
Interviewing Tips

Purpose of Interview

- To sell yourself to the employer.
- To obtain more information about the job you are applying for and the company you are interviewing with.
- To determine if you are a good fit (with the team, the culture, the position, etc.).
- To land the job!!

Preparing for the Interview

- Know yourself: skills, interests, abilities, values, strengths, weaknesses, accomplishments, short- and long-term goals, etc.
- Think about qualities employers are looking for, such as leadership skills, intellectual competence, flexibility, motivation, communication skills, customer service skills, technical skills, decision-making skills, and the ability to influence. How have you demonstrated these skills/abilities? Be able to provide evidence (specific examples) of your skills.
- Prepare your materials (resume, reference list, portfolio, etc.).
- Prepare questions for the interviewer based on your research, what you want to learn about the company and the job, etc. Don't ask questions you should already know the answer to, or questions about salary, vacation time, or benefits.
- Get directions – know how to get there & know where to park! Do a test drive to the location, if necessary.
- Research, Research, Research!! Know the organization and why you want to work for them.
- Practice answering common interview questions – behavioral and traditional questions (possibly case questions depending on the industry and the job you're interviewing for). For tips on case questions, visit www.casequestions.com. Additional information about case questions is available on Vault's Career Insider.
- Do a few mock interviews to practice your interviewing skills and get feedback on your interview performance. Participating in more than one mock interview helps you learn how different people interview. You get more comfortable with different styles of interviewing.
- Prepare your interview attire. Try it on a week or so in advance, and make sure it fits properly and looks professional. In most cases, both men and women should wear a business suit to the interview.

Dress for Success

These are guidelines for how to dress for an interview. However, what's appropriate dress for an interview may depend on the industry and/or the job. But when in doubt, dress conservatively. For tips on professional dress, visit www.symsdress.com.

Women

- Dress professionally, conservatively, and comfortably.
- Invest in a good quality pant suit and/or skirt suit in a conservative color (black, navy, gray, tan, or brown). Keep in mind that skirts still may be expected in some industries.
- Avoid wearing something too trendy or too "loud".
- No short skirts!
- No low cut or see through blouses! Don't show too much cleavage.
- Wear subtle makeup.
- Make sure fingernails are well groomed, and if wearing nail polish, make sure it is light or clear.
- Wear simple jewelry, and only one earring per ear and one ring per hand.
- Hair can be worn down or up, as long as it looks neat.
- Wear polished heels, no higher than 2 inches. Do not wear open toed shoes.

Men

- Invest in a good quality, conservative, professional two-piece business suit.
- Good colors: dark blue or gray. Avoid black, if possible.
- Wear a long sleeve shirt, in a light color. White is usually the best bet.
- Have the shirt dry cleaned or pressed OR do a great job ironing.
- Wear a conservative tie. Nothing too flashy!
- Wear polished shoes that are in good condition.
- Wear dark socks that go over the calf and that will not slide down.
- Wear a leather belt.
- Make sure fingernails are well groomed.
- Minimal jewelry.
- Shave and cut long hair.

During the Interview

- Arrive early!! It's usually best to arrive at least 15 minutes early. If you arrive very early, you can always kill some time by continuing to prepare for the interview in your car.
- The interview starts as soon as you get there. Be mindful of what you say and of how you treat people from the moment you arrive. Always be courteous and professional.
- Know the name of the person who is interviewing you, and address them by "Mr.," "Ms.," etc., unless you are told otherwise.
- Offer a solid handshake at the initial greeting.
- Look like you're happy to be there. Smile!
- Be positive and confident during the initial greeting and during the interview.
- Anything on your resume is fair game!! Be able to elaborate on anything listed on your resume.
- Be able to talk about what skills, abilities, etc. you will be able to bring to this position and this company.
- Listen and respond appropriately and concisely to the question being asked.
- Do not sound too rehearsed!
- Do not ramble.
- Do not give just one word or one-sentence answers.
- Maintain good eye contact.
- Pause before answering a question, if necessary.
- When it is your turn, ask the questions that you prepared in advance.
- Do not ask questions about benefits, salary, or vacation time during the first interview.
- Be aware of your body language. Avoid negative body language!
 - Touching your face, gnawing on your lip, swinging your foot or leg, tapping your foot, folding or crossing your arms, slouching, avoiding eye contact, cracking your knuckles, playing with your hair, moving around in your chair, playing with jewelry, etc.
- The interview should be conversational – you want to get to know them and they want to get to know you. It's important to be yourself, but remember that it's still an interview, so don't be too personal or too casual.
- Focus on the positive, not the negative. And be able to find the positive in negative situations.
- Use proper grammar!
- Emphasize leadership roles and decision-making skills.
- Use specific examples to show evidence of your skills and abilities. When preparing for interviews, use the STAR and/or PAR approach to think of examples:

Situation – What was the situation you were dealing with?	Problem – What was the problem you had to address/solve?
Task – What was the task you had to perform to address the situation?	Action – What was the action you took?
Action – What was the action you took?	Result – What were the outcomes/results?
Result – What were the outcomes/results?	

- At the end of the interview:
 - Reiterate your interest in the job and why you are the person for the job.
 - Ask what the process is from here or what the next step is. Try to find out when they hope to make a decision or when you will be hearing from them.
 - Get a business card from those individuals who interviewed you.
 - Thank the interviewer for their time, and end with a handshake.

After the Interview

- After leaving the interview, take notes on what was discussed during the interview, and assess your interview performance. Where did you excel? What could you improve upon? Any questions that stumped you?
- ALWAYS send a thank you note within 24-48 hours – the sooner, the better! E-mail, handwritten, or typed is appropriate. Sometimes a hand written note is a nice, more personal approach to take. If there is something important that you forgot to mention in the interview that would help sell you for the position, the thank you note is a good time to mention it.
- Follow-up about the position, especially if you're really interested. Don't follow up too early, though. Follow up based on when you should have heard back from them. Don't harass the employer!
- Even if you don't get the job, send a thank you note saying that you appreciate them considering you for the position, and if you're still interested in working with the company in the future, let them know that.

Helpful Hints for a Successful Interview

- Be Yourself! They want to get to know the real you because that's the person they'll be hiring.
- You only have one chance to make a good first impression, so make it a good one!
- Have a good attitude, be enthusiastic, and be confident, but don't be cocky!!
- Be able to convince employers to hire you – know about the company and the position, and know what your skills are and how they apply to the position.
- Interact in a professional manner.
- Determine if you are a good fit with the company, not just the position, by asking good questions and observing the environment.
- Don't apply and interview for a job just because! Know why you are interested in working for this specific company.
- Don't do anything or wear anything that will distract you or the interviewer.
- Keep a log of the employers you're interviewing with, including date of interview, company name and contact information, name of interviewer, and other relevant information.
- Make sure your interview attire matches.
- Do not chew gum during the interview.
- Do not smoke before or during the interview. Smoke tends to linger and your interviewer might be allergic to it.
- Keep perfume/cologne to a minimum, or avoid it altogether. Your interviewer may be allergic to the scent.
- Practice good hygiene: shower, wear deodorant, brush teeth.
- Try on your interview outfit days before your interview.
- Make sure clothing is clean and neatly pressed.
- If wearing a watch, make sure it will not beep during the interview.
- **Women:** Have an extra pair of pantyhose available.
- **Men:** Do not remove your coat or tie during the interview.
- Remove keys, loose change, etc. from pockets – anything that will make noise or bulge from your pocket.
- Keep your right hand free so you're able to shake hands
- Bring a cell phone, if you have one, but do not bring it into the interview with you, or be sure to turn it off during the interview. Nothing worse than a cell phone going off during an interview! However, if it does go off, immediately turn it off (do not answer it), and apologize for it going off.
- Do not text, talk on the phone, etc. while waiting for your interview to begin. Stay focused on the interview, and don't get distracted by outside things.

- Bring a brief case or portfolio to the interview, along with a pen and notepad. **Women:** Avoid carrying a purse if possible.
- Bring breath freshener (mints, breath strips, gum, etc.) for before, not during, the interview.
- Bring extra copies of your resume based on the number of people you'll be interviewing with (if known) and copies of your reference list – laser printed on resume quality paper.
- Bring money for parking just in case you need it. Try to find out in advance if you'll need money for parking meters or a parking garage.
- Bring contact information for the person you're interviewing with (name, address, phone number).
- If applicable, bring your portfolio which displays some of your best work. (Portfolios are not just for people in creative fields.)

Helpful Sites with Additional Interviewing Tips

- Vault's Career Insider: www.uncg.edu/bae/gcs (see the link on our office home page)
 - Search the various career topics guides, interview & resume guides, etc. There are a few guides related to case Interviews and finance Interviews, plus a number of other industry and career guides.
- CareerBeam: www.uncg.edu/bae/gcs (see the link on our office home page)
- UNCG Career Services Center: www.uncg.edu/csc
- Quintessential Careers: www.quintcareers.com
- Resumagic: http://resumagic.com/job_interviews.html
- Best-Job-Interview.com: <http://www.best-job-interview.com>
- WetFeet: www.wetfeet.com
- Job-Interview.net: www.job-interview.net
- Monster: <http://interview.monster.com>
- Career Journal: www.careerjournal.com