

Interview Tips

The primary purpose of an interview is to share information. It is your chance to sell the employer on your skills, knowledge, and abilities. The way in which you answer questions gives the interviewer a look at who you are and what you can do for the company/organization. You want to make a good impression. The following are tips that will help you make the best impression possible.

Before

- Research the job, the company, and the industry as well as the type of interview it will be. Use resources like the company's website, annual reports, trade journals, current employees, friends, family, and business sections of the newspaper.
- Write answers to the questions that might be asked (see page 51 of the Career Handbook).
- Prepare questions to ask the employer.
- Have extra copies of your resume prepared.
- Dress professionally and conservatively.
- Ensure you are familiar with the location, parking, and travel time to the interview site.
- Arrive 15 minutes early.
- Bring the company's phone number in case you get lost or have an emergency. Know the name of the main contact person who set up the interview with you.

During

- Don't chew gum or smoke. Turn off your cell phone.
- Give a firm handshake when greeted by the interviewer or others at the organization.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Demonstrate good posture and mannerisms.
- This is a performance. Be enthusiastic. Give it your all; you can always go home and relax.
- Stress your qualities and skills. Focus on your strengths and what you can contribute to the company.
- Be positive about past experiences, employers, or teachers.
- Keep a businesslike and professional attitude.
- Ask questions that are relevant about the position, organization, and industry.
- Don't ask about salary and/or benefits until an offer has been made.
- When leaving, thank the interviewer for their time and shake hands again.
- Ask for a business card from the interviewer or the receptionist.

After

- Send a thank you note or email within 24 hours of the interview. Use the business card for the correct spelling and address of the interviewer and place of business. Thank the interviewer for their time, courtesy, and consideration (see page 73 of the Career Handbook).
- Once an offer has been made, you can negotiate salary and benefits (see page 76 of the Career Handbook).

Phone Interviews Tips

- When setting up a phone interview, make sure you designate a time when you know you will be in a quiet, private place. Clear the room of pets, children, TV or radio noise etc. Also, consider using a landline as cell phone service can be tricky.
- Be as prepared for a phone interview as you would for a face-to-face interview.
- Do not use profanities during the interview. Always use professional language. Be sure to speak loudly and clearly.
- Compile a list of your strengths and weaknesses, have employment history available, and any additional material needed.
- Have your resume in front of you.
- Have a pen and paper ready for note taking.
- Run through a mock interview before the actual interview.
- Do not eat, drink, chew gum, or smoke during the interview. However, it might be handy to have a glass of water nearby just in case.
- Make sure you are awake and alert for the interview.
- Call the employer by their title and last name (i.e. Dr. Jones). Do not call them by their first name unless they ask you to.
- Be sure to inquire about a face-to-face interview.
- Send a “Thank you” note to reiterate your interest in the job.

Face to Face Interview Tips

- The night before the interview, be sure to get a good night sleep. Do not stay out late or drink the night before.
- Run through a mock interview prior to the actual interview.
- Prior to the interview, compile a list of your strengths and weaknesses. You may be asked about these in the interview and it is best to be prepared to answer these questions.
- Bring a copy of your resume and references to the interview. Also, bring a pen and paper for note taking.
- Be sure you know exactly how to get the interview location. It would be best to take yourself there prior to the interview so you can find the best routes and be sure of where you are going.
- Give yourself extra time to get to the interview.
- Eat before going to the interview. If your stomach growls during the interview it can be uncomfortable for you and the employer.
- Go to the restroom before the interview.
- Sit up straight, and make eye-contact.
- Maintain a friendly disposition
- Do not use profanities. Also, try to avoid saying “Um” or “Like” too much. Be sure to speak loudly and clearly.
- For women: do not cross your legs at the knees. Instead, cross your legs at the ankles. Also, do not sit with your knees apart.
- For men: do not cross your legs at the knees or rest your ankle on your opposite knee. Also, do not sit with your knees too far apart.