



Human Resources

Interview Feedback: SAR your Employer for their Interview Notes

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Biography

Tom Andrews is the Founder and CEO at Rightly (<https://www.rightly.co.uk>). In 2018, Tom founded Rightly because he saw an opportunity to use the new consumer legislation and protection on personal data to help people understand what's happening to their data – and take control of it. Launching in May 2020, Rightly has already helped over 60,000 people and works with 12,000 firms.

Attending university at Imperial College, London, Tom graduated with a Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Physics. He has always been analytically minded and after university he followed a career in problems solving for businesses like KPMG and PwC, focused on financial markets, risk assurance and forensic accountancy.

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Abstract

As an employer, giving interview feedback can be seen as another touchpoint for your company in creating a competitive employer brand that is both appealing and attractive to prospective employees. Whether the feedback is positive or negative it shows a candidate that their time and effort was valued making them more likely to reapply for roles in the future or recommend the company to others. However, many companies don't share any feedback with their unsuccessful applicants, often choosing to send blanket rejection emails and leaving people in the dark as to how they can improve. Interestingly, there is now a way around this for applicants as one aspiring barrister found out – and as the author of this article explains, anyone can request the notes taken about them in their interview under GDPR law.

Introduction

In a world with an increasingly saturated job market, interview feedback has become more crucial than ever to pinpoint your biggest areas of improvement and how you come across to employers during interviews.

Luckily, an aspiring barrister discovered a way to use his data protection rights under GDPR to send a subject access request (SAR). This allowed him to contact



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potential employers and demand a copy of his application interview notes to find out exactly why he wasn't hired.

Know your rights

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a European law that came into force in 2018 that gives individuals greater control over their personal data.

Personal data is any information that allows a person to be directly, or indirectly, identified, such as a person's name or ID number. For example, an email or a filed paper copy of a document involving your name combined with any comments about you would count as your personal information.

Under GDPR, you have the right of access. This means you have the right to access and receive a copy of your personal data, and any other supplementary information. You can do this by sending any organization a SAR.

Typically, this right is exercised by individuals who want to understand how and why organizations are using their data, and check they are doing it lawfully. But this right can also extend to sending an SAR to a potential employer for their interview notes about you.



Case study: An aspiring barrister successfully uses SARs to access interview comments

Recently, an aspiring barrister innovatively exercised his rights under GDPR to send SARs to the top 20 UK legal chambers, aiming to find out exactly why he wasn't hired for the job.

He managed to access internal storing sheets, application criteria and interview notes. The interview notes contained some eye-catching comments like:

- 'extremely articulate but show-offy'
- 'brilliant but exhausting'
- 'prone to slightly pretentious references'



Okay, the truth hurts – you may have to mentally prepare yourself for potential unsavoury comments about yourself. After all, this information may not have been released to you for a reason. But this type of information, how you come across socially beyond your academic or professional achievements, is invaluable: it's likely unattainable any other way and could be the difference between getting hired or not.



We recommend asking for interview feedback within 24 hours of receiving a rejection notice. But, if a company cites 'lack of resources' (as many chambers do) as a reason for not giving you feedback, or if you think the feedback you receive is too vague or something may be missing, you have nothing to lose by sending that company a SAR.

How do I send a SAR?

Unsurprisingly, the move by the aspiring barrister inspired others to do the same – and we don't see why you shouldn't too!



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You can send SARs to companies on your own by emailing them, or you can use the Rightly platform. Our platform allows you to send multiple SARs at once to any company and view the information securely. It's quick, easy-to-use and completely free!

Find out exactly where you went wrong during an interview by searching for the company and sending a request. If you can't find the company, get in touch.

We recommend doing this as quickly as possible before interview notes are destroyed or companies catch on and stop taking such detailed notes.



Final thoughts

Job searching takes up a lot of time and energy. Exercising your right of access under GDPR to gain accurate interview feedback could be the invaluable information you need to work on your weaknesses and get you that dream job. Remember, you have the right to access any personal information a company holds on you.