**Job Interview -**

**Everything you need to know about a Job Interview**

# Standard Format for an Interview

Although the length may vary, most interviews follow four standard stages:

# Greetings and Introductions

* Introduce yourself and shake hands with each interviewer
* Interviewer’s goal is to utilize small talk to make you feel comfortable, calm and more relaxed in an effort to prepare you for the next part of the interview
* Your goal is to make a strong first impression with your manners, body language and smile
* Allow the interviewer to guide you on when and where to take a seat

# Question and Answer Period

* **I**nterviewer may begin with a brief description of the job responsibilities and the organization’s plans with respect to the position
* Prior to beginning with their list of questions, an interviewer may begin with a general request for you to tell them a little bit more about yourself (give a brief one minute overview of your background and be sure to connect this closely with their company and the job you are applying)
* Interviewer will ask you questions to determine whether or not you can do the job and how you will fit into the organization
* Through this process, interviewers are also testing your communication and interpersonal skills
* Your goal is to answer all questions effectively to clearly demonstrate your fit with the position
* Listen closely to what the interviewer is asking you to ensure that you eliminate any doubts they may have about your suitability for this

# Opportunity for You to Ask the Interviewer a Few Questions

* Have 3 or 4 questions prepared to ask the interviewer that demonstrate your understanding of the position and the company
* Ask questions about potential projects, training, supervision, performance evaluation and corporate goals
* Use your questions to highlight the skills that make you suitable for this position
* You can also use your questions to demonstrate the amount of research you have done on their company
* Do not ask any questions during the interview that appear self-serving, such as “What will my salary be?” or “Can I have 2 vacation weeks in July?”
* Questions about salary and vacation can be asked at the time a job offer is extended, but they are not appropriate for a job interview

# Wrap Up

* The interviewer may use the last few minutes of the interview to discuss what happens next, such as timelines for hiring or future interview dates
* Offer your list of references if the employer doesn’t request it
* Your goal is to demonstrate your enthusiasm for the position and express interest in their company
* Thank the interviewer for meeting with you and shake hands
* If you are interested in the position, ask the employer for a business card

# What to do After the Interview

Finally, the interview is over and you have done everything you can to secure a job offer from that employer, right? Wrong, here are some tips on what to do after you leave the interview room:

* Immediately following the interview, write down the interviewer’s name (if you didn’t obtain a business card) and your thoughts about the company and position – if you are interviewing for numerous jobs over a period of time, this technique will help you keep all of your job applications straight and provide you with a pro/con list if a job offer is extended
* Send a Thank You note/email to the interviewer
* If the employer falls behind on the hiring timeline that was discussed with you during the interview, follow up with a phone call to inquire about the status of the position

# Practice Interview Questions

Listed below are some common questions asked by employers during job interviews. Read these questions over carefully and practice responses you would give during an actual interview. Prior to your job interviews, you may find it helpful to practice your answers with your family or friends.

The questions provided below are meant to serve only as a guideline to help you prepare for the interview. Some questions may or may not be appropriate for your interviewing situation.

# Career Goals

1. What are your long range career goals? Short range goals?   
  
2. What specific goals, other than those related to your career, have you established?   
  
3. Please describe the accomplishments you have achieved in your career so far.  
  
4. How does this assignment fit into your overall career plan?   
  
5. What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?   
  
6. Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?   
  
7. How would you describe your ideal job following graduation?

8. What qualifications do you have that make you think you will be successful in your career?

9. How do you define "success?"   
  
10. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

# General Skills/Attributes

1. Tell me about yourself. (Try to hold your response to 2-3 minutes)   
  
2. Describe a time when you prepared and communicated ideas and information in a formal setting.  
  
3. If a friend or professor were asked to describe you, what would he/she say?

4. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?

5. What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?   
  
6. What have you learned from your mistakes?   
  
7. Tell me about three of your accomplishments of which you are the most proud of.

8. Identify a major problem you've encountered and how you dealt with it.  
  
9. Can you tell me about how you make important decisions?

10. What personal attributes do you feel are necessary to succeed in this field?

# Work Specific Skills/Attributes

1. Describe your ideal job.  
  
2. Describe your management philosophy.   
  
3. What were the three most significant accomplishments in your last job?  
  
4. What have you learned from some of the jobs you have held?   
  
5. What specific things did you do in your last job to improve your effectiveness?  
  
6. What did you like least and most about your last job? What did you learn?  
  
7. Can you work well under deadlines or pressure?   
  
8. Describe what types of software packages you feel comfortable using.  
  
9. Describe a situation when you were able to identify a conflict between two individuals and were instrumental in the solution to that conflict.  
  
10. How would your colleagues (or your boss) describe you?

# Education

1. Why did you select your University?

2. How is university preparing you for your career?  
  
3. Tell me more about your program.

4. Why did you choose your major field of study?   
  
5. What courses do you like the best? The least? Why?  
  
6. Do you think your grades are an accurate indication of your academic achievement?   
  
7. How do you think your academic performance will influence your ability to perform well in this job?  
  
8. What areas do you perceive a need for additional training in this position?  
  
9. What extra-curricular activities have you been involved with at your university or in your community?  
  
10. What have you learned from participation in extra-curricular activities?

# Knowledge of Job

1. In your opinion, what skills and qualifications are essential to be successful in this position?  
  
2. What do you find satisfying about this kind of work?  
  
3. What interests you most about this job opportunity? Least?

4. What can you offer us that someone else cannot?  
  
5. Why should we hire you?   
  
6. What preparation have you had for this position?  
  
7. If you took the job, what would you accomplish in the first 6 months?

8. How long do you think it would take you to make a positive contribution to our organization?  
  
9. In this position, the ability to function well within a team environment would be important. Describe a situation where you participated in a team to complete a project.  
  
10. Describe any previous experience you have had that would help contribute to your success in this position.

# Knowledge of Company

1. What do you know about our company?  
  
2. Why do you want to work for us?   
  
3. What impresses you most about our organization?  
  
4. What have you heard about our company that you don’t like?  
  
5. Our company is much larger (smaller) than the previous companies you have worked for. How do you feel about that?

6. What criteria have you used to evaluate the companies that you hope to do a work placement with?  
  
7. How does our company compare with your previous employer(s)?   
  
8. How would you contribute to the overall goals of the company?   
  
9. How will you make a difference in our company?  
  
10. How familiar are you with our organization?

# Work Environment

1. What kind of supervisor or boss do you prefer?  
  
2. Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and subordinates.   
  
3. What types of people seem to "rub you the wrong way?"  
  
4. Do you prefer working with others or by yourself?   
  
5. How do you behave when you encounter a problem with a co-worker?  
  
6. Describe the kind of a work environment are you are most comfortable with: structured, unstructured, etc.   
  
7. How do you go about making important decisions?

8. Do you anticipate problems well or merely react to them?  
  
9. Tell me about a few new procedures you have instituted in your previous jobs. How effective where they and how did your co-workers react?  
  
10. Would you prefer a large or a small company? Why?

**Final Questions**

1. How do you spend your spare time?   
  
2. What other positions are you considering?  
  
3. How long would it take you to be productive in this position?

4. Which is more important to you, money or job satisfaction?  
  
5. How do you feel about working evenings or overtime?  
  
6. Is there anything that will prevent you from taking this job if offered?  
  
7. Is there anything else about you I should know?  
  
8. Do you have any questions for me?  
  
9. Do you have your reference list with you? (Remember to offer it at the end if they don’t ask for it)   
  
10. Do you mind if I contact your references?

**Behavioral-Based Questions**

The concept behind Behavioral Based interview questions is that the best indicator of future behavior is past behavior. These questions have very specific sections that should be answered and it is best to use a formula such as S.T.A.R. – Situation, Task, Action, Results when answering.

It is okay to talk about a negative experience, in fact they may specifically ask for one. The key is to show them that you were able to take a negative situation and turn it into a positive situation.

1. Describe a situation when you were able to identify a conflict between two individuals and were instrumental in the solution to that conflict.

2. How do you behave when you encounter a problem with a co-worker?

3. Tell us about a time when you were unable to keep a deadline. What was the end result?

4. Tell us about a time you had a steep learning curve, what did you do to learn all the material you needed to know?

5. If you felt uncomfortable in a certain office environment what would you do?

# Questions for the Employer

At the end of every interview, the interviewer will ask you if you have any questions. One of the biggest mistakes a candidate can make is to not be prepared with three or four questions. The employer may perceive this as a lack of a serious desire for the job. The interview process is your opportunity to conduct further research that will enable you to make an educated decision about whether or not to accept a co-op position with that company. It is therefore important that you learn how to develop questions to ask the interviewer about the company and the position.

Listed below are sample questions that candidates may ask during an interview. Use these as a guideline to develop your own questions. When considering what questions to ask, read over the job description and conduct company research then see what natural questions arise out of this. It is considered acceptable practice to write your own questions in advance and bring them to the interview in a portfolio.

# The Position

1. What are the main expectations of this position? (May have already answered in job posting/interview)

2. What would you like to be done differently by the next person who fills this position?

3. What do you consider to be the main skills and qualifications that the ideal candidate for this position should possess? (May have already answered in job posting/interview)

4. How does this position contribute to the company’s goals, productivity or profits? (May have already answered in job posting/interview)

5. What should be the first priority for the person who takes this position?

# Training/Orientation

1. What type of orientation does your organization provide for co-op students? (May have already answered in job posting/interview)

2. Is there a training program available for all new employees? (May have already answered in job posting/interview)

3. How long do you anticipate the training period to be for someone taking the role? (May have already answered in job posting/interview)

# Job Responsibilities

1. What are the major responsibilities of this position? (May have already answered in job posting/interview)

2. What is a typical day like in the department?

3. What would be a typical first assignment?

4. What are some of the objectives you would like to see accomplished in this job? What is most pressing? What would you like to have done in the next three months?

5. What are some of the long-term objectives you would like to see completed?

# Evaluation

1. How often would my performance be reviewed?

2. What type of evaluation methods does your organization utilize to review performance?

3. How does your organization recognize its employees for their contributions?

# Advancement Opportunities

1. What advancement opportunities are available for the person who is successful in this position?

2. What is a possible career path for the position?

3. What constitutes success within the company?

# The Organization

1. In terms of products are services, how has this organization been most successful over the years? (You should also research this type of question BEFORE the interview to demonstrate your knowledge of the employer)

2. How would you describe the atmosphere of this organization? What is unique about it?

3. What significant changes do you foresee in the near future?

4. What are the most important relationship in this role; clients, customers, other employees?

5. What are some of the departmental goals for the upcoming year?

6. Who does this position report to?

7. What are the company’s/organizations long-term goals?

8. What do you like best about this company/organization? Why?

9. I’ve read that … (Cite some employer research). What are the key reasons for this success?

# The Hiring Process

1. Are there any questions that you have about my background that I can clarify for you?

2. Would you like a copy of my references? (Have it available to give them)

3. What is the next step in the hiring process?