



# INTERVIEW GUIDE

Few words create the mixed upwelling of excitement and fear quite like “interview.” Try to minimize the fear by viewing the interview as a chance to demonstrate your skills and qualifications and learn more about the opportunity and if its a good fit for you.

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## Types of Interviews:

- **Screening/Phone Interview** - 15-20 minute interview used to screen out unqualified candidates.
- **Pre-Recorded Interviews** - Such as HireVue or SparkHire. In this type of interview, you aren't meeting live with a person. They will have prerecorded questions for you and then you will record yourself answering the question.
- **1 on 1 Interview** - Typically last thirty minutes to an hour. The employer and candidate have a conversation involving questions about a candidate’s interests, experience, and qualifications.
- **Panel Interview** - In this type of interview there will be multiple people from the organization in your interview and they each take turns asking you questions. It will be important to make eye contact with everyone there.
- **Group Interview** - Multiple applicants are interviewed at the same time in the same room. This interview is structured more as a group conversation and you need to find a way to stand out!
- **Working Interview** - In this interview, you are assigned a task or project to complete so the employer can see how well you could do the work.
- **Selection Interview** - An hour to an entire day in duration. The employer and the candidate engage in a deeper discussion of qualifications, responsibilities, and other aspects of the position and of the organization.

*NOTE: You might experience multiple interviews during the whole job interview process. For example, you first do a screening interview then are invited to a 1:1 interview.*

**Tip: Some industries may conduct specific interviews, for example case interviewing, for Consulting. Check in with the Career Center to learn more about industry specific interviews.**

# PREPARING FOR YOUR INTERVIEW

**What you should know about yourself - before your interview, you should be able to answer the following questions:**

- What attracts you to this job and the organization?
- How do your education and experience prepare you for this position?
- How do your interests, values, personality, and goals align with the position?
- What are your previous skills and accomplishments? (education & experience related)
- What are your personal strengths and weaknesses?
- What are your short and long-term goals?

**What you should know about the company:**

## *Non-Profit Organization*

- Objectives of the agency
- Some of the programs they offer
- Plans for the future
- Where they receive their funding

## *For-Profit Organization*

- Services or products offered
- Organizational structure
- How old is the company
- Plans and goals for the future

## *Education*

- Student population size
- What emphasis is placed on teaching, research, and public service
- Private or public institution
- What major programming is offered

**Note: these are some suggestions of what you should know about the company. Going through the website, reviews online, etc. can help you learn more.**

**Tip: Regardless of the industry, you should know the company's mission statement and guiding philosophy!**

# COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## **Self Awareness**

How would you describe yourself?  
What motivates you to work hard?  
How do you evaluate success?  
What led you to this career path?

## **Weaknesses, Challenges**

What major problems have you encountered and how did you deal with them?  
What have you learned from your mistakes?

## **Skills, Abilities, Qualifications**

What qualifications do you have that will make you successful?  
In what ways will you contribute to our organization?  
Why do you feel qualified for this job?  
What are your own special abilities?  
What is your managing style?

## **Goals, Objectives**

What do you see yourself doing in five years?  
What personal goals have you established for yourself for the next 2-5 years?  
How do you plan to achieve your goals?

## **General**

What do you think it takes to be successful in our company?  
What qualities should a successful manager possess?  
What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction?

## **Values**

What are your top two values?  
What kind of work environments are you most comfortable in?  
How are you evaluating the companies you hope to work for?  
Are you willing to travel?  
Do you prefer working with others or by yourself?

## **Experience**

Tell me about your experience.  
What have you learned from some jobs you have held?  
What jobs have you enjoyed most/least? Why?  
What have you done that shows initiative?  
What did you like most/least about your last job?

## **Education**

Describe your most rewarding college experience.  
How has your college experience prepared you for this job?  
What courses did you like best and why?  
What skills have you gained from your liberal arts education?

## **Stress Questions**

How do you handle stress?  
How can you remain calm while on the job?  
How would you handle a difficult client?

**TIP: it's helpful to prepare a few key points you want to emphasize in your answers no matter what as well as a few scenarios that can be adapted for a range of behavioral questions**

# INTERVIEW PREP WORKSHEET

**Tell me about yourself** - They're not trying to find out where you were born or where you went to high school; instead, use this opportunity to outline the experiences and skills that make you a great candidate for their company. *Who am I? Major & College, Interests & Skills, Experiences.*

**Why are you applying for this internship/job/program?** - This is your opportunity to demonstrate that you have done research on the company. You can connect the opportunity to your values and how they align with your short & long term goals. *What attracts you to this position, how does it align with who you are, how is it helping you reach your goals?*

**What are your strengths?** - Your chance to showcase relevant skills you will bring to the position and prove that you have the skills to be successful. *What relevant skills can you bring? Provide 1-2 short examples.*

**What is your greatest weakness?** - You want to be honest here but keep it professional. Your weakness should not be something that would significantly inhibit you from doing the job. Give an example of one weakness and how you are working to overcome/improve it. *What is an area of growth for you and how are you working to improve it?*

**What questions do you have for them?** - Your chance to be thoughtful and intentional. These are questions that you can't answer by reading the job description or website. This is your chance to evaluate the company and see if it's a good fit. *What is important to know in order to help you determine if the organization and position are a good fit for you? Prepare 5-8 questions to ask the employer.*

# BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING

The "tell me about a time...." questions! These can be difficult to answer but utilizing the STARR format can make it easier.

- ★ **Situation** By using the STARR method you can talk about a
- ★ **Task** specific situation, the task that needed to be
- ★ **Action** accomplished, the action you took, the positive result,
- ★ **Result** and then, relate your answers back to the position to
- ★ **Relate** show how this situation has prepared you for the role.

<b>Example</b>	<b>"Tell me about a time when you faced a difficult challenge and how you handled it."</b>
Situation	Advertising revenue was falling off for my college newspaper, and large numbers of long-term advertisers were not renewing contracts.
Task	As head of the advertising team, I was expected to figure out the root of the problem and increase revenue by the end of the semester.
Action	I compared the benefits of the newspaper circulation with other ad media in the area and designed a new promotional packet to go out with the rate sheet in our next mailing. I also set up a special training session for the account executives with Business and Economics professor who discussed competitive selling strategies.
Result	We signed contracts with 15 former advertisers for daily ads and five for special supplements, and we increased our new advertisers by 20% within the first three months.
Relate	With this previous experience I feel confident that I would be able to handle challenges that arise in this position.

**Think of examples from past internships, classes, activities, team involvement, community service and work experience.** You can also give behavioral responses to typical interview questions like, "do you have good organizational skills?" Instead of just saying yes, you can provide an example.

# BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WORKSHEET



**Situation**

**Task**

**Action**

**Result**

**Relate**

By using the STARR method you can talk about a specific situation, the task that needed to be accomplished, the action you took, the positive result, and then, relate your answers back to the position to show how this situation has prepared you for the role.

**Tell me about a time when you faced a challenge and how you handled it.**

**Tell me about a time you had to work closely with someone whose personality was very different from yours.**

**Describe a time when you had to interact with a difficult client or customer. What was the situation and how did you handle it?**

**Give me an example of when you had to think quickly and make a decision.**

**Give me an example of a time you managed numerous responsibilities. How did you handle that?**

**Tell me about a time when you had to rely on written communication to get your ideas across.**

**Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully persuade someone at work to see things your way.**

**Describe a time when you saw a problem and took the initiative to correct it.**

**Give me an example of a time you were able to be creative with your work. What was exciting or difficult about it?**

# PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!

It is important to practice so you feel comfortable going into the interview! There are a few ways that you can practice:

- Schedule a Mock Interview with a Career Consultant
- Practice with a friend or family member
- Record yourself practicing questions by using Big Interview
- Complete the Interview Prep Worksheet and Behavioral Interview Question Worksheet that are in this packet
- Practice with your network - This method should be utilized later in the preparation process to ensure you're efficiently using the time with your network and creating a positive impression

## DAY OF INTERVIEW

- Present yourself professionally. You can check out our "How to Dress for an Interview" handout for ideas of what you can wear.
- Come prepared - bring copies of your resume, notepad and pen/pencil to take notes if needed.
- Plan to arrive 5-10 minutes early. It's better to be early than to be late!
- Take care of yourself before the interview so you are feeling your best! Eat breakfast, drink water, take a deep breath.

*End of Interview:* Be sure you know what the next steps are. Will they follow up? When can you expect to hear?

*Following up Post Interview:* After your interview (within 48 hours) you will want to follow up by sending a thank you message. This message will typically be sent via email. In this thank you, you should refer back to specific things that you talked about, express your thanks and reiterate your interest in the position.

If you don't hear back from the employer within the timeframe they gave you it is okay to follow up with another email or phone call.