1.

Activity introduction

In this activity, you'll practice and refine your interview skills. To make sure you're ready for different interview formats, you'll schedule a phone call and a video call with a peer or family member. During each session, you'll have your interviewer ask you a few common interview questions.

Interview preparedness is an important skill for UX designers to practice. Going into an interview with confidence will raise your credibility and increase your hireability. With so many people applying for UX design positions, showing up to an interview fully prepared will help to set you apart from other applicants. Thorough preparation allows you to demonstrate that you are an informed and capable professional who would be a good fit for the company or organization you're applying to. The more you prepare, the better you'll be able to answer a variety of questions and address different topics without feeling overwhelmed.

Interviewers ask a series of common questions about your experience and who you are, but what they are really trying to understand is whether you are a suitable fit.

In an interview you are being evaluated on:

How well you fit the company culture

Whether or not you're a team player

How effective your communication skills are

How persuasive you are

What your thought process is when you design

How you approach and solve problems

How much technical knowledge you have

How passionate you are

Keep these things in mind as you prepare for your mock interviews, as well as your real interviews.

Step-by-step instructions

Step 1: Schedule mock interviews

First, decide whom you can ask to act as your mock interviewer. Your mock interviewer could be a friend, a family member, or someone in the design field you met through networking.

Choose an interviewer, then let them know that you'll provide them with a list of questions and will need about a half-hour for the mock interview. During this time, let the interviewer know you'd like them to critique your interview and give you the feedback afterward. Give them the criteria to evaluate you on ahead of time. Provide a checklist or feedback document that they can take notes on.

Some possible criteria for interview feedback are:

Knowledge of what UX design is

Level of overall preparedness

Level of confidence

Level of knowledge about a particular subject

Level of interest in company's mission

Ability to answer technical questions

Ability to discuss previous work

Awareness of strengths and weaknesses

Brainstorm a list of criteria you want your interviewer to evaluate you for and write it down on a document. You can choose from the list, or come up with your own. Take some time to consider what skills you want to work on when creating the list.

Once you have your interviewers selected and provide them with necessary information about the interview, set up a date and time that works for both of you.

Step 2: Send a list of interview questions

Send a list of interview questions and your evaluation criteria document to your interviewer. As a reminder, you can revisit the reading on preparing for interviews from earlier in the course to review common questions asked at each stage of the interview process.

The phone interview should use questions you would encounter in a screening interview, while the video call should include more in depth questions about what you offer as a designer.

Phone interviews are usually conducted to assess your viability as a job candidate. Questions here are more straightforward, and deal with your previous experience and your process as a designer. Many companies have multiple rounds of phone interviews, but you can usually expect to speak to either a recruiter, a hiring manager, or both. Here they are trying to decide whether to move you forward to the next round of interviews, which is a more involved process.

Common things interviewers ask during phone interviews for are:

An introduction about yourself

Your work history and experience

Your current employment status

Your approach to designing

Questions you have for the interviewer

It's helpful to prepare responses to these questions ahead of time, and think up some questions you want to ask. The more targeted and insightful questions you ask, the more you demonstrate your ability to analyze and think critically.

For the video interview, you'll be answering questions that are slightly more involved. Interviewers want to understand you as a UX designer, and what you can offer as a member of their team.

Questions you might encounter in a video interview are:

An example of good and bad design in a product

Your UX experience, including education and work history

Projects you've previously worked on

Your favorite project

Challenges you've encountered in past projects

Your biggest success as a UX designer

How you approach problems as a UX designer

How you handle feedback

How you would solve a problem that is presented during the interview

Video interview questions vary in scope, but tend to focus on your process as a designer and how you fit into an organization. It's likely you'll be asked about work you've done, problems you've encountered, and solutions you've identified to solve those problems. A good strategy here is to guide the interviewer through your thinking process, as if you are talking out loud. They are interested in your value as an adaptable problem solver, self-advocate, and team player. The exact needs of the role depend on the position and the company you're applying to, but demonstrating your value as a designer and team member will improve interview skills.

Step 3: Prepare interview answers

If you haven't already, start planning your answers to interview questions. Although you can't know exactly what questions you'll be asked in an interview, you can have answers prepared that generally fit the questions you'll be asked. You can use the STAR method to make it easier to come up with responses to interview questions. If you need a

refresher on the STAR method, revisit the reading

Learn more about the STAR method [↗] to help you develop responses to potential interview questions.

Create a document with the questions you create and write out full answers for each using the STAR method. Writing out your answers will help you to think about how best to communicate your skills and experiences, as well as give you a space to build on and revise your answers.

Step 4: Prepare your space

It's a good practice to treat your mock interview as if they are the real thing. This includes preparing a quiet space with no audio or visual distractions for the interview. Try your best to simulate a real interview environment, which usually takes place in a quiet, private place.

Pro tip: Lighting can make a difference during video interviews. Consider letting light into the area you're hosting the interview in. You can also use a lamp to help illuminate your face, making you easier to see. Do your best to eliminate any glare from the sun or lights that might be in the background of your video call.

Step 5: Conduct the mock interview

At least 10 minutes before the time of your interview, double-check that your devices are ready and have a back-up plan to address any surprise technical issues. It's also good to have a copy of your resume, portfolio, and any work examples accessible and ready to share. Take a deep breath, and get ready to answer with confidence! You're going to do great.

Step 6: Review your mock interview

Answering interview questions out loud will help you feel more comfortable and confident with the interview process. When the interview is finished, ask your interviewer for feedback from the evaluation document you provided them at the beginning of the mock interview process.

You may also have other questions to ask that help them give you even more constructive feedback. It's a good idea to record or take notes on the feedback your interviewer provides. Use this feedback to get a better idea of what areas or answers might need more practice.