



Career Services

Interviews

Purpose: Interviews give an employer a chance to evaluate your personality, qualifications, skills, and knowledge related to the job you are applying for.

Interviews also give you the opportunity to determine whether or not you want to work for the organization.

Interview Tips

Before the Interview:

- Know how to discuss your skills, experience, accomplishments, and qualifications.
- Practice answering commonly asked question (see examples on page 2).
- Research the employer by viewing their website, reading brochures and publications.
- Verify logistics including time, location, parking, and name of interviewer.
- Plan to arrive 10 to 15 minutes early the day of the interview.
- Prepare extra copies of your resume and references to take with you.
- Prepare to dress professionally and look your very best.

During the Interview:

- Offer a firm handshake.
- Smile and make eye contact (see Body Language section on page 2).
- Listen to the interviewer.
- Keep your responses to 60 seconds or less.
- Do not accept coffee, soda, food, etc.
- Remember to breathe.
- Get a business card from each person who interviews you.
- Do not ask about salary or benefits.
- Ask for clarification if you do not understand a question.
- Ask questions about the job and organization (see examples on page 2).

After the Interview:

- Send a thank you letter to each person who interviewed you as soon as possible.
- Send any additional information that was requested.
- Make notes of what went well and what did not.
- Contact employer to find out if a decision has been made. Wait at least 5 business days.
- Keep going on interviews!

Questions You May be Asked During an Interview:

Tell me about yourself.
What qualifications do you have related to this job?
What are some of your most significant accomplishments?
What job-related skills do you have?
What can you offer us?
Why should we hire you?
What are your strengths and weaknesses?
Why are you interested in this position?
Why are you leaving your current position?
Where do you see yourself in 5 to 10 years?
What can you tell me about our company?
What attracts you to our organization?
Do you prefer to work under supervision or on your own?
How would a recent supervisor describe you and your work?
What extra curricular activities have you been involved in?
Why did you choose your major?
Do your grades accurately reflect your ability? Why or why not?
Describe your ideal job.

Questions You Can Ask:

Who is the direct supervisor for this position?
How often are performance reviews given?
Has there been a lot of turnover in this position?
Do you have plans for expansion?
What skills are especially important for this position?
What personal qualities are you looking for?
Is there a lot of teamwork or project work required?
Do you promote from within the organization?
When will you be making a decision?
What's the next course of action?
Note: Based on your research before the interview, ask about the company's products and services. Bring a list of these questions with you.

Body Language:

Since first impressions are sometimes made before job seekers even open their mouths, nonverbal communication – or body language – is an essential part of any interview.

Seeing Eye-to-Eye

Some people make too little eye contact. Others make too much. The right amount, according to experts, lies somewhere in between. "Make eye contact and periodically break away," says David Givens, Director of the Center for Nonverbal Studies in Spokane, Washington. "The one caution I would give," he adds, "is that when you break away, do not look down. It gives connotations of submissiveness."

Be Forward Thinking

The interviewer offers you a chair. You sit down and lean back. You've already made your first mistake. Always lean forward during a job interview. "Leaning back shows an attitude of being too relaxed," says Givens. "Leaning to the side can connote that you don't like the interviewer." Givens suggests leaning about 10 degrees forward.

Dressing for an Interview:

Dress in a manner that is appropriate for the position for which you are applying, but always in a professional, conservative, and "put together" way. Make sure you are well-groomed, for example clean finger nails, neat hair, and polished shoes.

Common Reasons Applicants are not Hired:

- Lack of preparation for the interview
- Volunteering too much information
- Exaggerating the truth or lying
- Little or no social poise
- Not responding to questions being asked
- Poor personal appearance
- Having a negative attitude
- Being late for no plausible reason
- Not a good fit with organizational culture
- Not enough relevant experience
- Not a good fit with job responsibilities and qualifications