

## Interview Preparation

### General Interview Guidelines

- Research the company, their mission, product/services, culture, etc. Look at the company website, LinkedIn, glassdoor, and recent news articles. Speak to someone who currently or previously worked for the company, if possible.
- Appearance is key! Dress professional, conservative, and CONFIDENT! Slacks/skirt/dress with a blazer, and dress shoes that are comfortable. Keep colors, patterns, and accessories to a minimum, nothing distracting. Style hair appropriately. Perfume/cologne and makeup should be used sparingly.
- Plan to arrive 10-15 minutes early. Make sure you know exactly where you are going. Plan for traffic/public transport delays.
- Practice, practice, practice. Schedule a mock interview with the Career Success Coordinator. Ask a friend to practice also.
- Come prepared with extra resumes, a reference page, blank paper, pen, a list of questions for the interviewer, and your portfolio (if applicable) in a professional folder and/or bag/briefcase.
- The interview process is to see if this will be a good fit, for them, AND for you! You are interviewing them also!
- Keep responses to 1-2 minutes only. Get to the point. Share as many examples as possible. Highlight the positive!
- It is ok to pause and take a moment to think about your responses. Ask for clarification if needed.
- Introduce yourself with a firm handshake. Maintain eye contact. Keep good posture. Limit hand gestures.
- Remain engaged, enthusiastic, and responsive!
- Refrain from speaking negatively about a current or previously employer or co-worker.

### Types of Interviews

Screening/1st Interview	Often over the phone with the human resources department. Questions are basic to eliminate unqualified candidates. Plan for approximately 30 minutes.
Interview with Hiring Authority	Usually in person. Sometimes the second interview, especially in medium to large organizations. In-depth questions about experience, skills, and technical knowledge. Plan for approximately 1 hour.
Panel/Committee Interview	Two or more interviewers, usually members of the team or department you will work closely with. Take note of each person's name, title, how you will work together if hired. Make eye contact with each interviewer. Plan for 1-2 hours.
Group Interview	Two or more candidates being interviewed simultaneously. Sometimes multiple interviewers also. Often includes a task or presentation to be observed. Pay attention to the other candidates' responses and the interviewer(s) reactions to the other's responses. Do not repeat other candidates' responses. You may express a similar response with your own twist. Plan for 1 1/2 to 2 hours.
Phone Interview	Often a screening interview to determine if it is worth their time and effort for an in-person interview. Prepare for a phone interview the same way you would an in-person interview. Dress and position yourself professionally. Make sure you are separated from possible distractions and in an area with strong reception. Plan for 30 minutes-1 hour.
Video/Skype Interview	Common for positions that are remote or in a different state/country than the candidate's current location. Prepare the same way you would for an in-person interview. Dress and position yourself professionally. Make sure your technology is set-up and working properly, and free from distractions. Plan for approximately 1 hour.

### Top Interview Turn-offs

Tardiness  
Cell Phones  
Questions about salary/benefits  
Being rude to the staff  
Lack of career direction

Over-confidence/bragging  
Negativity about past jobs  
Rambling  
Dishonesty  
Poor communication

Interrupting  
Lack of questions  
Sharing about other offers  
Lack of interest  
Lack of company knowledge

## Common Interview Questions

General	Behavioral	From the candidate
Tell me a little bit about yourself.	Respond in the <b>STAR</b> format: Describe the <b>Situation</b> you were in, the specific <b>Tasks</b> you needed to perform, the <b>Action</b> you took, and the <b>Results</b> of that action.	What goals would you like me to immediately reach in my first 6-12 months here?
Why do you want this position?	Provide an example of when you used good judgement and logic to find a solution.	What made you decide to join this company? Why are you still here?
Why do you want to work for us?	Describe an occasion in which you had to follow a policy you did not agree with.	What excites you most about the future of the company?
What are your strengths?	Tell me about a time you had to make a quick decision without your supervisor.	What do you see as the company's biggest opportunity/area of growth?
What experiences have prepared you for this position?	Describe a situation when you had to quickly adapt to new experiences.	What is a typical day like for this position?
What is your biggest weakness?	Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond to get a job done.	Who was previously in this position and where is that person now?
Why did you leave your previous job?	Describe a time you had to deal with a customer/co-worker that was very unhappy with the situation at hand.	How would you describe the company culture? How is that reflected in everyday activities?
Where do you see yourself in 5 years?	Describe a time you had to present complex information to a customer/peer.	Is this a new position? If so, what additional value do you expect someone in this role to deliver?
Why should we hire you?	Describe a recent situation when you had too much to do and too little time to do it.	What's the most important characteristic required for success in this role?
What is your understanding of responsibilities in this position?	Describe the most significant or creative presentation which you had to complete.	How would you describe the team that I'd be working with?

## After the Interview

- Send the interviewer(s) a thank you note/email within 48 hours.
  - Express your appreciation. Re-emphasize your interest. If you forgot to emphasize important information or want to re-emphasize something, do so. Make it less than a printed page.
- Evaluate your performance. Did you answer their questions concisely and timely? Did you ask appropriate questions? What went well? What could you do to improve for your next interview?
- Evaluate the employer. What did you learn about the company and opportunity? What did you like? What did you not like? What questions do you still have? Do you feel it would be a good fit if they offered you the position?

## Consider the Offer

Salary	Independence	Benefits
Opportunity for Creativity	Location	Advancement
Industry	Amount of Travel	Company Image
Career Path	Learning Potential	Variety of Work
Management Opportunity	Responsibilities	Career Path
Job Status	Quality of Management	Skill Transferability

## Negotiating Salary & Benefits

1. Establish your range: highest, mid and lowest
  - Research industry norms for your level and education
  - Assess your lifestyle and needs
2. Initiate only after an official offer has been made
3. Avoid undercutting
  - Make them begin. If they ask you, turn it back to them, "This position will put my abilities to good use. What is the salary range?"
4. ALWAYS negotiate higher
  - Focus on your qualifications, not your needs & provide evidence
  - You may go back and forth a few times, so never begin at your lowest
  - If they cannot go up, negotiate a salary review after 6 months
5. Consider the benefits: vacation & sick time, insurance, discounts, etc.