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LSESU Student Leadership
Conference 2025/26

How to discuss society experience in applications – CV and motivational questions at interviews

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Part I: Describing society experience in your CV



Education Officer (VP), UCD Students' Union 2014 - 2015

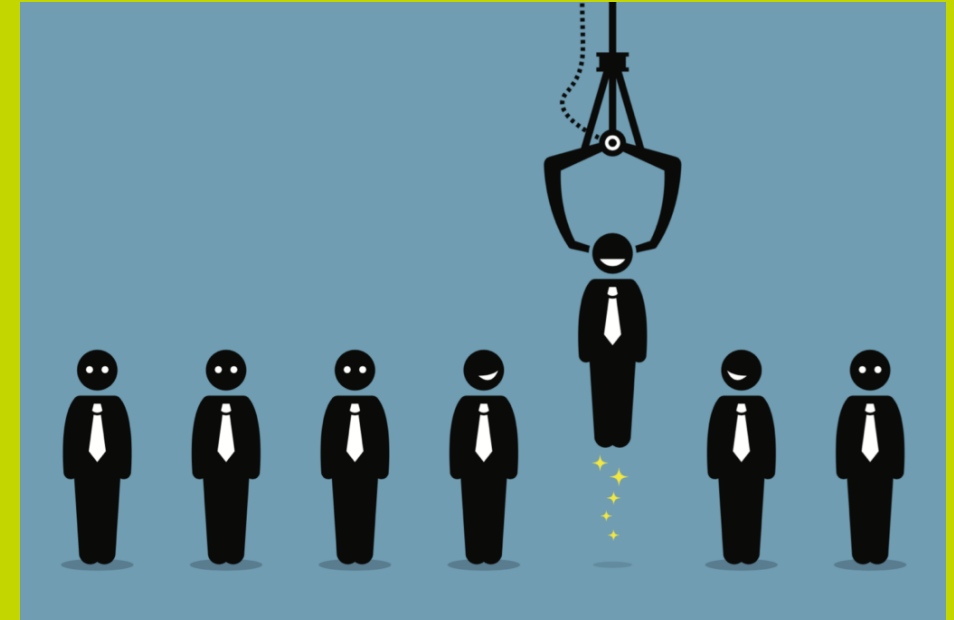
- Elected by over 1,500 peers to the role after an engagement campaign focused on initiatives including Skills for Life, Peer Assisted Learning, and recognition of extra-curricular learning.
- Coached 500+ students who visited my office for confidential support, advice, and solutions to various problems. Guided students through processes such as registration, grant/funding applications, extenuating circumstances applications, appealing exam results and EDI issues.
- Developed organisational awareness, advocated for student needs and rights, and assisted in developing university policies as a member of UCD's senior decision-making bodies; Governing Authority, UCD Academic Council and University Management Team.
- Designed and executed two student skills development programmes called 'Lead UCD' and 'Skills for Life'. Across both programmes 90 students participated in 6 skills workshops and 2 company visits.
- Collaborated with AIB, EY and the US Embassy in Ireland who sponsored our skills programmes in return for increased brand visibility and access to engaged students.

Recruiter's Perspective

Ideal Candidate...

- Understands role and organisation
- Enthusiasm
- Transferable skills
- Knowledge
- Self-aware and motivated
- Professional experience

To Stand Out: You need to develop the ability to better articulate your skills and enthusiasm at interview



What does a cat do all day?

Sleep

Eat

**Beg for more
food**

**Dig up
house plants**

**Hide in small
places**

More sleep

What does a cat do all day?

Beg for more food

Strengthened a number
of key relationships
with humans, which led
to an increase in treat
acquisition

What does a cat do all day?

Dig up house plants

Successfully project
managed digging soil out
of houseplants, which led
to an immediate increase
in attention from humans

How might a confident cat describe it?

Presented with the “Best Napper Award” in 2022

90% success rate when **negotiating** the acquisition of second breakfast

Strengthened a number of key relationships with humans, which led to an increase in treat acquisition

Successfully **project managed** digging soil out of houseplants, which led to an immediate increase in attention from humans

Demonstrated a flexible approach to work **proven** by my ability to squeeze into small spaces

Activity: Elevate your experience

Step 1: Reflect & pick one experience to focus on



Activity: Elevate your experience

Step 2: Write 3 bullet points to describe this experience



Action Verbs

Achievement

- accelerated, accomplished, achieved, carried out, completed, improved, delivered, enhanced, negotiated, obtained, produced, secured, increased, implemented

Communication

- advised, participated, chaired meeting, wrote, instructed, demonstrated, edited, presented, discussed, promoted, persuaded, recommended

Taking initiative

- created, formulated, designed, established, introduced, devised, started, developed, set up, launched, initiated, enabled

Research

- classified, differentiated, investigated, determined, experimented, equated, searched, developed, surveyed, examined, indexed, compiled, catalogued

Organising & planning

- distributed, reorganised, arranged, restructured, budgeted, verified, scheduled, computed, planned, produced

Interpersonal

- advised, negotiated, consulted, evaluated, proposed, handled, collaborated, discussed, mediated, facilitated

Activity: Elevate your experience

Step 3: How can you elevate these bullet points to demonstrate the impact you made?



President, LSE 93% Club 2024 - 2025

- Directed the strategic vision and daily operations of the LSE 93% Club, leading a diverse committee to deliver impactful programming that empowered state-educated students through advocacy, opportunity, and community.
- Designed and delivered the inaugural Social Mobility Summit, bringing together university students and sixth formers for a day of panels, workshops, and networking focused on breaking barriers to social mobility in education and employment.
- Fostered a strong sense of belonging by organising regular community-building events such as tea and coffee socials, and peer networking circles, creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all 250 members.
- Strengthened employer engagement and alumni relations, securing sponsorships and delivering 15+ career-focused events, including commercial awareness workshops, fireside chats, and guest speaker panels tailored to the needs of LSE students.

Part II: Motivational Questions in Interviews



Have you had an interview before?

A: No

B: Yes, but only a few (1-3)

C: Yes lots!



How confident do you feel about being interviewed?

1.



2.



3.





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- What is a motivation question?
- Why do employers ask motivation questions?
- How can I prepare?

Employer perspective – what they want to know

Will you do the job?

- Have you done your research?
- What are your reasons for applying?
- Are you motivated by your career choice?

Give evidence that you have the **commitment**, **motivation** and **drive** for the position

Can you do the job?

- Academic performance
- Work experience, extra-curriculars, volunteering
- Proven set of skills

Give tailored examples which show you **match** the needs of the role

Will you fit in?

- Culture, values, work environment

Provide evidence that **links** you to the organisation



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**Demonstrate that you thoroughly
understand what the role involves**

**Self audit; how do you
match the requirements?**

Why would like to work with us?

**Say why you would specifically like
to work for this employer**

**Balance what you will learn/gain from the role
vs what you will contribute to the role/work**

lse.ac.uk/careers



Ingredients

- ☐ 8 ounces whole wheat pasta
- ☐ 1/4 cup olive oil
- ☐ 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- ☐ 1 cup pumpkin purée
- ☐ 2 Tablespoons milk
- ☐ 1 Tablespoon white wine vinegar
- ☐ 3/4 cup vegetable broth
- ☐ salt/pepper (to taste)
- ☐ 3-4 leaves fresh sage (or 1/2 teaspoon dried sage)
- ☐ 1/2 cups grated parmesan
- ☐ 2 cups spinach
- ☐ 1/4 cup chopped walnuts
- ☐ 2 Tablespoons roasted pepitas







Research

Organisation

- What do they do and where do they do it?
- What their products/services?
- Company culture: Core values/how viewed externally
- Who are their customers / main competitors?
- What is the traditional career path?
- What's new: new products, impact of, any growing areas?

Where to look?

Website: Press releases, annual reports, mission statements, organisational structure

People: LinkedIn, Glassdoor, Events

External: Social Media, Publications, News, Media

Role

- What would you be doing day to day?
- What is expected of you?
- What are you particularly interested in?

Job specification & job description

Sector

- How does the sector operate?
- What current issues is the sector facing?
- Any challenges or opportunities?

Governing bodies / Google alerts



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Show your motivation

- Cover Letter
- Motivation questions in an application form
- Speculative applications
- Email to recruiter