

INTERVIEWS

Congratulations! You have made it to the interview. This is one of the last crucial steps you will take before being hired. Because an interview is so important, the following information is provided to help you prepare. Read this information carefully to prepare for your interview. If you would like more help with the interviewing process visit or call the College and Career Exploration Center.

An interview is your opportunity to talk with someone who is in a position to hire people with skills like yours. As an interviewee you are primarily a sales person. The product you are selling is yourself and the products assets consist of your experiences, skills, and accomplishments.

A job interview can be fun! If not fun, it should at least be a positive, exciting experience. Treat interviews as opportunities to meet interesting people and a chance to increase your knowledge about particular careers or companies.

Before you go on your interview you must know something about the company. **RESEARCH THE COMPANY!** Make sure you at least know some basic information about them. What do they do? What is their product? How big are they? How many employees work there? When were they established? Not knowing something about the employer will make you come across as unprepared. It will also make it very difficult for you to ask intelligent questions.

There are many resources available to help you research employers. The Internet is an excellent place to start. Many companies have web sites explaining who they are and what they do. Some even post openings, giving a brief description about the position. The telephone book has a list of all the companies. The yellow pages categorized companies according to the services provided; this is also a good place to start your research. Local Chambers of Commerce will usually have information about businesses. The library is a good resource. Talk with employees who work at the companies. Visit the College and Career Exploration Center to see if they have any information about the employers you are interested in. Ask your instructors if they have any information about companies. If time allows, write or call a company to see if they will send you information about their company.

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Listed below are common questions you may be asked during an interview. Not all are related to your situation since questions vary depending on the job.

As you answer each one of these questions keep in mind three things: Do you understand what the interviewer is really asking? Did you present enough facts to make yourself look good? Did you give examples to support your best skills related to the position you are applying for?

After you have answered the questions, go back and practice your responses until it becomes comfortable to you. Make sure that all of your responses are positive. If you have negative issues in your past, figure out a way to turn it into a positive. This will often require a lot of thought and work, but it can be done. For more practice team up with a friend and interview each other.

1. What have been your two most important career accomplishments? What accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? (Cite examples involving skills that could be applied to the job for which you are interviewing.)
2. What do you know about our company? (This is a very popular question.)
3. Why did you leave your past job? (Give an acceptable reason if possible, i.e. school, better pay, forced layoff, no chance for advancement, etc. If you admit to something negative, do not dwell on your response. Respond to the question and move on.)
4. Explain a time when you had to work under stress.
5. What do you consider your major strengths and weaknesses? (Cite strengths related to the job you are interviewing for; cite weakness that are unimportant or unrelated to the job or weaknesses that you have corrected.)
6. How long would you stay with us if this position were offered to you?
7. What can you offer us that someone else cannot?

8. What did you like least about your last job?

9. What did you like most about your last job?

10. What are your short and long range plans? (Indicate goals that are realistic and which represent a logical career path within your occupational field.)

11. Why are you interested in working for us? Why are you interested in this particular position? (Make sure you know something about the company.)

12. What characteristics of this position interest you the least? What interest you the most?

13. Do you like to work individually or as part of a team? Why? (Your response should be yes to both.)

14. Why do you feel you are qualified for this position? (Demonstrate your knowledge of the company and the specific responsibilities of the position and relate those responsibilities to your interest, skills, training, and achievements.)

15. What salary do you expect? (Avoid an exact figure. Ask the employer what they usually start the position at or state your pay requirements vaguely. Give them a range, for example, mid to upper twenties.)

16. Tell me about yourself. (Your response should remain professional. Stay away from personal information. This is where they find out about children, marital status, etc.)

17. What hours are you willing to work?

18. What are your hobbies?

19. What skills or abilities do you have that would enhance your performance in this job?
20. Why should I hire you? How can you make a contribution to our company? (If possible, indicate your knowledge of the employer's needs and state specifically your training, skills, and personal qualities that will satisfy them.)
21. Would you please explain the gap in your job history?
22. Why have you held so many jobs?
23. How do you determine or evaluate success?
24. If you were hiring for this position, what qualities would you look for?
25. What might your response be if you made a mistake on the job?
26. What qualities does a good supervisor have?
27. What makes you angry? How do you deal with these situations?
28. Why did you choose the occupation for which you are prepared? (Give reasons that demonstrate planning and forethought on your part as well as knowledge about the particular job or career field.)
29. Do you have any questions you would like to ask us?

EMPLOYMENT QUESTIONS WHICH MAY DISCRIMINATE

Be aware that there are certain questions that employers CAN NOT ask. Below is a sample of questions that may allow an employer to discriminate against candidates. If you feel like you have been discriminated against during an interview you may wish to seek legal advice.

1. How old are you?

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (29 U.S.C. 621-34) prohibits discrimination on the basis of age between 40-69.

2. Have you ever been arrested?

You must answer questions about any convictions, but not arrests. Arrests do not indicate guilt.

3. How many children do you have? How old are they? Are you pregnant?

Many employers hold the false belief that women with young children are apt to be absent from work more than men or single women.

4. Do you owe any money or have a poor credit rating?

Unless it is a business necessity, your credit is your personal business.

5. What is the lowest salary that you will accept?

Women generally are paid less than men for the same work.

6. What is your maiden name? Are you married? What is your spouse's name? Spouse's place of work?

Your marital status is in no way related to your ability to do a job.

7. Questions regarding your gender.

Title VII prohibits sex discrimination. There are a few jobs where you must be a certain sex, but generally this is not the case.

QUESTIONS TO ASK AN EMPLOYER

An interview is not only a time for the employer to find out about you, but you need to use this opportunity to find out about the employer. Go prepared to ask questions of the interviewer(s). Below are some questions that you may wish to ask.

1. If hired, would I be filling a newly created position or replacing someone?
2. Was my predecessor promoted?
3. Would you describe a typical work day and the things I would be doing?
4. Which duties are most important for this job? Least important?
5. How would I be trained or introduced to the job?
6. How long should it take me to get my feet on the ground and become productive?
7. How is this job important to the company; how does it contribute?
8. What are the department's goals for the year?
9. How many people work in this department? In the company?
10. Who will I be working with and what do they do?
11. Can someone in this job be promoted? If so, to what position?
12. If hired, how will I get feedback on my job performance?
13. If hired, would I report directly to you or someone else?
14. What major market does this company compete in?
15. Are annual sales for the company ahead of last year's sales?
16. If you were to offer me this job where could I expect to be in five years?
17. Could you give me a brief tour?
18. I want this job, would you consider hiring me on a 30-day trial period to prove that I can do this job?