Market awareness

Watch the financial news, know what's happening in the markets, who is up and down, and why. Understand how something that is happening in the financial news will impact the area you are interested in. Read as much relevant information as you can and ensure you understand it. Practice discussing industry news with people.

Demonstrating market awareness
You will be tested on your knowledge, so be ready. You should feel very comfortable in your market knowledge and the company and desk you are applying for. Don't ask any silly questions that can be found online easily but also don't try too hard for a very technical question that may end up not making sense.

Analytical skills

If you have strong analytical skills, you will be able to draw conclusions from data. There are several opportunities within the industry to apply these skills in complex real-world scenarios. If you get excited by raw data rather than high-end figures which don't give you the whole picture, then you will do well in finance. You will enjoy analyzing data and being able to provide your conclusions. You may have written essays or assignments which have been technical. If so, explain how you did it and what conclusions you came to. If you haven't written anything numerical, then maybe you have observed behaviors or trends and made conclusions that way.
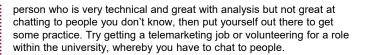
Demonstrating analytical skills
If you are interviewing for a graduate or internship position, then the likelihood of you taking an online test at application and then attending an assessment centre is very high. Your analytical skills will be tested here, so look online for examples and practice tests and ask your career advisors for help. Do lots of preparation beforehand.

Communication skills

As well as being analytical and numerate, you will also need to be able to explain technical ideas to people who don't have the numbers skills that you do. You need to ensure that you can be highly technical with numbers but extremely communicative and engaging when speaking to clients and other colleagues. Whatever you are good at, you should try to improve in an area you are not so good at and so if you are the kind of person who is very technical and great with analysis but not great at chatting to people you don't know, then put yourself out there to get some practice. Try getting a telemarketing job or volunteering for a role within the university, whereby you have to chat to people.

Demonstrating communication skills
The first impression of your communication skills comes out in your application or CV. Ensure it has no spelling mistakes or grammatical errors. Anything you write at the application stage should be clear, concise, and on topic. At the interview, be confident and friendly, use eye contact, and smile.

Keenness to learn

Roles in finance typically involve a lot of complex data analysis and information deciphering. To advise customers and be seen as an expert, you will need to have a continuous hunger to learn and acquire new and up-to-date knowledge.

Demonstrating a keenness to learn
Stand out by showing that you can and want to learn things outside of your day-to-day work, so for example, if you are a language student, then learn how to trade on the stock market and show your versatility. With your keenness to learn, demonstrate how much you have learned about the company and ask intelligent questions, not questions that you could have found on the recruitment pages in your own time. Show passion for whatever you have done and are asked about, and also for the role that you are applying for.

Teamwork

Teamwork is key. You are not an individual trader but part of a group of likeminded people working together to service clients and make money for the company and its staff. Demonstrate how you have used these kinds of skills before through group projects that you have worked on; what role did you play? How did you help? What skills did you bring, and how did you involve others to get the best out of them?

Demonstrating teamwork
At the assessment centre there could be a group discussion whereby you will be observed along with everyone else. You will be given a task to solve as a group, but more important than solving it is the way that you communicate with the others. This is what you are really being assessed on here.