

Interviewing

Preparing for an interview:

- Schedule a Mock Interview with Career Services to help yourself prepare for a real interview. Use the Mock Interview as an opportunity to practice and learn about what you do well and what you can work on. Mock Interviews can be in-person, over the phone, or using Skype.
- Make sure that your resume is updated and error-free. Take several copies with you.
- Visit the organization's website and/or conduct an internet search. Learn as much as you can so that you are comfortable discussing the organization and asking questions.
- Obtain reliable directions to your interview location. If you aren't sure exactly where you need to go, test the route beforehand. Also, confirm the time of your interview.
- Lay out your professional interview attire the night before your interview. Make sure that your clothing is clean and pressed.
- Organize a portfolio with extra copies of your resume, a list of references, directions, paper, and a pen.
- Develop a list of possible questions to ask the interviewer.
- Leave early. Generally, it is best to arrive about 10 minutes early. Allow plenty of time to park and walk to the building. Never, ever be late.

What to wear:

- Generally, a suit is the safest thing to wear to an interview. Dark-colored wool suits in solid colors or pin stripes are best. Women may wear pants or a skirt, as long as the skirt is at least knee-length. Avoid high slits in skirts.
- Shirts worn underneath suits should be long-sleeved and solid colors or pinstripes. Shirt sleeves should extend slightly past the sleeves of a suit jacket. Conservative necklines are best. Always iron clothing.
- Men should wear conservative ties that complement other attire. Silk ties in solid colors or conservative patterns are best.
- Shoe color needs to coordinate with clothing. Women can wear heeled shoes as long as they are not too high. All shoes should be closed-toe and closed-heel and need to be clean and polished. Do not wear casual shoes with a suit.
- Socks and nylons should fit properly and complement clothing. Undergarments and skin should not be visible, even when sitting.
- Any jewelry or accessories should be simple and conservative. Portfolios and briefcases should complement clothing. Coordinating belts should be worn with pants that have belt loops. Avoid distracting make-up and perfume or cologne.
- Keep hair out of your eyes. Avoid touching hair while interviewing.
- See the back page for photos of what to wear and what not to wear to an interview.

Arrival:

- Your interview begins the minute you arrive in the parking lot. Maintain a professional demeanor.
- First impressions are critical. Greet everyone you meet, making sure to be courteous and kind. Assistants and other staff members are often asked for their impressions of you, even if you did not meet them.

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- Greet your interviewer with a smile, being sure to make eye contact. Your handshake should be firm. It is a good idea to say the interviewer's name when introduced, as this will make it easier to remember their name later on.
- When invited to have a seat, sit straight and tall, but also comfortably. Don't fidget, and be on the lookout for nervous habits.
- Don't be afraid to talk about yourself. The interview is your chance to infuse your personality in to your application. When answering questions, speak calmly, confidently, and clearly. Maintain eye contact. Use examples when answering. By providing short stories as you describe your experience, you make yourself a much more "real" candidate. This also shows the interviewer that you have real-world experience that you can apply to a new position.
- Avoid rambling. Answer the question fully, but don't feel the need to keep talking to fill space. There will likely be a few seconds of silence while the interviewer makes notes about your response; this is normal, so do not feel the need to keep talking.
- Be positive and enthusiastic at all times, avoiding any negativity. Never speak badly about a former position or coworker.
- If you aren't sure how to answer a question, take a deep breath to give yourself a little bit of time to think about it. You can also ask the interviewer to repeat the question or repeat it yourself to buy more time.
- Pay attention to the interviewer's non-verbal communication. This can let you know how the interview is going and whether you should talk more or less.

After the end of the interview:

- Ask the questions you prepared. You may want to modify these based on the items discussed during the interview. Never ask anything that is easily available with research. Also, avoid questions about salary or benefits at this time.
- Ask for a business card or contact information from each interviewer.
- When leaving, shake hands firmly and again convey your interest in the position.

After the interview:

- Send a thank you note expressing appreciation for meeting with you. Include one or two unique things discussed during the interview and express your continued interest. Thank you notes should be sent as soon as possible and within 24 hours. They can be sent by email or regular mail or dropped off at the front desk.

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Sample interview questions:

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself.
2. What prompted you to apply for this position?
3. What do you know about this organization? About this department?
4. What are three of your strengths? Three weaknesses?
5. Where do you see yourself in five years? Ten years?
6. What work experience have you had that has prepared you for this position?
7. Describe your ideal position.
8. What is your proudest accomplishment?
9. Do you work better in a team or individually? Please give an example.
10. Tell me about a time when you overcame obstacles.
11. Describe a time when you had to deal with a difficult coworker. How did you handle it?
12. Tell me about a mistake you made recently made and how you corrected it.
13. How would you handle being confronted by an angry coworker?
14. How do you deal with working under pressure? Give an example.
15. Describe a decision you made that was unpopular.
16. What is your management style? Describe a specific example.
17. What would you do if you were working with a team member who was not doing their fair share?
18. How do you cope with stress?
19. How do you manage time to make sure projects get completed on time?
20. How would you persuade someone to accept your idea?

Questions to ask the interviewer:

1. How would I spend a typical day in this position?
2. What are the greatest challenges currently facing the organization/department?
3. What plans for growth and change does the organization/department have?
4. What do you think is the most challenging facet of this position?
5. What opportunities are there for advancement and professional development?
6. How would you describe the typical management style in the organization?
7. Could you describe the typical assignments first-year employees receive?
8. How has your career developed at this organization?

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What to Wear: Girls



What NOT to Wear: Girls



What to Wear: Guys



What NOT to Wear: Guys