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Complying with Freedom of Information legislation: a guide for practitioners

This report is written for practitioners in jobs focused on, or in roles influenced by, freedom of information legislation.

Focusing on key elements of the legislation and guidance from relevant coordinating authorities in the public sector, the report offers up-to-date and timely advice on the key issues.

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Do You Have any Questions?

An Interview is a two way process, designed to determine if you and the employer will be able to work together. One of the best ways to determine if you would like to work for an organisation is to ask pertinent questions.

If you have done your homework correctly, researched the organisation, re-read the job description, selection criteria and application package you should have formulated some questions already. You may also have been able to make a mental note of one or two others from the questions that the interviewers have asked you.

Whilst most of the questions that you will be asking will be based on the job description, and the specific industry and/or position that you are applying for, there are a number of questions that you can ask regardless of the job you are going for, or the organisation that you will be working in. For instance "What do you like most about this company?", and of course its opposite, "and what do you like least about working for the company." The answers are always interesting and can tell you an awful lot about the organisation, its culture and the people it employs.

Remember to make copious mental notes of body language, eye contact that you do or do not receive, as well as the answer to the question that you have posed.

This is a selection of the types of questions that are suitable for you to ask during the interview. You don't need to ask every question, choose one or two that are really important to you, and relevant to the job on offer.

- Who would my co-workers be, and what are their functions?
- How many people would I be managing?
- What are the goals of the department?
- What makes this company different from its competitors?
- What can you tell me about the culture and the environment?
- What do you like most about working for this company?
- What do you like the least?
- What is (your) the department head's leadership style?
- Is someone currently "acting" in the position or is it a new role?
- What are the company's objectives for this year? Have you managed to meet them?
- What are the company's objectives for next year? What plans do you have in place to meet those goals and objectives?
- What will be my primary role on the project?
- What is the time frame for completion? Do you think this is realistic?
- What other resources (people and equipment) have been allocated to it?
- Does the project have a budget allocated to it?
- What would be the first aspect required and by when?
- What would be the deliverables?
- What does the client expect at the end of the project?
- How will success be measured?
- Have similar projects been completed in the past? Were they successful?
- Will there be other opportunities within the company once this particular project has been completed?
- Are there additional opportunities to expand my responsibilities if I meet or exceed the company's expectations?

Don't worry if some of these questions sound a little presumptuous on your part. It shows that you have taken the interview process seriously and are looking at ways that you can help the organisation achieve its aims and objectives by becoming a member of the team. Thank them for their time when you have finished.

Don't Ask This

- Anything that requires a simple yes or no answer. You want to find out as much as you can about the organisation you are hoping to work for.
- Anything that is already written on the application package or job description, as this just proves that you haven't bothered to read the material that they have sent to you.
- Anything that has already been covered during the interview. This will seem like you haven't been paying attention.
- Anything to do with Salary or salary packaging. This will be discussed at a later date with the successful candidate. It's not relevant to anyone else.
- Anything to do with benefits and conditions of service. For instance, asking about vacation and sick leave will make the interviewer(s) question whether you were going to bother turning up for work on a daily basis or not.

Lorraine Bradshaw is the marketing and training coordinator for Information Enterprises Australia (IEA) <<http://www.iea.com.au>>, A specialist library and records management recruitment agency, consultants and trainers in Western Australia. For permanent staff placements and short-term labour hire solutions. Lorraine is also the current editor of the Australian Record Retention Manual and is the author of IEA's free monthly e-zine Information Overload.

LIS Researcher (added 21st March 2005)

URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j3927>
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited
Location: London - City, United Kingdom

European Support Consultant (added 21st March 2005)

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URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j3941>
Recruiter: UCB Celltech
Location: Cambridge, United Kingdom

Information Officer (Legal) (added 31st March 2005)

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Location: London, United Kingdom

Senior Analyst - Transport (added 31st March 2005)

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Location: London, United Kingdom

Researcher (with fluent Russian) (added 31st March 2005)

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Location: London, United Kingdom

Business Researcher (with European language) (added 31st March 2005)

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Location: London, United Kingdom

