



Student's Guide to Social Work Interviews

We at the GMSWA recognise that at any stage of your career interviews can be a challenging experience, particularly for students preparing to enter social work practice, this the first and most important step at the beginning of your social work journey. Interviews are a key opportunity for you to show hiring managers that you are the best person for the job, and equally for the interviewer, there is pressure in ensuring they find the right person for the role.

Below we have created a guide of hints and tips for Interviews for student to consider before and during the interview process.

BEFORE – Prepare Well	DURING – Thinking on the day
READ your application and the person specification and make notes on areas that will be measured at Interview.	DRESS smartly, be 10 – 15 minutes early, make sure your phone is off or on silent mode. For virtual interviews log on early in preparation.
BE CLEAR about the interview/recruitment process – where, how long, who is interviewing, different tasks e.g., is there a written task or presentation.	VIRTUAL interviews, remember do not read off the screen or from notes in front of you, remember they can see you.
IDENTIFY your strengths and areas for development – ask other people about your strengths, look at your placement reports. Be specific, prepare examples of what you do well.	BE YOURSELF , be open and honest. Highlight your enthusiasm, interest, and achievements
RESEARCH the organisation and the area you will be working in e.g., Ofsted reports, current jobs available (which cover ethos etc.), mission statements on the organisation's website	THINK Body language and speech – be relaxed but confident, sit back, smile, make eye contact with ALL panel members. Speak clearly and confidently, moderate your pace. You can be expressive.
SPEAK to someone, if there is an opportunity to speak to someone from the organisation beforehand – do it!	REMEMBER Nerves are normal! This is a discussion; interviewers are on your side. Take your time, breathe, and think – you do not have to jump in with an answer
ORGANISE your learning – law, theory and models for practice, professionalism (e.g., resilience, reflection, and use of supervision)	AVOID being critical – stay positive and constructive.



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<p>PREPARE examples using the STAR technique (Situation, Task, Actions, Results) e.g., using models, applying law, a difficult situation, use of supervision, success stories, your strengths.</p>	<p>NOTES, you can usually take notes in however ask about this at the start to check and be prepared NOT to use notes.</p>
<p>THINK about questions to ask for the end of the interview e.g., ASYE, future training, something you have read on the website, career opportunities, support for staff and benefits.</p>	<p>LISTEN to questions carefully, ask for them to be repeated, if necessary. Take paper to write key points of the question down. If you have a block you can ask to return to a question</p>
<p>EASE anxiety in preparation for your interview by doing a practice run to the venue. This can helpful if the interview is in person, knowing the best places to park and how long the journey will take noting traffic etc. If the interview is online/ phone, think about not checking your equipment, internet connection, identify a quiet place, and have a backup plan (laptop/phone/ tablet).</p>	<p>USE your examples to demonstrate how you can do something as well as understand it e.g., I am familiar with the Care Act for example....., I have good communication skills for example.....I am able to assess and manage risk for example.....</p>
<p>FIRST questions can be something like, why do you want to be a social worker, what interests you/what you bring – consider your pitch, do not waffle. Prepare for a first question by planning to talk about - why this role, your interest, your relevant strengths</p>	<p>IF you are asked about something you have not done use a hypothetical example, e.g., what I would do is..., link this to similar experience (transferrable skills/knowledge)</p>
<p>CONSIDER getting friends or family to ask you ‘test’ questions e.g., why you want to be a social worker, so you can fine tune a model answer.</p>	<p>EXPRESS your eagerness for continuous learning, we all have developmental needs and you can use supervision and training opportunities to develop, say that!</p>

REMEMBER EMPLOYERS WANT YOU AS MUCH AS YOU WANT

THEM! ... and Good Luck 😊