

Teacher's notes Unit 1 Building a career

Level: Upper-intermediate

The slides in this PowerPoint presentation focus on:

university environments (**Slide 1**)

MBAs (**Slides 2, 3 and 8**)

answering questions in interviews (**Slide 5 and 6**)

the content of covering letters (**Slide 7**)

In addition, **Slide 4** provides the answers to 13 Listening and discussion on page 9 of the Student's Book.

Slide 1: photos of different university environments

The purpose of providing the photos is to give talking points for the students to go with the Discussion and/or as lead-in to the Reading and Listening on pages 6 and 7 of the Student's Book.

Ask your students to describe what they see and comment on the learning environment. Would they like to study there? Are the places anything like where they studied or are studying? How good were/are the facilities, for example computer rooms, library, sport, accommodation and labs?

Commentary

Photo 1 shows an Oxford college while Photo 2 shows a modern campus university.

Photo 3 a library, and Photo 4 – by way of contrast and for a bit of light relief – a messy shared student kitchen!

[10 minutes]

Slide 2: types of MBA programmes

The *Internet research* topic on page 6 of the Student's Book is to choose a business school you would like to attend. **Slide 2** provides some basic information about the *types* of course you can do, and their relative advantages and disadvantages.

Ask students which type of MBA programme they would ideally like to do and give reasons why. What would suit them? How can they compare the different types of programmes? Hopefully, they will come up with similar ideas to those seven listed.

Commentary

Choosing an MBA is a complicated process and depends a lot on personal circumstances. You could ask your students to follow this discussion up by looking at the information that the highly rated Warwick Business School (mentioned in the letter on Student's Book page 14) provides about their different MBA programmes.

Visit: <http://www.wbs.ac.uk/>

Alternatively, the University of Chicago has some interesting programmes to research.

Visit: <http://www.chicagogsb.edu/mbaprograms.aspx>

Another important aspect of choosing an MBA is what qualifications you need to join a programme. Very often the Business Schools require that you:

- take the GMAT, which tests a variety of skills
- have had some business experience and / or a first degree
- have an appropriate TOEFL or IELTS score.

Visit: <http://www.hbs.edu/mba/admissions/admissioncriteria.html> to read what the Harvard Business School requires.

Note: **Slide 3** focussed on how you fund an MBA and **Slide 8** on the costs of doing an MBA.

[10 minutes]

Slide 3: funding an MBA course

This slide looks at the different ways in which a student can pay for an MBA as a lead-in to *Funding 5* on page 8 of the Student's Book, where the focus is on verb forms.

Ask students to think about the different ways of paying for an MBA before showing the slide. Then show the four ways in the slide and ask students to provide the missing nouns.

This could then lead on to a short discussion of whether some students miss out unfairly because they cannot afford the fees.

Commentary

You could ask your students to follow this up by looking at the information and advice that INSEAD provides to those interested in its Executive MBA programme:

<http://www.insead.edu/emba/financing/index.cfm>

Note: we look at the actual costs of doing an MBA in **Slide 8**.

[5 minutes]

Slide 4: answers to Listening and discussion 13 Student's Book page 9

This is provided so that you can give your students the suggested notes on page 12 of the Teacher's Book quickly and easily.

Slides 5 and 6 focus on the *Internet research* topic of illegal questions and how to handle them.

Slide 5: Illegal interview questions

This slide provided some more examples of illegal questions to those found in *Listening and discussion 1* on page 12 of the Student's Book, plus the categories they fall into. The slide could be used to start the module before the first listening or as an introduction to the Internet research task.

Ask your students to say why the questions might be seen as illegal.

This is a very complex and politically sensitive area, and your students may be surprised about the degree of care interviewers should take, especially in the USA.

Interesting websites to look at are:

<http://www.usatoday.com/careers/resources/interviewillegal.htm#more>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A8963-2003Apr11.html>

Commentary

Here are explanations of why these five questions are illegal.

I've not heard of your surname before – where's it from?

This focuses on the racial origins of the interviewee. If the interviewer wanted to find out about the person's legal right to work, say, they could ask *Are you authorized to work in X?*

How would your husband feel about you being away a lot?

This asks about marital status and could be rephrased more objectively: *Would you be able to travel for this job?*

Do you have any children?

This is simply not relevant to the job. An interviewer might misguidedly ask a question like this to establish rapport with the interviewee.

Can you work on Fridays/Saturdays/Sundays?

This could be interpreted as a question trying to find out about religious beliefs. Or it could be interpreted as wanting to find out about family commitments or other commitments outside work.

How fit are you?

Questions about fitness should be limited to the requirements found in the job description, for example for a postman *Are you able to ride a bicycle?*

[10 minutes]

Slide 6: Answering illegal questions

Clearly in an interview the interviewee does not want to be perceived as difficult or hostile – he or she wants to make a good impression. So how can illegal questions be answered diplomatically and sensitively? And also steer the interview back to questions that are relevant to the job?

Slide 6 addresses this issue by asking students to consider which of the four answers could be used to answer the five questions from **Slide 5**.

Commentary

Why do you ask that?

This could be used with all five questions and is a good strategy for clarifying the real purpose of the question.

I've never been asked that before.

This answer indicates surprise and would be an appropriate response to *How would your husband feel about you being away a lot?*

I'd rather not discuss this, if that's OK with you.

This would be a good response if you felt you had to be very firm with the interviewer.

That's an interesting question.

This shows a willingness to reply to the question and also buys time to think.

Clearly you could not use it with factual questions like *Do you have any children?* but it would be good for *I've not heard of your surname before – where's it from?*

This could be followed up by a look at: <http://www.interviewstuff.com/illegal-questions.html> which has some interesting advice for handling illegal questions.

[5 minutes]

Slide 7: What not to put on your résumé

This is the *Internet research* topic on Student's Book page 15 in the Writing module. The slide provides a list of the main things to avoid plus some simple examples to match to the categories.

Ask your students to provide other examples under these categories as a precursor to doing some Internet research themselves. They could then report back with further interesting examples and perhaps further categories.

[5 minutes]

Slide 8: the cost of doing an MBA

This is the *Internet research* topic for this module. As a starter, **Slide 8** provides some figures for studying at the University of Warwick.

This is found at: <http://www.wbs.ac.uk/students/mba/fees/index.cfm>

Students can then go on to compare the costs of attending their programme of choice with Warwick's University. One thing to bear in mind is that Warwick's programme only lasts 12 months. Many American MBA programmes are longer and will thus incur greater costs.

[10 minutes]

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