

GUIDE TO INTERVIEW PREP

An interview is a conversation that allows you to highlight your skills, knowledge, and experience and share your story with regards to how you might fit within the organization's culture. A successful interview is highly dependent upon preparation! Follow the steps below to maximize your opportunity.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Lack of knowledge of the field or organization are regularly cited as a reason candidates do not advance in interviews. To stand out amongst the less-prepared candidates, you should first utilize resources such as Vault, Wetfeet, LinkedIn, trade or business publications for an overview of the organization and industry. Be sure to check recent news headlines about the company and read recent press release for insights. You should also perform a detailed review of the organizations website. Reach out to alumni or individuals in your network who are familiar with the organization to better understand their culture.

REVIEW YOUR CAREER COMPETENCIES

Your resume is often a source of interview questions. Be able to expand on each item on your resume and connect your experiences to the job/organization. Make sure to analyze the job description and outline any tasks you will be responsible for along with the knowledge, skills and abilities required to carry out your duties. Understanding where the position fits within the structure of the organization is critical.

PRACTICE & PREPARE

Meet with a Greene Center counselor for a mock interview. Most interviews involve a combination of resume-based behavioral questions. Practice telling your story and prepare responses for commonly asked questions. Know your way to the interview location and arrive at least 10 minutes early. You should confirm things like time and location in advance. Be sure to dress professionally.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Bring copies of your application materials (resume, cover letter, etc).
- Have a positive attitude and be aware of non-verbal contact (eye contact, posture, hand gestures, facial expressions).
- Be professional: greet the interviewer with a handshake and treat every interaction as part of the interview.
- Listen, be attentive, and communicate your excitement for the position.
- Ask clarifying questions and develop a rapport with the interviewer.
- Be genuine and flexible so you are not flustered by unanticipated questions or come off as overly scripted.
- Offer targeted and descriptive answers.
- Wait to discuss salary and benefits until after you receive an offer.
- Gather business cards from your interviewers or take note of the correct spelling of their name.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Be sure to follow up with a thank-you email within 24 hours to all of those with whom you met. Notes should personalize your experience, reiterate your qualifications, and declare an interest in the next stages of the selection process. You should also perform a post-interview analysis. Take note of positive experiences and any areas you might want to improve upon.

General and “fit” questions

- Why are you interested in this particular field of employment/field of study?
- What academic achievements are you most proud of?
- Why did you choose your major and how does it relate to your goals?
- What classes were your favorites? Least favorites?
- What would you like to be doing in five years? What are your long-term career/academic goals?
- What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- How would you describe yourself and how would others describe you?
- What are your three most significant achievements?
- When did you use persuasive skills or sales talents?
- Why should we hire/admit you?
- How have your academic experiences prepared you for a career, and what are your future academic goals?
- What would you do differently with regards to academic, co-curricular, and practical experiences?
- Why did you attend your Alma Mater?
- What do you think it takes to succeed in the job/academic program you are being interviewed for?
- Are your grades fair reflections of your academic abilities and intellectual potential?
- What motivated you to first interview with us?

Behavioral questions

- Describe when you faced problems at work that tested your coping skills. What did you do?
- Give an example of a time when you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision.
- Tell me about when you used communication skills in order to get an important point across.
- Tell me about a job experience when you had to speak up and tell others what you thought or felt.
- Give me an example of when you felt you were able to motivate co-workers or subordinates.
- Tell me about an occasion when you conformed to a policy even though you did not agree with it.
- Describe a situation in which it was necessary to be very attentive and vigilant to your environment.
- Give me an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to gain information needed to solve a problem; then tell me how you analyzed the information and came to a decision.
- Tell me about an important goal you’ve set and tell me about your progress reaching this goal.
- Describe the most significant written document, report or presentation you’ve completed.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to go “above and beyond” to get a job done.
- Specifically, what did you do in your last job in order to plan effectively and stay organized?
- What did you do in your last job to contribute toward a teamwork environment? Be specific.
- Give an example of a problem you faced on the job and how you solved it.
- Describe a situation when you positively influenced the actions of others in a desired direction.
- Tell me about a situation in the past year when you dealt with a very upset customer or coworker.
- Describe the most challenging person you’ve interacted with and how you dealt with him or her.
- Give an example of a time when you failed.

Questions for a potential employer

- How would you describe the job in terms of day-to-day roles and responsibilities?
- What qualities are you seeking in a candidate?
- What type of person would most likely succeed in these roles?
- How will my performance be judged, and by whom?
- What characteristics does it take to succeed within this organization and within this position?
- What are the best things about the job and, the most challenging requirements of the position?
- What is the typical career path and time frame associated with career development?
- How will I be trained and how can I begin preparing now?
- Who last served in this position, and what is he/she doing now?