Lecture Notes

Employability Skills (303193353)

Topic: Personal Interview

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lecture, students will be able to:

- Understand different types of interviews.
- Develop essential soft skills required to succeed in interviews.
- Learn how to structure responses using the STAR and PEEL frameworks.
- Gain practice in organizing clear, confident, and impactful answers.

Topics to be Covered

1. Introduction
2. Importance of Interview Skills
3. Types of Interviews and Questions
4. Do's and Don'ts
5. Expectations of Recruiters
6. Response Models
7. STAR and PEEL Framework
8. Final Interview Tips
9. Conclusion
10. Learning outcome

Introduction

A **personal interview** is a critical step in the selection process. Unlike written tests, interviews assess not only what you know but also **how you communicate, present yourself, and handle real-time questions**.

Key Points:

- **First impressions matter:** Your body language, attire, and greeting are noticed immediately.
- **Preparation is key:** Knowing your strengths, achievements, and examples enhances confidence.
- **Broader impact:** Interviews affect academic placements, internships, and career opportunities.

Example Prompt: Think of someone who made a strong first impression. What did they do differently?

Importance of Interview Skills

Interview skills are essential because they:

- Create a **strong first impression** on recruiters.
- Open **enhanced career opportunities** through positive evaluation.

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- Showcase **clarity of thought and communication**.
- Build **confidence** for professional interactions.
- Help manage **stress and unexpected questions** effectively.
- Demonstrate **preparation, professionalism, and credibility**.

Discussion Prompt: Why do some highly qualified candidates fail interviews?

Steps for Interview Preparation

Preparation is the foundation of success. Steps include:

1. **Self-assessment:** Identify strengths, weaknesses, and career goals.
2. **Elevator pitch:** Prepare a concise 30–60 second introduction.
3. **Company research:** Learn about mission, culture, products/services.
4. **Role understanding:** Align your skills and experience with the job description.
5. **Resume review:** Be ready to explain all points with examples.
6. **Example preparation:** Prepare real-life instances to demonstrate skills.
7. **Industry awareness:** Stay updated with trends and news.
8. **Professional etiquette:** Dress appropriately, maintain posture, and be punctual.

Activity: Draft a **1-minute self-introduction** and present to peers.

Types of Interviews

Structured vs. Unstructured

Aspect	Structured	Unstructured
Definition	Pre-planned, standard questions	Free-flowing, spontaneous questions
Focus	Job-specific skills	Personality, creativity, adaptability
Evaluation	Objective and consistent	Subjective; depends on interviewer impression
Candidate Experience	Formal and predictable	Relaxed and conversational
Example	"Describe a time you handled a conflict."	"Tell me about yourself."

Types of Interview Questions

1. **Personal Questions** – Assess personality, motivation, and values.
   Examples:

   - Tell me about yourself.
   - What motivates you?

- How do you handle failure?

2. **Academic Questions** – Focus on education and learning aptitude.
   Examples:

   - Tell me about a project you worked on.
   - How do you apply what you learned in real life?

3. **Career-Oriented Questions** – Assess clarity of career goals.
   Examples:

   - Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
   - Why should we hire you?

4. **Behavioral Questions** – Explore past behavior as a predictor of future performance.
   Examples:

   - Describe a time you led a team.
   - How did you resolve a conflict?

5. **Situational / Case-Based Questions** – Evaluate decision-making and problem-solving.
   Examples:

   - What would you do if your team disagreed with you?
   - How would you handle an unhappy client?

6. **Industry Knowledge / Current Affairs Questions** – Test awareness of trends and developments.
   Examples:

   - What recent trends are shaping your industry?
   - Name a company you admire and why.

7. **Technical / Domain-Specific Questions** – Evaluate role-based expertise.
   Examples:

   - CS: How does an OS handle deadlocks?
   - Chemical: Factors affecting distillation efficiency.
   - Biotech: How does CRISPR-Cas9 work?
   - Cross-domain: Scaling up lab processes to industry level.

Do's and Don'ts

Do's:

- Maintain good posture and eye contact.
- Listen carefully before answering.

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- Answer clearly and concisely with examples.
- Ask clarifying questions if needed.

Don'ts:

- Don't interrupt the interviewer.
- Don't speak negatively about others.
- Avoid vague answers.
- Don't fidget or display nervous habits.

Expectations of Recruiters

Recruiters typically look for:

- Strong **communication skills**
- **Problem-solving and analytical thinking**
- **Teamwork, collaboration, and leadership skills**
- Relevant **domain knowledge**
- **Adaptability and learning attitude**
- **Professionalism, ethics, and business awareness**

Response Models

STAR Framework *(Behavioral Questions)*

- **Situation:** Describe the context.
- **Task:** Explain your responsibility.
- **Action:** Outline steps taken.
- **Result:** Share measurable outcomes.

Example: Leading a team during an internship to improve customer satisfaction.

Activity: Draft a STAR response for "Describe a time you went beyond your responsibilities."

PEEL Framework *(Opinion-Based Questions)*

- **Point:** State your view.
- **Evidence:** Support with examples.
- **Explanation:** Clarify reasoning.
- **Link:** Connect to the company/role.

Example: Why do you want to pursue a career in marketing?

Activity: Draft a PEEL response for "Why should we hire you?"

STAR vs. PEEL

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Aspect	STAR Framework	PEEL Framework
Purpose	To answer **behavioral or situational questions** by describing past experiences.	To answer **opinion-based or abstract questions** by structuring arguments logically.
Focus	Real-life examples, actions, and results.	Point, evidence, reasoning, and linking to context or company.
Structure	**S** – Situation **T** – Task **A** – Action **R** – Result	**P** – Point **E** – Evidence **E** – Explanation **L** – Link
Use Case	"Describe a time you resolved a conflict." "Give an example of a goal you achieved."	"What makes a good leader?" "Why should we hire you?"
Outcome	Shows problem-solving skills, initiative, and measurable results.	Presents persuasive, well-reasoned, and structured arguments.
Example	Leadership during an internship project that improved customer satisfaction.	Explaining why you want to pursue a career in marketing using evidence and linking to company goals.

Final Interview Tips

- Practice **mock interviews** regularly.
- Prepare for **company-specific and role-specific questions**.
- Stay **calm, professional, and authentic**.
- Reflect after each **practice session** and refine responses.

Video Resources:

- STAR practice: https://youtu.be/WRLF8ULhZmw
- Mock interview example: https://youtu.be/PRuX-SebpbI

Conclusion

- Interviews are a platform to **showcase skills, values, and potential**.
- Structured frameworks (STAR/PEEL) help create **clarity and impact**.
- Preparation builds **confidence** and reduces **anxiety**.
- Tailor approach for different interview types.
- Regular practice ensures **professional readiness and effective delivery**.

Learning Outcomes
Students will be able to:
• Identify types of interviews and their formats.
• Demonstrate the use of STAR and PEEL frameworks in responses.
• Develop confidence through mock interviews.
• Analyze and critique peer responses using a structured rubric.

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• Reflect on their interview preparedness and areas of improvement.

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