Mastering the HR Interview

How to Impress and Land Your Dream Job?

SoftUni Team

Technical Trainers

Software University

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Different Types of HR Interviews

In-Person, Online, Phone Interviews

Prepare for Your In-Person Interview

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- Research the **company** and
the **role** you are applying for

In-Person Interview

- Review common interview **questions** and prepare **responses**

- Dress **professionally** and arrive **early** to the interview location

  - Clean and neat clothes and shoes (no need of suit)

  - Clean, bathed, good looking (but not for wedding)

- Bring copies of your **resume** and any
relevant documents (e. g. certificates)

Make a Great Impression During the Interview

- Make a strong first impression with a **positive attitude**

- **Listen** carefully the interviewer and ask **thoughtful** questions

- Do not **interrupt** the interviewer

- Maintain a good **eye contact** and **body language** throughout the interview

- Turn **off** your phone

In-Person Interview

Prepare for Your Online Interview

Online Interview

- Make sure you have a good quality **camera** or **microphone**

- Test your **internet connection** before the start

- Choose a **quiet well-lit** space for the interview

- Have a **backup plan** in case of technical difficulties

- Dress **professionally** even if you will only be seen from the waist up, **switch on the camera**

- Get to know with the **platforms** used for the interview (e. g. install Zoom / Teams / WebEx)

Make a Great Impression During The Interview

Online Interview

- Look directly at the camera and **avoid distractions**

- Speak **clearly** and **concisely** and avoid interrupting the interviewer

- Use a positive **body language** and **facial expressions** throughout the interview

- Make sure you show up **on time**

- Do not talk **too much**

Prepare for Your Phone Interview

- Be prepared **which company** might call you

- Be prepared to conduct the interview in **English**

- Be prepared with more information about the **company** and the **position** you apply for

- Ensure that your phone has a **good signal** and **enough battery life**

- Chose a **quiet**, **private** location for the interview

Phone Interview

During the Phone Interview

Phone Interview

- Answer the phone **professionally** and **clearly** state **your name**

- Speak **slowly** and **clearly** and do not **interrupt** the interviewer

- Avoid **distractions** like background noises

- Do not **multitasking** at the time of the interview

- Ask for a **later** interview if you are unavailable at the moment
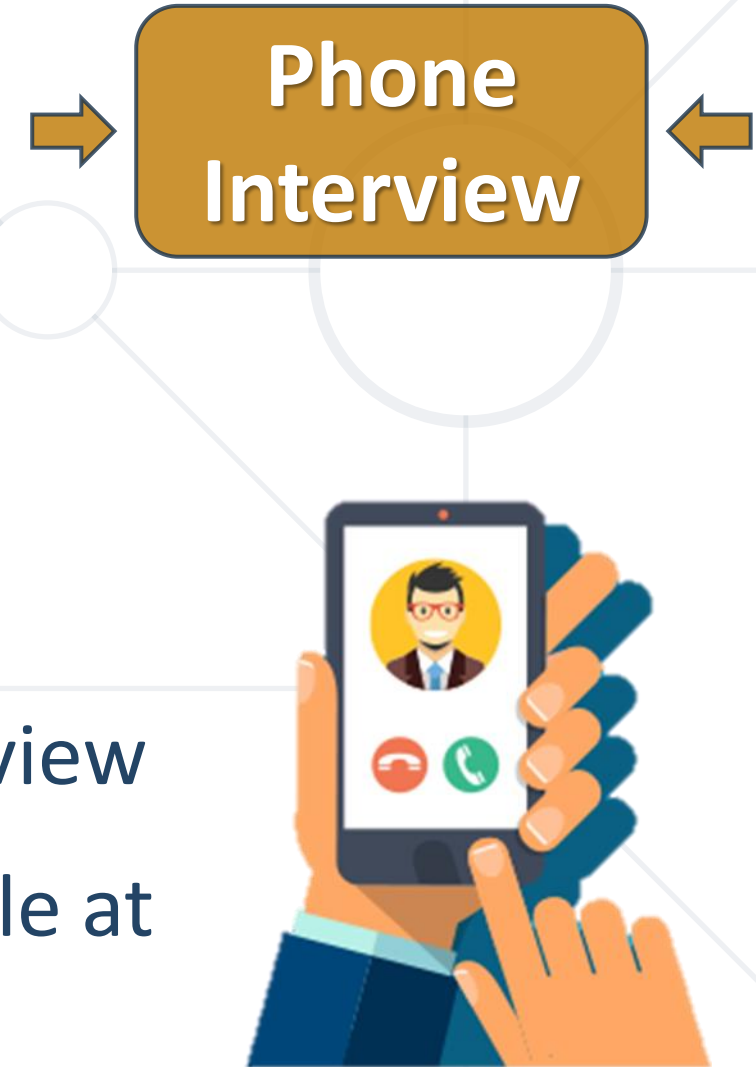
Job Interview Must-Knows

- Its okay to tell the HR if you are **nervous** during the interview, so they can help put you at ease

- **Do not** apply **for too many** job positions at the same time due to the following reasons:

  - Keeping track of multiple job applications is difficult and **increases the chances of fail**

  - Applying for too many positions can lead to a **lack of focus** and **attention to detail** in your applications

  - You won't have **enough time** to properly prepare for each interview

Meeting Company Expectations

Successfully Fulfilling Your Employer's Expectations

What Does a Company Expect from You ?

- **Self-presentation**:

  - The company expects you to **present yourself** in a way that makes them want to **hire you**

- **Preparation**:

  - A good research about the **company**, **job requirements**, **potential questions**

- **Professionalism**

  - You should demonstrate professionalism by **dressing appropriately**, arriving **on time** and maintaining a **positive** and **respectful** attitude

What Does a Company Expect from You ?

- **Adaptability**:

    - The company expects from you to be **adaptable** and to **handle** change and uncertainty

- **Enthusiasm**:

    - A willingness to take on **new challenges**, to be able to learn **new skills** and **grow** in the role

- **Cultural fit**:

    - Understanding the company **mission** and **values** and showing that your own values **align** with theirs

Company Expectations – What Not to Do?

- **Don't** speak **negatively** about previous employers and colleagues
- **Don't** **dominate** the conversation
- **Don't** forget to **show interest** in the job position
- **Don't** forget to follow up with a thank you **email** or letter after the interview
- **Don't** **exaggerate** or **lie** about your qualifications or experience
- **Don't** appear too focused on **salary** or **benefits**

Common Questions and Proper Answers

Comprehensive Guide for Excelling in Your Next Interview

Question: Tell me about yourself

- Begin with a **brief** overview of your education and work experience

- Highlight your most **relevant** skills and accomplishments

- Mention your most **relevant** background experience which **aligns** with the job requirements

- End by stating your **interest** in the position and how your skills **align** with the job requirements

1-2 mins

Question: Why do you want to work for us?

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- Do your **research** on the company and its mission!

- Highlight specific **aspects** of the company that **align** with your own interests

- Mention any **positive experiences / impression** you have had with the company in the past

- Emphasize how your **skills** and **experience align** with the job requirements

  - How can the company **benefit** from you?

1-2 mins

Question: What are your strengths?

- Talk briefly about your strengths that are **relevant** to the job requirements

1-2 mins

- Provide specific **examples** of how you have **demonstrated** these strengths in previous roles

- Emphasize skills such as **communication**, **teamwork**, **problem-solving** and **perseverance**

- Explain how these strengths will **benefit** the company and **contribute** to your success in the position

Question: What are your weaknesses?

- Choose a **weakness** that is **not critical** to the job requirements

  - Explain how you have worked to **improve** this weakness

    1-2 mins

  - Provide specific examples of how you have **addressed** this weakness in previous roles

- End on a **positive** note by highlighting your overall **strengths** and **qualifications**

Question: What are your long-term career goals?

- Explain that you want to **spend many years at this position**
    - Still be **honest** and **authentic** about your career aspirations

1-2 mins

- Explain how **this position** can help you **achieve your goals**

- Mention any professional **development opportunities** that you are interested in (aligned to company goals)

- Emphasize your **commitment** to your career and your desire to **grow** and **learn** in the position

Question: What motivates you?

- Choose motivators that **align** with the job **requirements** and the company's **culture**

- Highlight your **passion** for the work and the industry

- Mention any **personal** or **professional** goals that **align** with the position

- Emphasize your **desire to learn and grow** in the position

1-2 mins

Question: How do you handle criticism?

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- Explain how you actively **listen** to the **feedback** and seek to **understand** the other person's **perspective**

- Highlight your ability to take **responsibility** of your **mistakes** and learn from them

- Provide examples of how you have **successfully applied** constructive criticism in previous roles

- Emphasize the **importance** of **growth** and **development** and your **willingness** to receive feedback to **improve** your performance

1-2 mins

Question: What is your biggest accomplishment?

- Choose an accomplishment that is **relevant** to the job requirements (e. g. graduated SoftUni)
  - Provide specific details on **what** you did, **how** you did it and the **positive outcome**
- Explain how this accomplishment **demonstrates** your **skills** and **qualifications** for the position
- Emphasize how this accomplishment can **benefit** the company and **contribute** to your success in the position

1-2 mins

Question: How do you handle stress?

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- Explain how you **prioritize** and **organize** your workload

- Highlight your ability to remain **calm** and **focused** under pressure

- Provide examples of how you have successfully **managed stress** in previous roles

- Emphasize the importance of self-care such as **exercise**, **meditation** or **taking breaks** when needed

1-2 mins

Question: What are your salary expectations?

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- Research on the **average salary** for similar positions to match the company expectations

- Provide range of **acceptable** salaries based on your research

  - Emphasize that you are **flexible** and **open to negotiation**, e.g.

    - You are open to start lower and negotiate after a year

- Mention other factors besides salary that are important to you, such as **growth opportunities**

1-2 mins

Question: What are your hobbies or interests?

- Choose hobbies or interests that are **appropriate** and **relevant** to the job

- **Highlight** how these activities demonstrate your skills or qualities such as **teamwork**, **creativity**, **analytical skills**

- Mention any **volunteer work** or **community involvement** that you are passionate about

- Emphasize the importance of **work-life balance** (let the steam off)

1-2 mins

Question: Why should we hire you?

- Summarize your **skills**, **accomplishments** and **experience** that align with the job requirements

- Emphasize what **sets you apart** from other candidates (e. g. more prepared, motivated, etc.)

1-2 mins

- Mention any **unique qualities** or **strengths** that you can bring to the position

- Provide specific **examples** of how you can **contribute** to the **company's success**

Question: What do you want to ask me?

- Ask about your **future** at this position: What will happen in 2-3 years if you start this job?

- What is a **typical day** as a Junior Software Developer at the given company?

- Is there anything else I can **provide** or **clarify** to help you make your hiring decision?

- Don't ask about **benefits** (e.g., parking slot, fitness card, etc.)

1-2 mins

Winning Interview Behavior

How Your Actions Can Affect Your Interview Success?

Positive Body Language

- Greet the interviewer with a **firm** handshake

- Maintain a good posture by **sitting up straight** and keeping your **shoulders back**

- Use appropriate **hand gestures** to emphasize your points, but avoid **overusing** them

- Use facial expressions, such as **smiling** or **nodding** to show you are listening and responsive

- Use **appropriate vocalizations** such as: mm-hmm, I see, to show you are listening and engaging

Negative Body Language

- Avoid **crossing** your **arms** or **legs**, as this can be perceived as defensive or closed-off

- Don't **fidget** or **play** with objects, as this can be distracting and indicate nervousness

- Avoid **slouching** or **leaning back** in your chair, as this can indicate disinterest or lack of engagement

- Avoid **looking away** or **checking your phone**, as this can indicate boredom or lack of respect for the interviewer

Interpreting Body Language

- Pay attention to the interviewer's body language to help you **gauge** their **response** to your answers

- Look for sings of **interest** or **engagement**, such as **nodding** or **leaning forward**

- Watch for signs of boredom or disinterest, such as **looking away** or **crossing their arms**

- Remember that body language can be **cultural**, so try to be **aware** of any cultural differences that may **impact** your interpretation

Interpreting

Adapting Your Body Language

- Be aware of your own body language and how it may be **perceived** by the interviewer

- Adapt your body language to **match the tone** of the conversation such as:

    - Using more **animated gestures** for **exciting topics**

    - Maintaining more **serious tone** for more **somber topics**

- Be flexible and adaptable, but also **true** to **yourself** and your **natural body language style**

- **Practice** good body language habits in everyday life to help you **develop** strong habits for interviews

Mirroring

- Mirroring is a technique in which you **match the body language** of the interviewer to build rapport and **establish a connection**

- Pay attention to the interviewer's body language and try to **match** their **posture**, **gestures** and **facial expressions**

- Be **subtle** and **natural**, rather than **overtly** copying the interviewer's every move

- Mirroring can help create a sense of **trust** and **empathy**, but it should be used **sparingly** and **appropriately**

TODO: shall we have this?

Key Moments in an HR Interview

The Crucial Moments Which Can Open Your Career Path

Key Moments During an Interview

- **Self-presentation** – brief introduction about yourself

- **Appropriate dressing** – clean and tidy clothes

- **Information about the company** – research the company

- **Good manners** – polite and respectful language

- **Conversation with HR** – creating a friendly environment

- **Confidence** – stay calm, use positive self-talk

- **Pre-prepared answers** – for common questions

- **Expected salary** –research the average salary

How to Handle Questions You Cannot Answer?

- Do not worry if the HR asks you a question you **cannot answer**

- This is a common practice, and it is a test of how you **handle unusual situations**

- In this situation it is **important** to:

  - **Stay calm** – panicking never helps, maintain your composure

  - **Ask for clarification** – it is okay to ask the interviewer to rephrase or clarify the question

  - **Use this as opportunity** – showcase your problem-solving skills

From Questions to Dialogue with HR

Tips and Techniques for Navigating the HR Interview

Communication Skills

- Speak **clearly** and **enunciate** your words

- Avoid **slang** or **filler** words (don't mumble)

- Speak at **appropriate volume**, not to loudly or softly

- Use **storytelling** techniques **to engage** the interviewer and make your responses more **memorable**

- Use appropriate **humor** (carefully) to break the ice and create an atmosphere

Positive thinking

Asking Intelligent Questions

- Ask insightful questions about the **company**, **culture** and **job responsibilities**

- Ask about opportunities for **growth** and **advancement** within the organization

- Ask about the company's **performance metrics** and how success is measured in the position

- Ask about the company's **training** and **development** programs, and how you can leverage them to **grow** and **advance** in your career

At the End of the Interview

- **Express gratitude**: show appreciation for the interviewer's time and interest in your application

- **Highlight key points**: emphasize your strengths and qualifications for the role and that you are a match

- **Inquire about the next steps**: ask the interviewer what the next steps will be in the hiring process, including when you can expect to hear back

- **Close on a positive note**: end the conversation on a positive note by expressing your excitement about the opportunity to join the company

How to Follow-Up After the Interview

A Guide to Stand Out and Secure the Job

Tips for Effective Job Follow-Up

- After completing a job interview, it's crucial to **follow up** with the employer

- This helps you leave a **positive** impression and shows your **interest** in the position

- However it's important to do that in an **unobtrusive** and **non-desperate** way

- Here are some tips which can help you make a **lasting** impression and **increase** your chances of securing the job
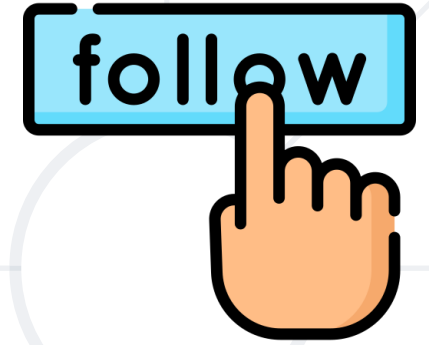
Tips for Effective Job Follow-Up

- Send a **thank-you** note within 24 hours of the interview, expressing your **gratitude**, **enthusiasm**, and reiterating your **qualifications**

- Connect with the interviewer on **LinkedIn** to show your interest in the company and stay connected

- Follow up on the hiring timeline with a **polite** email or phone call, **reiterating** your interest and asking if there's additional information you can provide

- Stay **professional** and **patient** throughout the follow-up process

Summary
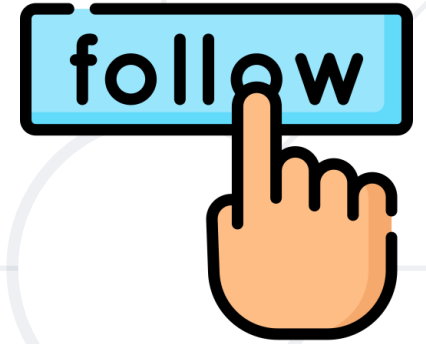
- Types of interviews with HR – in-person, online, by phone

- Company expectations

- Frequently asked questions and answers

- How to perform during the interview

- Critical key moments

- Questions, dialogue with HR

Homework

Pick a Job Description and Answer the Given Questions

Questions?

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