



Skills for the future, marketing your achievements Question and Answers with Lib Golding (Employability Officer, University of Liverpool)

Q: With video interviews becoming the norm – especially since/during the pandemic – what do you anticipate is the next stage of virtual interviews?

A: Many companies have started to use pre-recorded sets of interview questions for applicants to complete, as a way of shortlisting. Other companies choose to opt for logging into a portal and answering questions to see if they fit in and align with the organisation's strategies and practices. These emerging strategies which incorporate AI and virtual interactions have their benefits, but there is also the worry about whether more traditional interview skills taught with coaching such as eye contact, positive body language etc. are not being utilised or recognised as much as previously. We might also expect to see more virtual reality features in interviews and recruitment in the future, as the gamification of the industry grows e.g. escape rooms to show problem solving and communication, virtual meeting rooms for jobs outside of the UK. Digitisation is certainly on the rise and will continue to be a big part of recruitment in the future.

Q: With online recorded sessions expected to become more common, how might applicants find out more about the culture of the company or the dynamics of the team that they might be joining? In-person or live interviews often help both applicants and interview panels to gauge how well they will work together.

A: This is very important and recruitment is very much a two-way process. The online recorded questions are often an early part of the process, as a quick way of shortlisting only relevant, strong candidates at the earliest stages. This is particularly useful for companies with a high volume of applicants, and there are of course obvious pros and cons to this strategy. We would expect some form of face-to-face or live interview to take place throughout the recruitment, as to ensure that both the applicant and company align professionally in terms of goals, expectations, and behaviours.



Q: The phrase 'commercial awareness' can sometimes worry people in academia, particularly those who have not worked beyond academia or those who have had limited exposure and experience in a new sector. Is 'doing your homework on an organisation' enough in a job interview, and is it enough to show that you're willing to upskill?

A: Yes absolutely, there are lots of ways to demonstrate commercial awareness such as networking, following people on LinkedIn, reading publications, being aware of emerging conversations and plans, and a general positive attitude towards learning, development and contribution are all ways to show commercial awareness of a company that you apply to. Companies want you to be part of the conversation and showing a willingness to engage and learn is always beneficial.