

INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

in-ter-view *noun,*

A formal consultation usually to evaluate qualifications

Getting Started...

DO:

- Shower, shave and wear deodorant
- Turn OFF your cell phone
- Be on time! Arrive 10 minutes early
- BE NICE! Greet the secretary/front desk staff- their opinion counts!
- Dress appropriately
- Have a firm handshake
- Maintain eye-contact
- Be honest and assertive
- Research the company and ask questions
- Relate your skills to the job
- Bring your reference sheet, extra copies of your resume and your portfolio
- At the end of the interview, ask what the next step is and when they plan to have a hiring decision made

DON'T:

- Be late- you have one chance to make a great impression
- Smoke or wear strong perfume/cologne
- Wear tight/revealing clothing, or anything that looks like lingerie
- Chew gum
- Bring anyone with you
- Ask about salary, vacation or benefits
- Bring up politics or religion
- Bash your former boss
- Slouch - Body language is up to 55% of communication
- Bring a backpack or large purse
- Answer with "yes" or "no" - be sure to elaborate

"Knowledge without experience is just information"

- Mark Twain

Experience matters!

Answer questions by using examples from internships, previous jobs, student

INTERVIEW TYPES AND TIPS: You never get a second chance to make a great first impression

Screening Interview

- May be conducted over the phone or in person to help employers determine if you meet the minimum job qualifications, or to narrow down the qualified pool of applicants
 - Emphasize you have the skills and desire to do the job
 - For phone interviews, keep your resume, note pad and several pens close for easy access and reference

One On One Interview

- This is the most common format, usually conducted on site by the hiring manager
- Each applicant is usually asked the same questions based on skills, knowledge and abilities as they relate to the job
 - Sell your key strengths, be personable and professional
 - When all things are equal professionalism is often the deciding factor

Panel Interview

- A group interview conducted by 3 or more people representing the company who may come from different departments
- Questions may come from each interviewer's area of interest or expertise
 - Direct your answer at the person who asked the question while maintaining eye contact with the other members of the panel
 - Send each participant a thank-you note following the interview

Peer Group Interview

- This interview will introduce you to your potential co-workers, who generally do not have the final say in who to hire but are looking for a "fit"
 - Focus on being agreeable rather than someone who has all the answers

Luncheon Interview

- The purpose of this interview is to assess how you handle yourself in a social setting
- Attendees usually include your potential boss, co-workers and HR officials
 - Order something healthy and easy to eat - Do NOT order alcohol
 - Offer to pay your share or leave the tip

Second Interview

- Second interviews are very similar to the first interview, but longer
- Usually take place at company headquarters and involve more people
- The focus of this interview is to ensure you have the necessary skills and will blend in with the company culture
 - Sell yourself as a well-balanced package
 - Prove you have researched the company and emphasize that you will work as a dedicated member of their organization

Video Interview

- Video/IVN interviewers allow the candidate and recruiter to see and interact with each other without the expense of travel
- These interviews are traditionally set up at a specified location or through a home computer
 - Dress as you would for an in-person interview and be prepared for a slight time delay in receiving sound and images
 - Make sure to hesitate before you speak to ensure the transmission has been fully completed

MAKING CONNECTIONS: Identify your interviewers

Although it is not realistic to “pin point” the personality of the interviewer, it is important to be aware of the different types of people who may interview you. Based on that awareness, you may answer questions differently.

INTERVIEWER TYPES AND TIPS

Technical Interviewer

- Focus is on your technical skills or previous experience to do the job
 - Deliver factual, reality based responses in a logical, detailed fashion
 - Value stability - rules, regulations and conformity

Performance-based Interviewer

- Focus is on competencies
 - Develop several stories that demonstrate your ability to perform (follow STAR Response Technique, see next page)
 - Solutions should be practical, effective and innovative

Emotional Interviewer

- These interviewers are sometimes snowed by first impressions based on if they “click” with applicant
 - Acknowledge importance of harmony in work relationships and an ideal work environment
 - Compliment them on the meaningful work they do in the organization

Intuitive Interviewer

- Often influenced by impressive attributes of a candidate or family name, and often hire in their own image
 - Stress visioning, logic, innovation, mastery, progress and excellence

Source: Career Coach Academy

SUCCESSFUL PHONE INTERVIEWING

- Treat the phone interview with as much preparation as you would an on-site interview
- Stand and look into a mirror when answering their questions - this will remind you to smile
- If you have call-waiting, disable it prior to the interview
- Ensure that you are in a private location and will not be interrupted or disturbed
- Have important documents (resume, portfolio), a note pad and several pens/pencils nearby
- Dress up - it may be easier for you to think and sound more professional if you are dressed professionally
- Keep the pace of your speech slow as rapid speech is magnified over the phone
- Be sure to enunciate your words very carefully
- Do not use a cell phone unless necessary
- Record the names of each interviewer for a thank you letter

DRESSING FOR INTERVIEW SUCCESS: College clothes don't make the cut

Men and Women

- Conservative two-piece business suit (solid dark blue or grey is best)
- Conservative long-sleeved shirt/blouse (white is best, pastel is next best)
- Clean, polished conservative shoes
- Well-groomed hairstyle
- Clean, trimmed fingernails
- Minimal cologne or perfume
- Empty pockets—no bulges or tinkling coins
- No gum, candy, or cigarettes
- Light briefcase or portfolio case
- No visible body piercing (nose rings, eyebrow rings, etc.) or body art

Men

- Necktie should be silk with a conservative pattern
- Dark shoes (black lace-ups are best)
- Dark socks (black is best)
- Get a haircut; short hair always fares best in interviews
- Fresh shave; mustaches are a possible negative, but if you must, make sure it is neat and trimmed
- No beards (unless you are interviewing for a job as a lumberjack!)
- No rings other than wedding ring or college ring
- No earrings (if you normally wear one, take it out)

Women

- Wear a suit with a jacket and skirt or slacks; no dresses
- Shoes with conservative heels
- Conservative hosiery at or near skin color (and no runs!)
- No purses, small or large; carry a briefcase instead
- If you wear nail polish, use clear or a conservative color
- Keep your makeup simple and natural (it should not be too noticeable)
- No more than one ring on each hand
- One set of earrings only

Source: Collegegrad.com

BEHAVIOR-BASED INTERVIEW

Behavior-based interviewing is the most popular format among HR professionals. This style of interview focuses on past behavior to determine how an applicant will respond to similar situations in the future. Most questions are designed to elicit specific responses and detailed descriptions. Behavior-based interview questions will challenge the applicant to recall in detail what they did and how they felt. By doing this, the interviewer is able to see the big picture- the applicant's thought process, decision making, communication skills and results.

Answer behavior-based interview questions in the following format: Situation/Task; Action; Result (STAR)

Situation/Task

- Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish
- You must describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past
- Be sure to give enough detail for the interviewer to fully understand what the situation/task was

Action

- Keep focus on you even if you are discussing a group project or effort
- Describe what your role was - not the efforts of the team
- Don't tell what you might do, tell what you did

Result

- Finish answer by telling the interviewer what happened, how the event ended and what you accomplished

COMMON INTERVIEW Q & A: Always finish answer with the result/outcome

Tell me about yourself.

- Almost always the first question an interviewer will ask
- Companies are not looking for family history, hometown or hobbies
- Keep your response related to the job you are applying for
- Discuss education, work experience, and skills but do not ramble

Tell me about a difficult decision you have made.

- Employers are looking for the process you use to make a decision

Tell me about your best/worst boss.

- When given the choice, focus on the positive - no one wants to bring on a whiner
- If pressed about your "worst" boss, put a positive spin on it and focus on the learning involved
 - Ex: My boss was very vague, and as a result I learned the importance of good communication

Describe a time when you worked as part of a team.

- Draw on examples from past work experiences, class projects or athletics
- Emphasize what your role was and how you contributed to the team

Do you have any questions for me?

- Always have 5 questions prepared, ask 3
- Ensure they are not questions you can find the answers to on your own
- You may have them prepared on the notebook in your leather portfolio
- Never ask about salary, vacation, break time or benefits

Questions you can ask:

- What are you looking for in an ideal candidate?
- Would you describe a typical day on the job?
- How will this position be evaluated?
- Please describe your company culture.
- When will you make your decision? (Always ask!)

Additional common interview questions:

- Why do you want to work here?
- If you could be the company president/CEO for one day, what changes would you make and why?
- Tell me about a conflict you had with a co-worker.
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

ILLEGAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Laws regulate the kinds of questions interviewers cannot ask during the interview. Employer's questions must be related to the job in which you are applying. If asked an illegal question you have 3 options:

1. Answer the question - You are free to do so if you wish. If you do answer the question keep in mind you are giving info that is not related to the job and may put yourself at risk of giving the "wrong" answer.
2. Refuse to answer the question - It is your right. Be careful in your refusal as you don't want to appear confrontational or uncooperative.
3. Examine the question for its intent and respond with an answer that will apply to the job.

Examples of illegal interview questions:

- How old are you?
- Are you a US Citizen?
- What religion are you?
- Are you planning a family?
- Are you disabled?
- What is your marital status?
- Have you ever been arrested?
- How is your family's health?
- What is your sexual orientation?

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Informational Interviews are different than an interview for employment. This is an interview initiated by the student, for the purpose of gathering information about a particular industry (DO NOT ASK FOR A JOB!) You should treat this interview the same as an employment interview as far as dress and professionalism.

Questions you may ask at an informational interview:

- On a typical day in this position, what do you do?
- What training or education is required for this type of work?
- What qualities or abilities are important to being successful in this job?
- What part of this job do you find most satisfying? Most challenging?
- How did you get your job?
- What do you think of the experience I've had in terms of entering this field?
- If you could do things all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself? Why? What would you change?
- With the information you have about my education, skills, and experience, what other fields or jobs would you suggest I research further?
- What do you think of my resume? Do you see any problem areas? How would you suggest I change it?
- Who do you know that I should talk to next? When I call him/her, may I use your name?

NEGOTIATING JOB OFFERS

"Who is wise? He that learns from everyone. Who is powerful? He that governs his passions. Who is rich? He that is content. Who is that? Nobody."

- Benjamin Franklin

Once you ace your interview and receive a job offer, keep a few things in mind:

- If you plan to negotiate, have a solid ground to negotiate. Just because you want more money does not mean you are deserving of it. Factor in experience, skills and qualifications.
- When you have multiple job offers be honest with all employers. Let them know the other company(s) that have made offers, but also stress your interest with their company. Ask them to consider meeting or exceeding the competition.
- Consider things other than salary – health and dental insurance, cost sharing, 401K

Helpful Website Resources:

- Job Bank USA: http://www.jobbankusa.com/interview_questions_answers/
 - Breaks down questions/answer guide by category (ex. Leadership, customer service, etc...)
- Monster.com: <http://resources.monster.com/tools/default.asp>
 - Select type of virtual interview
 - Multiple choice questions - Monster.com gives advice after you answer questions
- College Grad.com: <http://www.collegegrad.com/intv/>
 - Articles and advice on preparation, interviews, job search and salary negotiation