

What to do during an interview

The following are guidelines for you to review prior to going to your interview. Hopefully, this will answer many of your questions regarding how to conduct yourself during the interview.

- **If you are nervous, it may help to mention it.** Interviewers see many nervous applicants. Simply saying, "I'm a little nervous about this - it's very important to me," will help create a more relaxed situation.
- **Be confident and professional.** Look the interviewer in the eye, but avoid staring. Vary your tempo and tone of voice. Sit up straight and look alert. Don't forget to smile.
- **Be honest in your answers, but steer away from any troublesome areas.** You, more than the interviewer, can control the content of the interview. Know in advance what you want to say, and look for opportunities to say it. Expand your answers to questions to include points that may not be asked for.
- **If you have questions about the job duties, ask them early in the interview.** Then you can target your abilities to the job as the interview progresses.
- **Relate your comments to the employer's needs rather than just to your background and accomplishments.** Talking too much about the past is one of the most common mistakes job interviewees make. Don't boast about what you have done. Instead, talk about the employer's needs and how you can meet them.
- **Don't mention any financial or personal problems you may be having.**
- **Don't say anything negative about your former employer.**
- **Don't bring up salary, vacations or fringe benefits.** Wait for the interviewer to introduce these subjects. The best time to talk about salary is after you have been selected for the job. You are then in a much better position to negotiate.
- **Thank the interviewer.** When the interview is completed thank the interviewer for his or her time and consideration. Ask the interviewer for a business card before you leave. This will help ensure you have the proper name, title, and spelling of the person(s) who interviewed you for future correspondence and communications.
- **Be polite and professional with everyone you meet.** It is not uncommon for an interviewer to ask others in the office what they thought of you. You never know what kind of influence the receptionist may have. Be aware of your behavior at all times, even in the elevator or parking lot.

Questions you may be asked during an interview

These are questions you may be asked during an interview with employers. Start practicing answering the questions you may be asked as soon as you start contacting employers. Practice answering these questions during a practice session with a counselor, career technician, relative or friend. The more practice you get, the better prepared you will be.

Work Experience Questions

- Why are you interested in this job?
- Why are you interested in working for this organization?
- What do you know about this company?
- What do you feel you can contribute to this organization?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- What is the worst thing your former employer could say about you?
- What is your idea of the job you will be doing?
- What contribution do you think you can make to this company?
- Have you had summer jobs or part-time jobs? What have you learned from them?
- Describe your ideal job.

Training Questions

- What training have you had other than courses in school or college?
- What workshops have you attended?
- Do you have any skills that are not listed on your resume or in your application?

Education Questions

- What courses did you like most in school? Which ones did you like least?
- Why did you choose your major course of study?
- Discuss your background in terms of how it has prepared you for this job.

Future Plans Questions

- What are your long-term goals?
- What are your long-term career objectives?

- How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
- What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
- What plans do you have for continuing your education?

Availability Questions

- When will you be able to start this job?
- Do you mind working overtime?

Money and Benefits Questions

- What level of salary are you expecting?
- What benefits are you expecting?

Personal Questions

- What are your weak points with regard to your ability to perform this job? What are your strong points?
- How do you work under pressure?
- What are your two most satisfying accomplishments?
- Do you consider yourself a creative person? Why?
- What important rewards do you expect from your career?
- Why should I hire you?
- What have you learned from your hobbies or interests?
- What major problem have you encountered and how did you deal with it?
- What have you learned from your mistakes?

Questions to ask during an interview

Prepare some questions that you can ask during an interview. While in an interview, always wait for a response to your question. Do not interrupt when someone is talking.

- What kind of person are you looking for to fill this job?
- Why is the job vacant?
- Who will supervise this position? Would it be possible for me to meet this person?
- May I see the work area?
- When will you decide who will fill the job?
- What is the starting date of the job?
- From your research you should have some **questions about the employer's products or services**. Make a note beforehand of these and any other questions you could ask during the interview

After the interview

You have made it through the question and answer part of the interview, now what? You want to leave the interviewer with a good impression and you want to share any information that you may have overlooked during the interview.

- Often during this time, you can ask questions. Be sure to have some that will assist you in determining whether the position is suitable for you.
- If there is an important item that you forgot to mention during the question and answer phase, you can take a moment to mention it. Do not turn this into a speech. Brief and concise statements are fine.
- Thank your interviewer at the close of the session. Offer your references if they have not already been requested.
- If the job is offered, be prepared to accept it, to reject it, or to get answers to any additional questions you may have.
- Right after the interview send the interviewer a brief thank you letter. Send a separate letter to each person who interviewed you. If you still want the job, be sure the letter says this.
- Be patient. The employer probably wants to check your references and see other applicants before deciding.
- You may call if you haven't heard back within the time period that was specified by the employer.