepared. Don't leave anything till the last minute, but do read through your application shortly before the interview, so everything is fresh in your mind.

> "Above all, try and relax and enjoy the interview. It's as much about the company selling themselves to you as you selling yourself to them."
> *Emma, UKESF Scholar 2014–17*

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