

Interviewing Checklist

Before the Interview...

- ✓ **Research.** Make sure you do a fair amount of research about the position and organization. Review the company's website to learn about their products/services and their mission, values, and "points of pride". If you know any current or former employees, speaking with them would also be a great research opportunity. Doing your research shows you are serious about the job and will allow you to incorporate company information into your responses.
- ✓ **Practice.** Practice answering common interview questions aloud. This allows you to think through answers and gather ideas on how you will respond. Pro tip: schedule a mock interview with the Career Center!
- ✓ **Plan Your Attire.** What "professional attire" means can vary by industry, but a good guideline to follow is to dress one or two steps above what you would typically wear day-to-day on the job. This might mean a nice pair of khakis or dress pants and a polo, dress shirt, blouse, or sweater—or it may mean a suit. Check with the Career Center for tips and for help connecting with community partners who can provide free interview attire.
- ✓ **Prepare a Portfolio.** Bring a professional-looking portfolio or folder and notepad with you to your interview so you have a place to hold copies of your resume, business cards, and notes.
- ✓ **Trial Run.** If you are unsure of where the business is located and it is within a reasonable distance, go on a trial run to the location. Be aware of any construction, traffic, or parking issues.

During the Interview...

- ✓ **Create a Positive First Impression.** Arrive 10-15 minutes early. Greet the receptionist in a friendly, courteous manner. Offer a firm and confident handshake to the interviewer. Greet them by Mr./Ms. and their last name. Sit when offered a chair. Follow the lead of the interviewer.
- ✓ **Be aware of your body language.** Make eye contact with the interviewer. Speak in an even tone at a volume appropriate to the space you are in. Maintain enthusiasm and interest throughout the interview.
- ✓ **Promote yourself and your talents.** This is your time to speak confidently about what you can do and how you can benefit the company. Answer with more than a yes or no response.
- ✓ **Ask questions at the end of the interview.** Have a list of at least five questions prepared in advance.
- ✓ **Conclude with confidence.** When the interview is coming to an end, restate your interest in the position. Ask what the next step is in the hiring process if it has not been previously discussed.
- ✓ **Ask for contact information.** Try to get a business card from as many of the interviewers as possible. This will provide you with correct contact information and spellings for the future.

After the Interview...

- ✓ **Send a thank you.** One of the best ways to stand out is to send a thank you note. Make sure it is sent within 24 hours of the interview. Send one to each individual interviewer if possible. This can be a handwritten note, print letter, or email. Along with sending thanks, it allows for a chance to restate your interest in the job.
- ✓ **Check back in.** You should know what the employer's timeline looks like before leaving the interview; if you have not heard from them within the stated period, call back to check on the progress of the search and your status as a candidate. Restate your interest in the job and inquire about when a final decision is expected.



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Common Interview Questions

Many times the stress of an interview causes you to draw a blank when asked certain questions. Although you have them, those great examples from your past just don't come to mind. Thinking through past experiences and gathering ideas on how to respond is a great way to prepare for those hard-to-answer questions. Keep in mind the idea is not to create a memorized script. Your actual interview response should still be natural and honest. Use the following questions as examples to get you started.

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why are you applying for this position?
- Why do you want to work for this company?
- What do you know about our company?
- What is your greatest strength/weakness? Explain.
- How has your education prepared you for your career?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?
- If I were to ask a faculty member or boss to describe you, what would they say?
- Describe your greatest accomplishment.
- Tell me about a time when you worked with a team. What role did you play in this team?
- Tell me about a time when you took the lead on a project. Were you successful? Why or why not?
- Tell me about a time when you failed. How did you handle the situation? Why do you think you failed?
- Tell me about your experience with customer service.
- Tell me about a time you had a conflict with another person. How did you resolve the conflict?
- How well do you work independently?
- In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
- What question did you think we would ask you today and didn't? Tell us the question and answer it for us?

Questions to Ask an Interviewer

It is important to ask questions at the end of the interview (or at appropriate times throughout). Along with helping determine if a position is right for you, it shows the employer that you are truly interested in the job. It is common to prepare questions ahead of time and bring them along with you. Not only does it help you remember what to ask, but it shows you are organized and did your homework before your interview. The questions below are great generic questions that could be asked in most interviews.

- What qualities does your ideal candidate have?
 - What would make someone really successful in this role?
 - What do you expect of your hire in the first 30, 60 and/or 90 days ?
 - How are your employees evaluated in this position?
 - How often is performance reviewed?
 - What opportunities for advancement are available?
 - Where does this position fit into the organization?
 - Will there be formal training?
 - What problems might I expect to encounter on this job?
 - What do you consider to be the most difficult tasks on this job?
 - Why do you enjoy working here?
 - What is the next step in your decision making process?
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