

Interviewing



What is the Purpose of an Interview?

- Accurately assess competency, fit, and motivation (for both the student and employer).
- Prevent candidates from being improperly assessed or judged solely on their job search documents.
- Clarify specific position needs and requirements, and to establish rapport.

Interviews can take place over many different platforms (phone, virtually, or in-person) and some may involve numerous rounds of interviewing in order to narrow down the candidacy pool to find the ideal candidate.

Before the Interview

Research Yourself

- Analyze how your strengths, values, personal and academic experiences, as well as your interests, can be transferred to the position for which you are applying.
- If you are unsure about your values/interests/personality/and skills, take a career assessment. Focus2 career assessment can be found on www.ut.edu/career/exploration/

Review your Accomplishments

- Create a list of the experiences you've had and don't limit yourself to experiences at your internships or paid jobs, but also consider your volunteer experiences, extracurricular activities, and projects or class assignments completed.

Research the Career Field, Company, and Job Description

- To conduct research, utilize company websites, LinkedIn, articles, associations, online research engines, etc.
- The more you know and understand about the company, the better the impression you will make.
- Make sure you have a clear description of the job and the required skills.

Practice Potential Interview Questions

- Create a list of skills and personal characteristics the job requires.
- For each skill/personal characteristic this job requires, find strong examples from your accomplishment list to back it up then practice answering potential questions as if you're telling a story. We call these, "story-telling" answers.

Write Down to 5 to 8 Questions to Ask the Employer

- Don't ask obvious questions you can find out on the company's website, but rather, after you do your research, ask questions related to what you found, as it relates to your position.

Think of Credible References

- Ask past colleagues or supervisors who have worked with you and know your strengths and skills. Create a single page listing 3 to 5 contacts. The heading should be the same as on your resume and cover letter. Only submit upon request.

Prepare for the Interview Day

- Find out time, place, and review the traffic pattern for the time you will be commuting for the interview in order to avoid unexpected traffic. Plan to arrive 15 minutes before your interview in order to avoid feeling rushed.
- Ask about the format of the interview and who will be present to conduct the interview. You can walk into the interview room and find 2 people or 12 people – Expect the unexpected!

Day Of The Interview

Dress For Success – First Impressions Count!

- Keep it simple and professional. Research the industry of interest and figure out what makes a candidate successful.
- Exude confidence, enthusiasm, willingness to learn, courtesy, and positivity in your non-verbal and verbal behaviors.
- Smile, use a firm handshake, make eye contact, demonstrate positive body language to the interviewer, and announce.
- Bring a padfolio with enough copies of your resume for all interviewers.
- Jot down quick notes to help you remember what they mention.
- Don't be negative or place blame on past employers.
- Communicate how you've learned from previous experiences and set yourself apart from other candidates.

Interviewing



Answering Questions

- Be concise and avoid rambling. Keep your answers to 2 minutes, maximum.
- Give specific answers and provide examples with all of your answers to back everything up. We call this “story-telling”.
- Utilize the S.T.A.R formula when asked behavioral questions to help you with your “story-telling”.

Answering Questions

S.T.A.R Formula (aka: story-telling)

| | | |
|-----|-----|---|
| 10% | S/T | Describe the situation or task you were involved in |
| 60% | A | Explain your role and what action you took |
| 30% | R | Illustrate the result(s) you achieved |

The STAR method is a structured manner of responding to a behavioral-based interview question by discussing the specific situation, task, action, and result of the situation you are describing. It is recommended that you spend 10% of your time addressing the situation and task, 60% describing the action, and 30% detailing the result(s).

To practice your interviewing skills, use our mock interview software available at: quinnia.io/signin

Example of a response to a behavioral question using the S.T.A.R formula:

- (S)** The restaurant was not attracting new customers to the location.
- (T)** My goal was to generate strategies and incentives to increase awareness of the restaurant and attract new customers.
- (A)** I designed a flyer and went around to all the local businesses to share the flyer and talk about the restaurant. I also came up with a social media page to promote the brand as well as certain incentives.
- (R)** By reaching more people through the new initiatives, we were able to increase our new and returning customers by 20%.

Sample Questions Employers May Ask

- Tell me about yourself.
- How would your friends and/or last supervisor describe you?
- Why should we hire you?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What have you accomplished that you're proud of?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?
- Why do you feel you will be successful in this field?
- Why did you decide to interview with our organization?
- In depth, specific industry related questions (terms/techniques).

Closing the Interview

- Briefly highlight your skills, strengths, and reaffirm your interest in the position.
- Collect their business cards or write down their names/emails so you can follow up with a 'Thank You' note.
- Thank those who interviewed you and close with a strong handshake, eye contact, and genuine smile.

After the Interview

- Reflect on what they mentioned and your experience. Are you still excited by the prospect of this job?
- Follow up with a detailed 'Thank You' note within 24 hours by email to all interviewers reiterating 1-2 skills.

Sample Questions to Ask Employers

- What are the next steps/timeline in this interview process?
- What skills are most useful for success in this position?
- What professional development opportunities are there?
- What traits do successful professionals in this position possess?
- Describe typical first year assignments/projects.
- Do you have any further questions regarding my qualifications?
- DO NOT ask about salary, benefits, or vacation time in the initial interview.