

## Potential interview questions:

### ...about yourself, your background and your future ambitions:

- *Tell me about yourself*
- *Why did you choose the University of Kent/your degree subject?*
- *Explaining gaps on your application form - e.g. year out; unemployment; travel*
- *How would the work experience you've had be useful in this company?*
- *What are your main strengths and weaknesses?*
- *What other jobs/careers are you applying for?*
- *Where do you see yourself in five years' time?*
- *Tell me about your vacation work/involvement with student societies/sporting activities*

### ...about your knowledge of the employer, or career area:

- *Why do you want to work for us?*
- *Why have you chosen to apply for this job function?*
- *Who do you think are, or will be, our main competitors?*
- *What do you think makes you suitable for this job?*
- *What do you see as the main threats or opportunities facing the company?*
- *What image do you have of this company?*

## Closed questions: these are questions which can normally be answered with a simple "yes" or "no".

If you are asked a closed question, open it up, as in the following example:

Interviewer: *"So you're studying History at the University of Kent?"*

Interviewee: *"Yes, I've found it a very interesting course because ...and it has enabled me to develop my ... skills..."*

Give answers which are relevant and illustrated with examples:

Interviewer: *"This is a job with a very heavy workload. Do you think you could cope with that?"*

Interviewee: *"Well, during my final year I've had a great deal of academic work and I've also been working three nights a week at my bar job and kept up my involvement with the squash club. That has meant that I've had to be very organised but I've never missed an evening's work or an essay deadline and I reached the semi-final of the squash tournament too!"*

## Hypothetical questions

Some interviewers like to pose hypothetical questions, or questions that you could not be expected to have anticipated. These questions are used precisely because it's impossible to work out your answer before the interview, thus it tests your ability to think quickly, reason logically, and produce practical solutions.

You may be given an example of a situation that might arise in your work, and asked what you would do about it:

- *"How would you deal with a staff member caught stealing a packet of biscuits from the warehouse?"*
- *"How would you deal with an irate customer?"*
- *"Your manager is unwell for a week and leaves you in charge. You hear staff complaining about the way he runs things, and how bored they are with their job - what do you do?"*

Sometimes questions may be about non-work situations:

- *"You are a shepherd in the Scottish Highlands, a dam is about to burst due to heavy rain, you come across the dam keeper with a broken leg, obtained as he was trying to reach the village below the dam to warn them of the danger. You have your flock of sheep to get in from the inclement weather. What would you do?"*
- *"How would you solve London's traffic problems?"*

Tips on answering hypothetical questions:

- Don't panic! Don't try to blurt out your answer. Take a few seconds to think - this shows confidence and assertiveness rather than weakness.
- Don't try to form your whole answer immediately - just try to say one or two sensible things first - in the example above, you could say that first you would examine the dam keeper's leg to see how bad the injury was. This gives you time to think further.
- There may be many possible solutions to the problem. The interviewer won't be expecting a perfect answer. What you actually say in answer doesn't matter, so long as it sounds reasonable, confident and well-thought-out and you show awareness of the issues involved.