

## INTERVIEW TIPS FOR ESL SPEAKERS

**Cultural differences in interviewing:** Cultural differences come into play during interviews, so it is important to be aware of them. Understanding your own cultural context and the cultural context of where you are interviewing, and anticipating what the differences are and how to address them, will help make the interview process more smooth.

**U.S. Interview Context:** Interviewing in the U.S. context is about “selling yourself”, or demonstrating what your strengths and accomplishments are and how these will contribute to the company/role you are applying for. This may feel uncomfortable at first, but with practice, it will get easier! Start with understanding your strengths, and practice talking about them in mock interviews. U.S. interviews are also a two way street—you are interviewing the company as much as they are interviewing you! You’re encouraged to ask questions about the role/company to see if it would be a good fit for you.

**Cultural competence as strength:** Being multilingual/multicultural is a strength in itself! Think about the benefits of being multilingual/multicultural (i.e. adaptability, intelligence, resilience, cultural competency) and talk about these in your interview.

**Know Your Rights:** You are not expected to share personal information (like marital status, family composition, religion). It is in fact illegal for interviewers to ask personal questions. You are also not expected to share your current compensation.

**It’s ok to ask for clarification:** If you didn’t understand a question, it is totally ok to ask the interviewer to repeat the question.

**Practice** with your CSC, with family or friends, or recording yourself and playing it back. See the “Further Reading/Resources” below for mock interview practice tools.

**Vocabulary:** look up new vocabulary that you encounter for the role that you’re interviewing for. Research company culture and values and how the company describes them. What examples do they share for their stated values and culture? How would you translate those into your experience and ways of working?

## QUESTIONS TO ASK MYSELF:

- Where am I coming from? What are my expectations going into an interview? What was it like to interview in my home country?
- What is U.S. interview culture?
- What is the company culture and how does it align with the way I work?
- How can I frame my stories around company values? (like adaptability, inclusion, innovation)

## STRENGTH-BASED SELF ASSESSMENT:

- How is being multilingual and multicultural a strength?
- What unique perspective could I bring to this role?
- What did I notice about a process or practice at work that added a new perspective to the team?