



Hire education



Belfairs Academy 6th formers learn interview skills

There were a few awkward moments during Belfairs Academy's Interview Week (held between the February half term and Easter holidays), when Post 16 students were given a chance to take part in a series of mock interviews and experience what it's like to pitch to the professionals.

Designed to give members of the 6th Form an understanding of what it's like to talk about themselves as part of applying for a university or apprenticeship place, or indeed, a job – industry professionals took on the role of potential employers, with students then having to give a good account of themselves after being given information on the prospective job and having to do the relevant job-sector research.

One of the key lessons learned from the exercise is that a good interview is based on having a decent CV and some knowledge of the person and/or company interviewing you. Therefore each of the participating students made sure they had this sorted beforehand.

Top Tip: Make your CV applicable to the interview, do some background research and have your own questions prepared.



"For some of us, our interviews became a little awkward," explains Ara Stott. "It can be hard to sell yourself, especially with Mrs Rabone-King taking lots of photos throughout!"

"However, what was brilliant was the fact that those people who came into the Academy to interview us were really friendly and engaging. This definitely wasn't like being one of the candidates on 'The Apprentice', appearing in the show's final interview, where Lord Sugar rip you and your ideas to shreds!"

Some of the other moments that led to laughter and one or two blushes were the initial handshake – who shakes hands at age 16? – and arriving at the wrong room – both interviewee and interviewer!

Afterwards, each student was given advice about how to improve their interview performance. This included ideas such as CV must-haves and some great pointers for how to respond to questions.

Top Tip: Try to restrain the look of sheer panic on your face if asked an impromptu question! Take a moment, think and then respond. If you simply don't know the answer, be honest and say so. Don't blag.

Summer Children-Smith says: *"It was a great experience. One that you don't get at every further education establishment. The chance to wear smart clothes and address our interviewers in a professional manner allowed us to grasp what real-life interviews are like."*

Kasper Lindberg-Jones agrees: *"It definitely feels like everyone who took part grew in confidence and now has a clearer view of the future, and what they need to do to get there - with as few as possible awkward interview moments."*



Mrs Rabone-King, Assistant Director of P16, thinks the 6th Form members learned some valuable new skills: *“Interviews Week aims to create as close to a real-time experience of a professional interview as possible, without actually having to go for a job. Students have to have an employment sector in mind and create a CV that reflects their skills and what they have to offer their ‘chosen profession’.”*

She adds: *“We could see from the comments of some of our interviewers and students that a lot of effort goes into this activity and that it can be quite a daunting experience, even as a role-play. However, this year every single student in Year 12 participated and from their evaluations, they all got something out of it. Even the most nervous beforehand were surprised at just how much they enjoyed meeting and talking to a knowledgeable professional.”*

The acid test for the students’ newfound interview skills will come in July, when they set out to find work experience.

Top Tip: When preparing your CV, make sure you include your hobbies and activities. Employers like to see someone who likes doing a variety of different interests and don’t be afraid to include geeky things. You never know, your interviewer could also be into Manga comics, your favourite sport or a wannabe stand-up comedian.

Some great endorsements from our professional interviewers...

‘You should be extremely proud of your students, they are a pleasure to talk to’

Jo Girvan – Barclays Legal, Canary Wharfe

‘I’ve never met a group of young people who seem to do so much and have so much to talk about, they are so interesting’

Carmel Jane - Photographer

‘I get the impression that our next generation is in much better hands than our press would have us believe’

Keith Luxon – HR at Maximus, London

‘I would like to say how charming, caring and focussed so many of my interviewees were, they will go far’

Hyla Grimwade, Southend Borough Council

‘Your young people are certainly up for a challenge and I wish them well, they deserve to progress’

Sarah Moreton, Career Ready

‘What a great bunch of young people, can I come back next year’

Caroline Fairman, Southend Adult community College

‘Each time I come back I am impressed by the knowledge and ambition of Belfairs 6th formers, I wish them all great success’

Bob Robertson, Engineer, NTL