

# INTERVIEWING *Guide*



## How to Prepare

### RESEARCH THE COMPANY

You should know as much as possible about the company before going into the interview. Research their website and Google results for information about their products/services, organizational structure, mission and values, recent news, etc.

### READ THE JOB DESCRIPTION

Become very familiar with the responsibilities of the position and the language they use to describe what they are looking for. The questions they ask will revolve around those themes.

### REFLECT

Take some time to reflect on who you are, how you fit, and what makes you unique. Recall challenge and success stories from your past experiences.

### PRACTICE

Practice basic questions that you know will probably be asked, such as "Tell me about yourself," and "What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?" Set up a mock interview with the College and Career Coordinator to get feedback on your interviewing skills and tips on how to answer specific questions.

## How to Answer Interview Questions

### KEEP YOUR ANSWERS BRIEF AND CONCISE

Unless asked to give more detail, limit your answers to two to three minutes per question. Your answers should provide a complete picture while demonstrating your ability to communicate both efficiently and effectively.

### PROVE YOUR ANSWERS WITH EXAMPLES

Interviewees tend to talk in generalities, failing to convince interviewers of their assets. Include information about specific accomplishments and give examples. When telling stories, use the STAR method: Describe the Situation/Task at hand, the Action you took, and the Result of that action.

### EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

During the interview, you may be asked some unusual questions. Do not be caught off guard. Many times they simply want to see how you react. Surprise questions could range from, "Tell me a joke" to "What time period would you like to have lived in?" Don't think too hard. Just provide an answer and explain why you chose it.

### IMAGE IS OFTEN AS IMPORTANT AS CONTENT

Studies have shown 65 percent of conveyed messages are nonverbal. Maintain good posture, eye contact, and simple hand gestures. Show your enthusiasm in your facial expressions and voice inflection.

### BE CONFIDENT

Confidence goes a long way in standing out amongst the competition. If you truly believe you are a good fit, then act like it!

## Sample Interview Questions

### GENERAL

Tell me about yourself.  
Why do you want to work for our company?  
What are your long and short-term goals?  
What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?  
How has your experience prepared you?  
What jobs have you enjoyed most/least and why?  
What co-curricular activities have you been involved in?  
What is typically your role in a team?  
How do you typically handle conflict?  
What makes you stand out from other candidates?

### BEHAVIORAL

What has been your greatest accomplishment?  
Tell me about a time in which you demonstrated initiative.  
Tell me about a time in which you had to solve a difficult problem.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK

What do you enjoy about working here?  
Where is this company headed in the next 3-5 years?  
What are the key challenges this company faces?  
What is the company culture like?  
What type of person excels in this position?

## What Happens During the Interview?

### TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

There are a few different interview formats:

**Phone:** Many companies start their first round of interviews with a brief phone interview. It's important to smile and show your enthusiasm since they cannot read your body language. Have your notes in front of you too!

**One-on-One:** This is the most common and easiest to navigate. Just follow basic interview protocol.

**Group:** Some companies choose to interview multiple candidates at once. Try to engage with the group without monopolizing the conversation.

**Panel:** Sometimes a few people will be asking you questions. Remember to look them all in the eye, remember their names, and send thank you notes to each of them.

**Series:** Especially in the final stages of the hiring process many companies will put you through multiple interviews in one day. The best thing you can do is maintain your enthusiasm throughout the day.

**Lunch/Dinner:** If a company interviews you over lunch or dinner, make sure to maintain general etiquette and stay professional no matter how casual the environment may seem.

### IT STARTS BEFORE YOU EVEN SAY HELLO

Make sure to arrive about 10-15 minutes early. And be nice to everyone, including the janitor and the secretary! You never know who's opinion the boss wants. Give a firm handshake to your interviewer and wait to be asked to be seated.

### SMALL TALK IS TO BE EXPECTED

Many recruiters will begin the interview with some small talk. Topics may range from the weather to sports and will rarely focus on anything that brings out your skills. First impressions often are the most important so this phase of the interview can be very critical. Even though the small talk seems informal and relaxed, it has a definite purpose. Recruiters are trained to evaluate candidates on many different points. Stay away from controversial topics, such as politics and religion.

### THE RECRUITER HAS THE FLOOR

When the recruiter begins talking about your resume or asking for clarification, it is time to emphasize your positive traits. See the front of this guide for specific tips on answering interview questions.

### IT IS YOUR TURN TO ASK QUESTIONS

By asking intelligent, well-thought-out questions you show the employer you are serious about the organization and need more information. It also indicates that you have done your homework. Focus on questions regarding company culture and vision. Interviewers love being asked about their experience too.

### THE CLOSING COUNTS

It is important to remain enthusiastic and courteous. Reiterate your interest in the position and ask what the next steps in the hiring process are. Then shake the recruiter's hand and thank him or her for considering you. Follow up with a thank you note within 48 hours (see the Thank You Notes guide for more information)

### IN SUMMARY

In evaluating candidates, interviewers are mostly concerned with:

- Are you capable of doing the job well?
- Are you passionate about the line of work?
- And most importantly, are you a good fit for the organization?

## Dress For Success

Make the right first impression. When in doubt, go with formal rather than informal attire. Your appearance should communicate that you are ready for a professional position.

### DO WEAR

Conservative suit: dark or neutral colors  
Polished/clean shoes  
Clean and neat hairstyle  
Appropriate accessories

### DON'T WEAR

Dangling or excessive jewelry  
Perfume, cologne, or strong scents  
Excessive or flamboyant make-up or nail polish  
Loud ties