

Interviewing

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Screening Interview

A short interview, designed to eliminate candidates by asking basic qualifiers. Ex. Do you have 2 years of experience? Be deliberate about addressing the main skills needed for job completion.

Phone Interview

Many screening interviews and long-distance interviews are conducted via phone. Employers are looking to hear key buzz words related to the job. Prepare to show your personality through carefully selected descriptive words, examples and stories showcasing your characteristics.

Second or Selection Interview

Typically one hour to an entire day in duration. The employer and candidate engage in a more in-depth discussion of qualifications, responsibilities and other aspects of the position and the company. At this point, the candidate has become a finalist and must provide thorough information and examples as to why he/she is the best fit. These interviews often include a tour of the facility and introductions to other staff members.

Web Interviews

These are becoming more common for their convenience to candidates and interviewers in scattered locations. Choose a setting with a professional backdrop, ie. a wall with artwork. Avoid having beds, kitchens and couches in the background. Light should be directed toward your face, not coming from behind you which will leave you in a shadow. Adjust these factors before the interview day.

Maintain eye contact with the camera instead of the screen. Facial expressions and tone of voice will need to be more pronounced, as technology delays and internet strengths may vary.

Panel Interview

A panel interview consists of a group of interviewers. A committee will often meet and agree upon the questions to be asked. Each member may ask questions representing the entire group or their specific department. Be mindful of each person's title and area of specialty. Maintain eye contact with each member and address their individual concerns in your response. Bring enough copies of your cover letter and resume for each member.

Group Interview

Companies occasionally prefer to interview more than one candidate at the same time. Maintain a friendly appearance, eye contact and smiles throughout the interview. Avoid playing off another person's response, as it gives them credit for the answer and shifts the focus off you. (ex. "Like Sarah said, I also...") Strive to provide a unique answer with concrete examples.

Dining Interviews

Dining settings are oftentimes used to see how you balance professionalism in a relaxed environment. Avoid topics that disclose personal information. See the Dining Etiquette Guide for more information.

Arrival

Awareness of Location

Do a test run to the facility prior to the interview day. Know how long the commute takes at that time of the day, where to park, and the interview location within the building, if possible.

Punctuality

Plan to arrive on the property 20-30 minutes early. Check-in with the secretary 10 minutes early.

Introductions

- Be aware of the names and titles of each interviewer.
- Greet them with a firm handshake and smile.
- The interview may begin with non-business related conversation, or *small talk*. This is essential to building rapport with the interviewers.
 - *Safe:* Weather, local or national events (non-political or religious), hobbies, travel, sports, etc.

“The weather is been great lately, I’ve been able to go running every morning this week.”
 - *Avoid:* Personal life or problems, negativity, complaining in general

“Parking was really difficult here.”

Non-Verbal Behavior

Eye Contact

Maintaining eye contact is critical to being viewed as a candidate who is self-confident and interested in the position. It is fine to momentarily shift your gaze elsewhere if you are pausing to look for the right words. On the other hand, staring intently at the interviewer for too long can make the person feel uncomfortable.

Hand Movements

It is acceptable to use your hands to emphasize points as you speak. The goal is to appear as natural as possible, not stiff or too serious. Avoid excessive movements which will distract the interviewer. If your hands tend to fidget, keep them apart by placing one hand on each arm rest or on opposite sides of a professional binder.

Facial Expressions

Your face should match the content of your conversation. If you frown as you say “I’m passionate about helping people”, you are not believable. Use your face and tone of voice to emphasize your strongest points.

Traditional Categories of Questions (see Sample Questions guide for examples)

Educational/Career Decisions

- Your academic background
- Career path or decisions – emphasis how you made informed choices, your progression between jobs
- Goals – short-term for this position, 10+ years, how this position fits within your overall career plan
 - Acceptable answers for long-term goals include: gaining new skills (be specific) offered through company, developing professionally with larger projects, advancing positions within company.

Company Information

- Awareness of company history, department to which you are applying, programs and resources used
- Key words, mottos and emphasis of the position and department
- Comparison with other similar companies and departments

Experience/Competence in the Field

- Task-oriented questions that test your knowledge of the job content
- Related policies, laws, definitions for your field
- New developments in this specific field or overall industry

Personality – Focused

- Self-awareness
 - Strengths: Provide your most valuable personality traits related to the job tasks, environment, or population being served.
 - ▣ Good examples: analytical, approachable, thorough, solution-focused, open-minded
 - ▣ AVOID work ethic traits, as they do not relate to your uniqueness as an individual
Examples: Hard-working, reliable, dedicated, punctual
 - Weakness: Response needs to be sincere, not a ‘masked’ strength like perfectionism. Good examples:
 - ▣ Human nature weaknesses – think faster than I speak, non-confrontational nature causes me to not set boundaries that protect myself, self-critical
 - ▣ Learning curve (if it is not a key function of the job) – presentation anxiety, aspects of technology, limited knowledge of company-specific procedures

○ Behavioral/Situational Questions

“Tell me about a time when ____?” These questions can involve the following:

- People: Positive and negative situations with customers, co-workers and supervisors
- Skill-based: Times you have shown leadership, initiative, problem-solving, team work
- Learning Outcomes: Being criticized, making a mistake, gaining a valuable skill

Use the *STARS Formula* to provide a thorough answer.

- ▣ Situation - Where were you, what was the problem or task
- ▣ Thought – How did you process the situation, what values did you consider before acting
- ▣ Action – What steps did you take to resolve the situation
- ▣ Result – Discuss the outcome
- ▣ Summarize - Relate your traits or values displayed in this situation to the current job
- AVOID (unless it is requested): situations that were not resolved, Actions that include getting into a verbal argument, quitting a job, or a lack of work ethic, Actions that were a team effort instead of solely yours

○ “Tell me about yourself?” This is traditionally the opening question.

- Provide a brief overview of your journey. Response can include any of the following:
 - ▣ Past – where you grew up, how you became interested in this field, cultural or military background
 - ▣ Present – your major, jobs, community service, clubs (not clubbing), hobbies
 - ▣ Future – interest in the present job position, career goal after internship

○ “Why are you the best fit candidate/Why should we choose you?” Many times this is the last question.

- Avoid comparing yourself to other candidates, as you do not know their qualifications.
 - ▣ Your interest in the position/company
 - ▣ Related experiences, skills and personal qualities
 - ▣ How the above will allow you to contribute as a team member

Illegal Questions

Interviewers are prohibited from discriminating against applicants based on social, cultural or physical factors. Questions pertaining to the following areas are illegal:

Race	Gender
Religion	Marital Status
Age	Family Dynamics
National Origin	Disability

Candidates are not prohibited from answering but may also choose to redirect the conversation. Optional approaches:

- Answer truthfully, if desired, but keep your answer concise.
- Refer to the illegality of a question and say that you'd rather not answer.
- Address the issue rather than the facts:

“I’m not sure about my future plans. I believe I will be successful in this job with or without a family.”

“Any disability I may possess would not interfere with my ability to perform all aspects of this position.”

- Ignore the question and ask your own in return: “Are you concerned about staff turnover?”

Your Questions

At the end of the interview you will be asked if you have any questions. It is desirable that you show inquisitiveness and eagerness to know more about the job/company. Come prepared to ask 3-4 questions. Appropriate topics include:

- Company or job position information that is not covered on their website or during the interview
(tasks, projects, procedures, organization structure)
- Current or previous employees in this role (what do they enjoy, challenges)
- The overall industry, new developments, emerging technology
- Their expectations for this role
- The evaluation process, receiving performance feedback
- Next steps in the selection process
- AVOID: Discussions about salary or vacation time

Post-Interview

Send a thank you letter within 24 hours, preferably to each interviewer (see *Professional Documents: Thank You Letters*)

Evaluate new information about the position/company received during the interview.

Discussing a Job Offer

If a job offer is given to you, thank them for offering the position.

Discuss any new questions or concerns regarding the position or company.

Negotiating Salary:

- Prior to this stage, research the job market and learn about salary ranges for this position.
 - Sites include: www.onetonline.org www.salary.com www.glassdoor.com
[Http://www.jobsearchintelligence.com/NACE/salary-calculator-intro/](http://www.jobsearchintelligence.com/NACE/salary-calculator-intro/)
- Salary should not be discussed prior to a job offer. If an interviewer asks during the interview process, you can say, “I’m open to negotiating salary when the job offer is being discussed” or “Based on the fact that I exceed the qualifications requested, I would negotiate a slightly higher salary than what is being offered”.
Avoid giving a figure, if possible.
- Be aware of how you measure up to the job qualifications.
 - If you fall short of the minimum requirements, you do not have ‘proof’ to negotiate a higher salary.
 - If you meet or slightly exceed the qualifications you may be able to negotiate \$1,000 – \$3,000 more.
 - If you clearly exceed, you can attempt to negotiate \$5,000 +.
 - Some companies have a fixed budget and little power to negotiate. If they stand firm on their number, you can request time to consider the position. If they still do not change their stance after a period of waiting, chances are they are truly not able to change the salary.
- It is acceptable and even preferable, to ask for a few days to consider an offer (3 days maximum).

