

Interview Guide

Interviews are beneficial to both applicants and employers as this is the time where you both have the opportunity to exchange information for a potential professional relationship. At the interview, you should highlight reasons why you would be the best fit for the position by relating your personal strengths and past accomplishments to the job.

It should be your main objective to prove that you can help the company accomplish their goals and be a valuable asset to the organization. How well you interview will determine whether or not you get the job, this is why it is important to prepare and practice.

Types of Interviews

Before the interview, it is important to know what type of interview you will be a part of so that you can better prepare yourself. In the table below, you will find eight different types of interviews, which you may encounter throughout the recruitment and hiring process.

One on One	One-on-one conversation. One candidate being interviewed by one employer. This is the most common style of interview.
Panel	Two or more interviewers. Be sure to make eye contact with each panelists as you answer questions.
Group	Multiple candidates are being interviewed at once. Can be used to test teamwork skills and how each candidate operates in a group.
Screening	These are usually over the phone or video. During a screening, employers ask prequalifying questions in order to determine if they will invite you to an interview.
Phone	Similar to a one-on-one interview, however it will be over the phone. These are often used to narrow the pool of applicants. Be sure to turn call waiting off so your call is not interrupted and use a headset in order to sound clear.
Video	Be sure to test your equipment (i.e. webcam speakers and microphone) ahead of time to prevent technical glitches from occurring during the interview and use a headset in order to sound clear. Be sure to set up your background so that it is clean, professional, and free of distractions. A neutral wall is recommended.
Presentation	This will test your public speaking and communication skills, be sure to practice to ensure you are as comfortable as possible and stay within time restraints.
Full day or longer	This will take place over a longer time span of one or more days. During this process, you will participate in multiple interview segments with different interviewers in various formats. Be sure to get as much rest as possible and use the breaks to recharge and collect yourself.

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Before the Interview

1. Research

It's a good idea to become familiar not only with the job position but the company. Employers want to know that you've researched their organization prior to the interview. You should know the following:

- What they do
- Their organizational philosophy or mission
- Major clients or people they serve
- Contributions to the community

Research also helps you to prepare effective questions for the interview. Be sure to study the job posting carefully and come up with clear examples of how you have demonstrated the skills and qualifications they are seeking (this can be found in the job description).

2. Prepare Yourself

You will not be the only one doing research. Employers may Google you or check your social media. Make sure your social media accounts (i.e. Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, blog, etc.) will not negatively affect your professional endeavors. Brainstorm your past accomplishments and challenging situations. Think about your strengths and how they relate to the position. In the same merit, know your weaknesses and how you are managing them. Review the cover letter and resume that you submitted and prepare to elaborate on the skills you indicated. Make yourself more comfortable by practicing common interview questions.

3. Organize

- Write down all pertinent details of the interview such as the interviewer(s) name, title, phone number, and the address where you will be interviewing.
- Know the location: Have detailed directions and an understanding of where to go prior to the interview. Do not forget to ask where you can park!
- Be prepared to back up everything on your resume (do not have anything on your resume you do not want to elaborate on).
- Prepare to answer questions about your accomplishments, strengths, and weaknesses.
- Always try to relate your experiences to the job description or to the organization.
- If you have a phone or internet interview, make sure you are in a quiet place where you have a good connection without background noise. Be aware of your surroundings and what is on the walls behind you.

4. Decide What to Wear

Dress appropriately. This means be conservative and dress in business attire. Even if you are knowledgeable about the culture and environment or have friends in the office, dress professionally. Only dress business casual if indicated by the employer. The key is to be polished in your appearance and look like you have dressed to impress. Feel free to inquire about the office dress code after you accept the position.

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4. Practice Etiquette:

- Be on time. In this case, this means be early. It is appropriate to be fifteen minutes early.
- Bring questions you prepared while doing your research.
- Bring extra copies of your resume. You want to have enough resumes for everyone in the room.
- Make sure your email address and voicemail are professional and state your name clearly. Remember to check for messages frequently.
- Always say "please" and "thank you".

During the Interview

Whether you have an interview over the phone, through video conferencing, or in person, remember to keep the following in mind:

- Do not chew gum.
- Keep a bottle of water in case you need to wet your mouth.
- Smile! Smiling helps your voice sound upbeat and gives social cues of a good listener.
- Speak slowly and enunciate your words carefully.
- Take note of the interviewer(s) names, key facts, what you learned, and questions that were asked. This will be helpful when writing thank you notes or emails.
- Do not interrupt the interviewer, let them finish before you speak.

Types of Interview Questions You May Be Asked

Background Review	<i>Designed to confirm information on your resume/ application.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who is your present or most recent employer? ● What are/were your major responsibilities at (present/most recent job)? ● Which skills have you acquired in your present or previous positions that make you competitive for this position? ● Which accomplishments in your present position are you proud of and why? ● Why are you planning to/did you leave that position?
Initiative	<i>Designed to gather information about your ability to identify tasks that need to be done without specifically being told to do them.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This job requires much time working alone. Tell me about a job or project where you worked unsupervised and were given only general guidelines for job/project completion. ● Can you think of some projects or ideas (not necessarily your own) that were carried out successfully primarily because of your efforts? ● What new ideas or suggestions have you come up with at work?
Stress Tolerance	<i>Designed to give the interviewer an idea of how you have reacted to past stressful situations.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tell me how you maintain constant performance while under time and work load pressures. ● Tell me about some situations in which you became frustrated or impatient when dealing with (customers, co-workers, boss). What did you do?

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Planning & Organizing	<p><i>Designed to gather information relating to your ability to schedule work and handle multiple tasks.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you organize your day? • How often is your time schedule upset by unforeseen circumstances? What do you do when that happens? Tell me about a specific time. • Describe a typical day ... a typical week. (Interviewer, listen for planning)
Teamwork	<p><i>Designed to gather information relating to your ability to work and get along with others.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We've all had to work with someone who is very difficult to get along with. Give me an example of when this happened to you. Why was that person difficult? How did you handle that person? • When dealing with individuals or groups, how do you determine when you are pushing too hard? How do you determine when you should back off? Give an example. • From time to time, all of us are confronted by someone who wastes our time at work. Tell me about some situations like that. What did you do?
Communication	<p><i>Designed to gather information relating to your communication skills.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kinds of presentations have you made? Can you give me some examples? • Give me an example from your past working experience where you had to rely on information given to you verbally to get the job done.
Questions to ask Interviewer	<p><i>In your initial interview, avoid asking questions about salary. You should focus on what you bring to the organization not what you can get out of it.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who would I be reporting to? What is their leadership style? • What are the key characteristics you are looking for in a candidate? • Describe the culture of the company? What do you like best about working for this company? • How do you measure success in this organization?

When Answering Interview Questions

The key is being able to talk about your experiences in such a way that employers can identify your skills and approach to problems. One way to help organize your answers and experiences is to use the PARK method. The PARK method helps you focus on the most relevant aspects of your experience for the employer in a structured way.

- **P:** the PROBLEM or situation (“What happened?”)
- **A:** the ACTIONS you took (“What did you do?”)
- **R:** the RESULTS or outcomes (“What was the result?”)
- **K:** the KNOWLEDGE you gained (“What did you learn? How did you apply it?”)

After the Interview

Once out of the interview, take a few minutes to review how you did and write down questions you may have. Send a thank you letter or email within 24 hours to the interviewer(s), thanking them for their time, reiterating your qualifications as a candidate, providing any additional information you may have left out during the interview, and asking any questions you may have.