

Interviewing

What is an interview?

An interview is an opportunity for an employer to learn more about a potential candidate by asking a variety of questions. The interview is a crucial part of the job search. Your resume got your foot in the door, which means you meet their minimum qualifications. The interview now gives you a chance to show the interviewer that you are the ideal candidate for the job and also learn more about whether the position is right for you.

What can I expect during the interview?

The type of interview you have will depend on the industry, the company and the position.

- The length of an interview can range from 15 minutes to an hour and you will probably have more than one.
- It can be done one-on-one, you can be interviewed by a panel or even interviewed with other candidates.
- Many interviews are being done on Zoom, Google Meet, and other media. See our [virtual interviewing](#) page for additional tips.
- The first interview can happen over the phone or at a career fair and is often the shortest interview. The intention is to screen initial candidates.
- The interviewer often starts with small talk and brief introductions. Next, they may either tell you first about the position/company or may start directly with asking questions. You will likely be able to ask questions.
- Everyone has different interviewing styles so expect the unexpected.

What should I do before the interview?

- You're being interviewed because of your resume, so make certain you know what's on it, and can discuss what you've achieved in school and your previous or current positions. Also, make a list of all of your skills, accomplishments, and experiences that relate to the position, and review it on the way to the interview, to refresh your memory. You can use the information you have prepared to answer the questions in a way that relates to the job.
- Be able to answer why you want to work for them, why you are interested in the position and/or the company as well why they should hire you /what makes you the best candidate?
- Other common questions are: Tell me about yourself, what are your strengths, what are your career goals, and what are your weaknesses?
- When available [review handouts](#) that contain advice from alumni working at specific companies
- Research your field through sites such as [Vault](#), [Wetfeet](#), and [Glassdoor.com](#). Who are the top firms/organizations? What are the latest trends /new developments?
- Know the company you're interviewing at: Who are their competitors? What is the company's mission? What are their services/products? How are they doing financially? What have they achieved recently that has appeared in the news?
- Practice interviewing with someone.
- Prepare a list of questions (at least 5) that you want to ask. Don't ask questions that can be answered on their website or that were answered during the interview. Questions about salary, benefits, time off, hours worked, etc are off-limits. You will likely only have time to ask 2-3 of the questions that you had prepared. Review our Director's [Questions to Ask During Job Interviews](#).
- Think about what qualifications are important for the position since it will give you a clue as to what they will ask. The job description will give an idea as to what they want to know about you.
 - For example, if the position is for a teller for a large bank you can assume they want someone with customer service skills and can work in a fast-paced environment. They will likely ask you questions to see if you have those skills
- Take each adjective/quality mentioned in the job description and on their website about what they seek in a candidate and develop personal examples that demonstrates you have that quality.

What should I do on the day of the interview?

- On the day of the interview, feel confident and good about yourself. Your attitude should be focused on why you think you are the right person for the job and how you will show them your fitness for the job.
- [Dress to impress](#).
- Know what is on your resume.
- Arrive early to have time to freshen up and fill out any applications, but do not get to the interview location earlier than 15-20 minutes before the interview (it may make the interviewer feel pressured).
- Don't chew gum, smoke or wear perfume.
- Remember that the interview starts as soon as you are close to the interview location. You might encounter your interviewer on the train, at a nearby coffee shop, or in the building's lobby or elevator without even knowing it. Also, the receptionist or any other employee can be asked their opinion of you, so treat everyone with respect.

What kind of questions will I be asked?

There are generally two types of questions: **Traditional:** What would you do? For example: "If you could do anything...", "How do you manage your time?" And **Behavioral:** What did you do? For example, "tell me about a time when..." or "describe a situation when...". When answering behavioral questions, use the STAR method (situation, task, action and result). Your response should describe the **Situation** or **Task**, the **Action** you personally took and the **Result** of your actions. Use resources to get a list of typical interview questions such as the [Magner Center](#) and the internet.

How should I answer the questions?

- Be thorough when answering your questions.
- Make sure you understand the question before you answer it. Take a second to think about the question before you answer. If you're not certain, it is ok to ask them to repeat/clarify once or twice.
- Provide specific examples. If applicable mention results and accomplishments.
- Speak slowly but not too slow, speak clearly, and do not be too long-winded.
- Pay attention to the interviewer: They will often give you cues about whether they are engaged in what they are saying or whether you are dominating the conversation.
- Be aware of your tone and the volume of your voice.

What should I do during the interview?

- Firmly shake the interviewer's hand.
- Pay attention to your body language, facial expression and posture. Maintain eye contact, smile, and avoid distracting mannerisms such as playing with your hair.
- Be confident, reflect a positive attitude and show enthusiasm.
- Remember to ask the questions you prepared ahead of time.
- End the interview by thanking the interviewer and telling them why they should hire you.
- Ask about next steps so you know what to expect.
- Ask for a business card.

What should I do after the interview?

- [Send a thank you letter or e-mail soon after.](#) Your letter should restate your interest in the position, highlight your skills and qualifications and emphasize something you did not have the chance to mention. Try to include something you learned during the interview to show you paid attention. **Make sure there are NO typos, spelling or grammatical mistakes at all.**
- Reflect on how things went and what you could do better next time.
- Follow up, if needed, two weeks after the interview.

How do you blow an interview?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act disinterested • Lack preparation • Dressed too casually • Being late • Talk too much/talk too little 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act disinterested • Lack of preparation • Dressed too casually • Being late • Talk too much/talk too little
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Where do I go for more help with my interview?

- Join Smooth-Talkers: Public Speaking & Interview Skills Club. Meetings Bi-Weekly, Wed. @330pm - 530pm. Magner Workshop Section or Email BCSmoothTalkers@gmail.com
- If you are very nervous review some tips on dealing with [interview anxiety](#).
- [Review examples of behavioral interviews.](#)
- Review [Recruiters Tips on Interviewing.](#)
- [Review Tips on Phone interviews.](#)
- [Top 10 Ways to Get an Interview.](#)
- For enrolled students: Set up a mock interview with a career counselor. Call 718-951-5696 to set up an appointment.
- Have a group interview? Here are some tips from [The Muse](#) and [Interview Guys](#) to help you prepare.
- Have a virtual interview? Review our [virtual interviews/job fairs page](#).

View These Additional Resources for Interviewing

- [Here's how to answer 'What's your biggest weakness?'](#)
- [Ask this One Question at Every Job Interview to Increase Your Chances of Being Hired](#)
- [80% of Jobs Are Not on Job Boards: Here's How to Find Them](#)
- [How to Handle Stress During a Job Interview](#)