

Interviews

Pre-Interview

- **Self-Assessment** - Compile a list of personal strengths and past accomplishments to boost your confidence. Identify ;and evaluate your:

- education
- experiences
- skills
- accomplishments
- strengths/weaknesses

Note which qualities you want to convey to the interviewer. Also note those you do not want to say during the ;interview.

- **Research the Employer** - Gather as much information about the employer as possible. Communication will be better ;and you will have a more comfortable and productive exchange. The more you know, the more confident you are ;likely to feel. Some information you may want to know:

- size of the organization
- location of facilities
- structure of organization
- past, current and potential growth
- product line, industry, service, clients, potential markets
- stock history
- the competition
- training provisions
- length of time in assignments
- recent news items, trends, problems
- name of the interviewer

Prepare a list of well-researched questions for the interviewer.

- **Practice Interview Techniques** - Before the interview, you may want to meet with a placement counselor or work with a friend in a role-playing situation. You may arrange to have a mock interview videotape session with a placement counselor. Please see the receptionist in the Career Center for details.
 - Rehearse how you will describe your qualifications and career aspirations.
 - Know what you want to communicate and how you are going to communicate it.
- **Prepare Yourself** - Logistics and materials are extremely important.
 - Know the name, title and level of responsibility of the recruiter
 - Arrive early (10-15 minutes before the interview)
 - Dress to project an image of confidence and success (wear a suit)
 - Prepare to bring additional materials, such as a transcript, samples of your work, and an updated resume, if needed.

During the Interview

- **Entrance** - Have a positive and cheerful attitude. Be courteous to those you meet and interview with. Give the interviewer a warm greeting with a firm handshake. Build rapport; attitude should be one of openness or sensitivity to the interviewer's style and a feeling of mutual responsibility for creating a comfortable atmosphere and establishing a common ground.
- **Your Presentation** - Relax, be yourself and think of the interview as an exchange of information between 2 individuals.
- **Components of a strong answer:**
 - backing up a statement with a specific example
 - sharing the outcome or solution to a specific problem
 - summarizing to emphasize your strengths
- **Nonverbal Cues**

Positive:

 - Occasional affirmative nodding of the head
 - Leaning forward

- Sitting with hands, feet, and arms unfolded
- Smiling appropriately
- Sitting erect in the chair
- Maintaining a pleasant facial expression
- Firm handshake
- Appropriate dress, matching the interviewer's organization
- Good eye contact

Negative:

- Inappropriate facial expression or lack of expression
- A weak and ineffectual handshake
- Inappropriate dress
- Poor body posture, either sitting or walking
- Lack of eye contact
- Squirming in the seat or sitting on the edge of the chair
- Nervous habits or gestures
- Frowning

- **Non-Verbal Behaviors** - In general, nonverbal cues are 50% of the interview. Be aware of posture, eye contact, hand gestures, facial expressions, and active listening.
- **Verbal Behaviors** - Use active verbs, concrete examples; be concise and complete, summarize and make transitions. Be open and thoughtful.

Have your questions ready to ask. They should reflect the amount of research you have done rather than your lack of knowledge about the employer.

Exit - Thank the interviewer. Give him/her a firm handshake and walk confidently from the interview.

After the Interview

- **Debrief Yourself** - Write down everything you feel you handled right and wrong. Note any information you may need to include in your thank you letter. Use the interview as a learning experience.
- **Write a Thank You Letter** - In a thank you letter, personalize yourself - try to set yourself apart from other applicants. ;Also, strengthen or add a point about your qualifications in relation to the position.

Types of Interviews

Interviewing styles vary from employer and interviewer to interviewer. To better prepare yourself for your interview, you may wish to familiarize yourself with the types of interviews and interview styles you may encounter.

•Screening Interview

The goal of this type of interview is to get the facts by identifying relevant skills and abilities, uncover inconsistency in your resume, and look for a solid candidate. It is usually short and not very personal. The interviewer's goal is to make sure the candidate has the necessary qualifications for the position before moving on to the next level of interviews.

•Selection Interview

This interview is usually conducted by a hiring manager. The goals are the same as in a screening interview but go beyond the obvious. It is a more personal assessment of your skills and abilities: the interviewer want to know you as a person. The interviewer will want to know how well you fit into the group and more detailed information about your skills and experiences.

•Behavioral Interview

This type of interview is based on the idea that a person's past behavior is useful in predicting future behavior. Typical questions will center around how you have handled past situations where you demonstrated certain skills, abilities, and team work. Areas could include project work, relevant experiences, difficult situations, accomplishments, failures, and leadership roles.

•Directed Interview

Usually conducted in a screening interview, the style may involve reading questions from a pre-selected list. It is a structured , impersonal, fact-finding interaction.

•Non-Directed Interview

A loosely structured format where the candidate can talk freely on any subject. This type of interview brings out the personality of the interviewee.

•Stress Interview

This very uncomfortable interview style involves the interviewer being in complete control of the situation. The interviewer may introduce "stresses" into the conversation to make you feel uncomfortable. The could involve long periods of silence, challenging your opinions, or seeming unfriendly. Another indicator could be the seating arrangement. All these tactics are designed to see how you'll react. The best thing to do is be aware and know your rights as an applicant.

•Group Interview

A group interview could involve several people taking turns asking you questions or presenting scenarios for you to react to or solve. It could be a group discussion which is used to determine how you interact with the other members of the group who could be potential colleagues.

•Board Interview

Similar to the group interview and closer to a normal interview, this type is common for higher level candidates like a doctoral student or upper-level management positions.

•Telephone Interview

Sometimes used as a screening interview for a candidate who is a distance from the employer. It is used to assess ;whether or not you should be considered for an on-site interview. The interaction should be mutual; you should gather ;as much information about the position and employer as the employer is gathering about you.

•Video Conference or Video Telephone Interview

In this era of interviewing technology, there may be a time when you will be interviewed by video telephone or video conference. It can be conducted as a screening or selection interview. One way to prepare for this type of interview is to practice using video equipment. The Career Center's videotaped mock interview program can prepare you for such an experience so you can see how you look and sound on video.

There are several books, articles, and videos on interviewing which can provide you with further details. Some that we suggest are:

Sweaty Palms: The Neglected Art of Being Interviewed. H Anthony Medley. Ten Speed Press, 1992.

Help! My Job Interview is Tomorrow! Mary Ellen Templeton. Neal Schuman Publishers, 1991

Knock 'Em Dead: The Ultimate Job Seekers' Handbook. Martin John Yate. Bob Adams, Inc. 1993

Insider's Guide to Competitive Interviewing. Video.

Improper or Illegal Interview Questions

If you believe you have been asked an improper or illegal question at any time in the interview process, do not dialogue or accuse the interviewer to his/her face but do bring your concern to the Director of the Career Center. In this way, the issue can be addressed without harming your job prospects.
