
INTERVIEWING BASICS – MAKE A GREAT IMPRESSION

What is an Interview?

The interview is an opportunity for candidates and employers to mutually evaluate the match between a candidate's qualifications and goals and the organization's needs. This may be your only chance to talk with the employer before they make a hiring decision, so first impressions are important. Prepare to make a great first impression!

Before the Interview:

- Research the company and position. Know what services they provide or products they manufacture.
- Think about your goals. What type(s) of jobs are you seeking? Why is this position a fit for you based upon these goals?
- Evaluate your skills, experience, and education. Can you provide examples that demonstrate skills and abilities related to the position?
- Have appropriate interview attire. Know the difference between professional attire and business casual.
- Review interview questions so you know what kinds of questions to expect.
- Prepare some questions for the employer. What do you want to know about the company? The position? Training?

During the Interview:

- Treat each person you meet with courtesy and respect.
- Use a firm, confident handshake. Carry yourself well. Use good posture and maintain eye contact with the interviewer. Don't fidget. Avoid non-words (ex: "um").
- Answer the questions asked by the employer completely yet concisely. Provide specific examples to help strengthen your answers.
- If you are asked a question you don't understand, ask the interviewer to clarify.
- If you are asked a question and can't think of an example/answer, ask for a moment to think about the question, or ask if you can re-visit that question later.
- At the end of the interview, most employers will ask if you have questions for them. Ask the questions you have prepared for the interviewer.
- Before leaving, thank the employer for their time. Ask for a business card if you do not have their name or contact information.

Behavior Based Interview Questions:

The basis for these questions is "past performance predicts future behaviors." The interviewer will seek specific examples and responses that give address the topic at hand. One strategy to answer these questions is the STAR approach – Situation, Task, Action, Result:

- Explain the **situation** or **task** at hand. Be specific about the situation.
- Describe the **actions** you took in that situation
- Finish answering the question by explaining the **result** of your actions.

Strategy for Answering Questions:

- **Listen** to the entire question the interview presents you.
- **Replay** the question in your mind to make certain you answer the question at hand.
- **Decide** upon your answer prior to speaking to help formulate an effective response.
- **Respond** to the interviewer.

After the Interview:

- Write a Thank You letter to the employer. Not only does this show courtesy for their time, but also your sincere interest in the position.

Evaluating Your Performance:

Employers will be evaluating you based upon a variety of factors, including appearance, preparation, skill, previous experience, expression, direction/goals, maturity, sincerity, personality and overall impression – to name a few.

Common Interview Questions

Each employer will ask different questions based upon the position and the qualifications for the position. Here is a sampling of common interview questions.

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why are you interested in this position? Why did you decide to major in _____?
- Why does the field of _____ interest you?
- What do you know about our company?
- Tell me about your related experience. How has it prepared you for this field?
- Tell me three strengths that you have and why you consider them strengths.
- Tell me about a weakness you have. What is an area in which you need to improve?
- What would your friends/former employers say about you?
- Tell me about a time you assumed a leadership role.
- Tell me about a time you had to deal with a challenging customer. How did you handle the situation?
- Rate your ____ skills on a scale of 1-10. Why did you give yourself that rating?
- Describe a situation in which you and a co-worker disagreed. How did you resolve it?
- What would you consider your greatest accomplishment to date?
- What is the greatest challenge you've faced and how have you handled it?
- Were there subjects in school that you found particularly difficult? Excelled in?
- How do you determine success?
- Where do you see yourself 5 or 10 years from now?
- Why should I hire you instead of any of the other well-qualified candidates?
- If you were offered the position, when could you start?
- What are your salary expectations?
- Do you have any questions for us?

Questions You May Want to Ask an Interviewer

Be sure to have several questions prepared in advance, as this demonstrates to an employer that you are genuinely interested in the position.

- I read the position description; could you provide me with additional information about the responsibilities of this position?
- On your website, I read about _____. Could you tell me more about that?
- What type of training or orientation would I receive if hired for this position?
- What might a typical workday be like?
- How many people work in this department? With whom would I be working?
- How will my work be evaluated?
- Are there any new projects anticipated for the company in the near future?
- What types of career paths have others in this position followed?
- Why do you like working here?
- When will I be notified about your decision? What is the timeline of your selection?

Additional interview question samples are available on the Career Services website at www.uwgb.edu/careers