

# INTERVIEWS



**Cover letters and resumes may help obtain interviews, but good interviewing skills can turn an interview into a job offer!**

Interviews are designed to get the applicant to talk. Questions should not be answered with a simple “yes” or “no.” Because interviewers want you to talk, they will generally be warm and open with you. This should not be misinterpreted as a symbol of their interest in you as an applicant. Interviewers will be evaluating not only the quality of your answers, but also whether or not you think and speak clearly, in an organized fashion, and with enthusiasm.

## The 3 P’s of Job Interviews

### Step 1: Preparation

#### Know Yourself

- Be ready to explain why you are interested in the particular position.
- What skills, abilities, values, strengths, and accomplishments do you bring to the job?
- Know your top strengths, top weaknesses, core values, and what motivates you.
- Share your enthusiasm for joining this profession, and getting the opportunity to contribute to the field.
- Review your resume (look for applicable/transferrable skills and knowledge gained from your educational experiences, work/internship/volunteer experiences, community involvement, leadership experiences, etc.)

#### Know the Position Requirements, the Company, and the Field

- Thoroughly review the job description and qualifications, including duties and responsibilities, as well as required skills.
- What are some of the hottest topics and trends in the field you are applying for?
- Conduct employer research and make a link between your academic preparation, interests, and work experience with the target position.
- Research the company’s goals and mission, products and services, organizational structure and culture, clients, growth and future direction, and current challenges.
- Remember that you are using the interview to determine if the position is the right fit for you, same as the potential employer is doing.

## Know the Star Method & Prepare for Potential Interview Questions

- Review the attached list “50 Questions Often Asked in Employment Interviews” and generate possible answers.
- Develop 10-15 sixty second personal stories related to skills, strengths, and accomplishments.
- Use the Situation Task Action Results (STAR) mnemonic device to help you develop and deliver your answers to interview questions.

## Develop a Brief List of Questions to Ask the Interviewer

Examples:

- What are some typical career paths of employees in your organization?
- What advancement opportunities are available?
- What characteristics best describe a successful person at your company?
- What is your favorite part about working for your company?
- Please tell me about training and/or professional development opportunities offered by the company?
- What would a typical day be like in this position?
- When will you be finishing up the interview process?
- When would you like the hired candidate to start?

## Step 2: Practice, Practice, Practice!

Practice on your own, practice with a friend or family member, practice with a trusted advisor, professor, or colleague, and last but not least, practice with the Career Development Specialist. Your Career Development Specialist can make sure you are prepared for many types of interviewing techniques and questions. The more times you practice, the less likely you are to be nervous during a real interview.

## Step 3: Day of the Interview

- Practice your interview skills again.
- Be prepared for all types of questions.
- Give yourself extra time to find the interview location, and in case of traffic issues.
- Arrive before the scheduled time (about 10-15 minutes).
- Dress business professional, even if it is a Zoom or Skype interview.
- Be professional, kind, confident, and enthusiastic.
- Conclude strongly by asking meaningful questions, and summarizing your positive aspects.
- Follow-up with a thank you letter within 24 hours of your interview.

## STAR Example

Question: Please describe the most challenging team experience you have encountered.

### Situation or Task:

- I was involved in a group project last semester where our team had to create a business plan. Group members varied appreciably in their skills and motivation to complete the project, and each member was delegated tasks and deadlines for completion, including progress updates every week. One group member had fallen far behind, and our group's success and grade were in jeopardy.

### Action(s) Taken:

- Being the group leader and the one responsible for delegating the project components, I reached out to the group member who was no longer keeping pace. In talking with him, it became clear that he had an entirely different understanding of our objective and how it would be achieved. This realization, however, was important since his unique viewpoint actually helped better inform our group's approach in creating the business plan.

### Results Achieved:

- As a result, our group became more cohesive, which helped us produce a successful business plan and made the group experience more enjoyable.

**If you would like to practice your interview skills, please schedule an appointment with the Career Development Center**

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