BDA The Association of UK Dietitians

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Dietetic job interview tips

Top personal statement tips

• Always give examples
• Make sure to meet *all* the points in the person specification
• Use trust values when answering questions. Think of the qualities needed to work at the trust/company/department. Describe, with examples, how you have demonstrated these values and how you fit the job description.
• Revise referral prioritisation skills – workload will vary. Explain your rationale and always state the obvious.
• Use vocabulary used in the person specification e.g. if it says essential to have good communication skills say I have demonstrated good communication skills on my final placement for example in my weekly clinic I did X

Top interview tips

• Think about what they are asking – what are the key things they want to know
• Think about skills needed for a dietitian e.g. communication, organisational skills, confidence, caring etc. Demonstrate how you have done this and will continue to do this
• Always link back to the question – try not to deviate from the question
• Be specific with all answers e.g. with scenarios make sure to talk about what you have done/would do…
• Reflect on past experiences always use examples – link this to what the job requires
• Read a journal article and know the key points: know the kind of study, what they did, what they found, implications for practice etc.
• Look at the trust values – think about how you can apply yourself to all of those and use examples
• Know the job description – is it general/rotational, is it a specific clinical area?
• Familiarise yourself with the clinical area if it is a clinical specific job
• Expect a case study question
• Prepare answers for common questions e.g. reflection, CPD
• Look at the trust website – is there something happening you should know about/a particular specialist service the hospital offers etc.
• Be natural – don't sound too rehearsed
• Let your personality come through
• Use good active listening techniques
• Be prepared – if it says bring portfolio or documents make sure to take it all!
• NEVER assume they know what you're thinking – say everything even if you think it sounds obvious
• Think about questions you want to ask – this is just as much an interview for you as it is for them e.g. do you want to know if there are opportunities for student training?
• Don't be afraid of rejection – learn from experience and move on

Produced by Konstantinos Eleftheriadis, BDA Student Representative 2018-2019

• Always ask for feedback from interview if not given – even if you get the job it is okay to ask for feedback on what went well
• Ask them to repeat the question/ask if you have answered the question – much better than rambling on and not understanding what they want from you
• Write the question down if that helps you remember the question

Questions to prepare for interviews

1. Tell us about yourself
2. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
3. What are two of your weaknesses and what are you doing about them?
4. What are your achievements so far?
5. How would your friends describe you and why?
6. How would you handle the daily stresses of working?
7. How have you prepared for this interview?
8. What are your training needs?
9. Why did you choose a career in Dietetics?
10. Why have you applied for this role?
11. What recent experience do you have?
12. Where do you see yourself in 5 years' time?
13. Why is patient centred care important? How would you ensure people from other ethnic groups obtained the same level of care as everyone else?
14. Looking at the population within this area, explain the importance of communication with ethnic minority groups.
15. What is the KSF? → Answer: Knowledge and Skills Framework dimensions
16. What is the role of NICE?
17. What do you understand by patient confidentiality?
18. How is clinical audit relevant to your work as a Dietitian?
19. Why do you think there is a need for a statement of conduct and professional standards?
20. What does clinical governance mean to you and why is it important?
21. What do you know about Department of Health or The Joint Commission surveys?
22. What does "autonomous working" mean to you? How will this be different from when you were a student?
23. What do you see as your biggest challenges?
24. What do you think makes a good Dietitian?
25. How do Dietitians contribute to the health and wellbeing of the general public?
26. What areas of medical nutrition therapy interest you the most? Why?
27. What do you think are the most important skills or traits for a Dietician to have?
28. What do you understand by the term safeguarding?
29. Describe a time where something you did could have been improved – what did you do, and what was the outcome?
30. Patient referred for TPN, what do you do?
31. What do you know by the mental capacity act?
32. We work 7 days, what do you think about that?
33. What support would you need for us to support you?
34. What do you know by SOVA?
35. What 3 guidelines would you need in this position?
36. Patient with dementia referred for NG. What do you need to find out?
37. PEG patient for discharge but discharged to care home without you seeing them. What do you do and what would you do in the future to ensure this doesn't happen again?

38. What barriers are there in this group of patients?
39. Which guidelines would you need in this post?
40. You have been asked to go up to the ward to complete a task and you are not sure what to do, what do you do?
41. What do you know about the cancer services at the hospital?
42. What do I know about CPD and how do I show CPD?
43. Why would you be suitable for this post specifically?
44. What is the role of the dietitian with this cohort and why can they make a difference?
45. Patient comes in to clinic having been referred by GP. Wants to go on the 5:2 diet, tell us about your assessment.
46. Patient on an NG feed. Nurse asks you to review for a low sodium feed due to high sodium. What do you do?
47. Nursing staff ask you to review a patient on supplements with T2DM as raised BMS, what do you do?
48. You notice decreased referrals on a usually busy ward. What do you do?
49. As a band 5 with a busy caseload how do you prioritise?
50. Why do you want to work here?
51. What do you need to consider when working with elderly patients?
52. How do you show appreciation for CPD?
53. What experience have you had with inpatients and outpatients?
54. What skills can you bring to the job?
55. Tell me about the most recent journal article you read.
56. Tell me about your weaknesses
57. Why do you want the job here?
58. Its Friday, you have a referral for a patient who is not eating and is losing weight, a new NG feed and a newly diagnosed type 2 diabetes patient. Talk us through your prioritisation
59. What barriers do dietitians face in inpatients and outpatients?
60. You are supervising a final year student who is overconfident, what do you do?
61. What skills would you bring to the job?
62. Tell us why it is important to keep accurate patient data
63. A patient you have been monitoring for refeeding syndrome is on supplements. You notice the supplement prescription has increased. What do you do?
64. Tell us about a time you reflected on…
65. You know that this post is a Macmillan funded post, how will you support them?
66. What do you know about the cancer services at the hospital?
67. What do I know about CPD and how do I show CPD?
68. What CPD activities do you include in your CPD portfolio?
69. Why would you be suitable for this post specifically?
70. What biochemical and physical features would indicate dehydration?
71. What first line advice would you give to a T2DM patient?
72. Why do you want this job/to work in the trust?
73. What motivates you to be successful?
74. Give an example of a time you worked well under pressure?
75. What do you need to consider for a new NG feed?
76. How would you manage a busy caseload?
77. How would you resolve a conflict with a GP who does not want to prescribe the supplements you requested?
78. Tell us how you meet the trust values?

79. How do you deal with communication barriers?
80. If you were offered this position what would be the important areas to audit and how would the information be used?
81. What is the difference between research and audit?
82. What would you do if you had a patient with a diagnosis you were unfamiliar with?
83. What do you consider when prescribing supplements to an inpatient? An outpatient?
84. Tell us about a time you had to deal with a difficult patient?
85. What would you do if a patient was rude to you?
86. What would you do if a doctor on the ward asked you about a nutritional treatment for a condition you didn't understand?
87. How do you show commitment to clinical governance?
88. What do you need to consider if an ethnic person came to clinic?
89. How do you show HCPC working?
90. Describe a time you saw something that wasn't evidence based/you didn't agree with. What did you do?
91. A consultant wants you to start NG feeding a patient, but you don't agree, what do you do?
92. Its Tuesday, you have 3 supplement letters from Tuesdays clinic, 2 reviews that have to be seen today and a new NG, what do you do?
93. How would you assess a confused patient?
94. How would you assess a nutrition support patient?
95. How would you ensure your practice was clinically effective?
96. What areas would you feel appropriate to cover when educating cardiac rehab patients
97. It has been demonstrated that up to 40% of people admitted to hospital are malnourished. As a dietitian, how can you improve their nutritional status?
98. You see a patient referred for an NG feed who is very thin, hasn't eaten for a number of weeks and there are no blood results. What do you do?
99. What would you do if you received a referral for a low protein diet for a patient with liver disease?
100. What information would you need to obtain from a referral before seeing a patient on the ward?
101. Can you tell us why you have applied for this job?

102. What skills have you learnt from your previous jobs or student life that can help you in this job?
103. There are 3 Band 5 dietitians based at the Hospital. They each have general wards that they are responsible for as well as helping in specialist clinical areas as part of their rotation. If you were part of this group of dietitians how would you make sure that you worked together as a team to maximum efficiency

104. What motivates you to do your best work?
105. Tell me about a situation that you have managed that demonstrated excellent communication skills?
106. Can you prioritise the following work? We are looking for justification of your answers rather than worrying about getting this absolutely correct:

a) A new patient referral – MUST score 2

b) A request to see a patient who has just had jaw surgery, about to be discharged home

c) A new referral – patient needs PEG feeding regimen following maxfax surgery

d) A patient to be discharged to a nursing home with a nasogastric tube (transport booked tomorrow morning)

e) A request to see a patient on the ward who has multiple food allergies

A nurse on one of your wards refers a patient (MUST score 3):

a.) What information would you ask for in the first instance?
One week later and there has been minimal change to this person's weight. What would you do now?
At what point would you discharge this patient from dietetic care?

You are required to review a patient on a jejunostomy feed. What do you need to monitor and why?

107. You are referred a patient by the Consultant. They refer a patient for a high protein diet due to low albumin level.
a.) How would you manage this referral?
b.) If the referring doctor is not happy with your advice how would you manage this situation?

108. You are asked to cover an outpatient clinic for a colleague who has phoned in sick. How would you manage this situation?

109. We regularly have students in the department. You have a student dietitian with you who is lacking in confidence and reluctant to see patients. What would you do?

110. We sometimes hear in the press of situations where a person has been treated badly while they have been in a care setting. How does this make you feel? What would you do if you were concerned about how a patient was being treated by their carers/family?

111. Why do you want this job? What about this role interests you?

112. What qualities do you think you need to make a team work and why?

113. Give an example of when you've been part of a team?
114. What is re-feeding syndrome? And how would you assess and manage it?
115. A stroke patient came onto the wards how would you assess them, what dietary advice would you give? And how would you monitor them?
116. Give an example of when you have cared for someone?
117. Someone in the office speaks abruptly to someone on the phone you overhear this, do you take any action and what do you do?
118. If you're on a home visit and a care home visit how would you comply with information governance procedures?
119. What is equality and what group of people do you think are vulnerable to not being treated equally and why?

Final Tips

- Create impact – in your opening paragraph of the job application demonstrate you understand the job and the organisation.
    - Address all the points on the person specification – imagine the employer is using it as a checklist.
    - In your first sentence you should make a short statement summarising how you meet to the requirements of the job.
    - The next few sentences should provide concrete examples of how.
    - A final sentence that shows reflection will add depth to the point you are making.
- Once you have got a good application it is easy to tailor each new application to the job.
- Take time to draft and proof read your document. Print it off and get someone else to check it. Type up your personal statement / supporting information in word first. Keep a copy.
- Be aware of the closing date – if your application is late it is likely it will not be taken forward. Many online jobs will be removed at close of business (e.g. 5.00 p.m) on the closing date.
- It is important to apply early for NHS jobs as many vacancies close early (some within 24/48 hours) when enough applicants have applied.