



INTERVIEW SUCCESS STRATEGIES

Preparing You For Life After OWU!

Career
connection

OHIO WESLEYAN

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Important Evaluation Criteria

Your interview success can depend on the interviewer's first impression of you.

- Appearance: Dress appropriately & professionally (for example, slacks, a dress/skirt, a suit, and closed-toed shoes). Look neat, clean, and well-groomed.
- Punctuality: Arrive at least 10 minutes early to use the bathroom, find the interview space, and collect your thoughts.
- Greeting/Introduction: Greet each interviewer with respect. When you shake hands, make eye contact and smile. Handshakes should be firm but not aggressive.
- Body Language: Be aware of your posture and use of hands while speaking.
- Attitude: People connect to energy. Convey enthusiasm, sincerity, and positivity. Refrain from using negative language about another individual or former employer.
- Interview Responses: Do your research and then PRACTICE!
- Verbal Communication: Speak clearly and concisely. It is better to take a few moments to consider your answer than to stumble through a poor answer.

Traditional Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.

Time for your Elevator Pitch! Provide an overview of your current and recent positions, education, professional goals, and interests; clarify how they pertain to the position.

2. Why do you want to work for our company?

This question assesses whether you researched the company & the position. The more detail you provide, the better! Show enthusiasm about the company and the work you will do.

3. We have many qualified applicants. Why should we hire you?

Summarize why your background, experience, and interest in the job make you a strong "fit" by addressing your top strengths and accomplishments.

4. What are your strengths and what are your weaknesses?

Prepare for this one in advance! Provide 3 strengths and examples of how you have utilized those strengths. Provide 1 weakness / area of improvement, and spend the majority of your answer sharing how you are working to IMPROVE it.

For insights on your top strengths, take the [OWU Strengths Assessment](#) today!

Visit  owu.gallup.com

Sample response to appropriately address weakness:

"We all have opportunities to grow & improve. One area I am working on is [Ex: Public Speaking]. To improve, I took a course in [Public Speaking], and assumed leadership roles [requiring me to lead meetings]. As a result, I am more comfortable at [public speaking]."

5. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

This question is assessing motivation and long-term goals. Share a career vision consistent with the job you are interviewing for, and be authentic about pursuing leadership, education, training, etc. If you know you won't stay long at the job, don't admit this in the interview!

Behavioral Interview Questions

Behavior-based interviews are designed to elicit information about how you have performed in the past; it is a good indicator of how you will function in the future.

Use the "CAR" or "STAR" technique for strong responses:



C – Challenge - Describe the challenge that needed to be overcome.

A – Action - Explain what action you took and what specifically you did.

R – Result - Elaborate on the outcomes of your actions. This is VERY important!

*Bonus: If possible, add what your takeaway was from the experience.



S- Situation - What was the difficult situation? Give a brief background.

T- Task - Explain the responsibility, goals, and task you took on.

A- Action - What action did you take to move forward? Who/what did it involve?

R- Result - What resulted? What did you learn from this experience?

Sample Behavioral Questions: Use the "CAR" or "STAR" method to respond:

1. Give an example of a time when you had to make a difficult decision.
2. Describe a time when your team members disagreed with your ideas. What did you do?
3. Give an example of a time when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. Why was this person difficult? How did you handle the situation?
4. Give an example of a time when you were assigned a complex project. What steps did you take to prepare for and finish the project?
5. Describe a situation when you had to adjust quickly and adapt to changes.
6. Describe a particularly stressful time you faced. How did you manage your stress?
7. Have you ever disagreed with a rule or procedure? How did you handle this?
8. Give an example where you pushed yourself to do more than the minimum.
9. Describe a situation where you had to manage multiple tasks at the same time. How did you handle it?
10. Give an example of an important goal which you set in the past. How did you reach it?
11. Describe a time when you had to problem-solve in a leadership role.

Your Interview Goals

An interview's purpose: Determine whether you are right for the job and whether the job is right for you. Interviews are a two-way conversation between you and a prospective employer.

- Demonstrate through your stories and examples how your experience, knowledge, and capabilities match with the organization.
- Display energy and enthusiasm, ensuring the employer that you are the right “fit”.
- Know with whom you are speaking.
 - Make sure you have the correct spelling of names & titles.
 - Look up details on their website & LinkedIn; knowing their background can be helpful.
- Gather information that will help you decide if you really want this position. Remember – you are interviewing the company/employer as well!

Questions to Ask Employers

You are interviewing the employer just as much as they are interviewing you! Consider questions that will help you decide if you want the job. Some examples are:

- ✓ How long have you worked here? What do you like about working here?
- ✓ How will you and I be working together?
- ✓ What are some examples of the best results produced by people in this job?
- ✓ What areas need the immediate attention of the person you hire?
- ✓ How would you define your organization's culture?
- ✓ What qualities are you looking for in the person who will fill this job?
- ✓ Describe a typical day in this role/at this company.
- ✓ What kind of training would I receive?
- ✓ What activities could I engage in now to prepare me for the job if I'm hired?
- ✓ What is the retention rate for people who have been in this position?
- ✓ How important of a role does teamwork play in your company?
- ✓ What opportunities for professional development exist in your company?
- ✓ What makes people want to stay here?
- ✓ How open are managers/supervisors to different viewpoints?
- ✓ Does your company offer a mentoring program?
- ✓ What role does diversity play at this company?
- ✓ What are the next steps in the interview process?

Employer's Interview Goals

- Employers are wondering if you have the necessary skills to do the job. Most importantly, they are seeking a candidate with a personality that fits the job and the team. They want to know if you are honest, open-minded, flexible, tolerant, and a team-player.
- To ensure longevity at their organization, employers need to be convinced that you really want to work there, and that you will stay!
- **Key competencies employers identified as necessary for workplace success:**
 - Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
 - Leadership
 - Oral/Written Communications
 - Professionalism/Work Ethic
 - Teamwork/Collaboration
 - Career & Self Development
 - Information Technology Application
 - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

PREPARING YOURSELF

for an interview



BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- **KNOW YOURSELF:** The interview is a reflective experience. Spend time considering your specific example that can support your responses.
- **KNOW THE ORGANIZATION:** Be familiar with the position and the organization! A commonly asked question is: “What do you know about our company?” Answer this effectively, or employers will see this as a sign of disinterest. Pick 1-3 things that resonate with you & your values.



DURING THE INTERVIEW

Stress the positive points about yourself in a confident, factual, and honest manner. Convey enthusiasm about the position, and avoid speaking negatively.

Some tricks to keep in mind:

1. Follow the 30 second – 2 minute rule: provide a concise but thorough answer.
2. Use specific examples in each question to highlight key skills, past performance, and details about the company.
3. You can pause before (or during) your answer to a question. One trick is to say: “That is a good question. Do you mind if I take a moment to think about that?”
4. If you are not clear about the question, you can ask the interviewer to clarify.
5. Thank the interviewers for their time and ask for business cards or email addresses to follow-up.

You **MUST** come prepared with questions to ask the interviewer. These questions demonstrate your interest in the position. We recommend having 3-6 questions prepared, even if you do not have time to ask them all.



FOLLOWING THE INTERVIEW

ALWAYS send a well-written thank you note to each person with whom you interviewed within 24-hours following an interview. This professional courtesy demonstrates your consideration, enthusiasm, and appreciation for the opportunity to interview.

This follow up message can be an email or a hand-written note. Continue to follow up and provide prompt information as needed.



@owucareers



Ohio Wesleyan University



careers@owu.edu

Acing Your Virtual Interview



- Room set-up & technology quality are as important as the quality of your interview.
- Act as if you are meeting in person – if you would not do it during an in-person interview, do not do it in a virtual interview.

Room Set-Up

- Background: The focus of the interview should be on YOU and what you are saying, not what is behind you. Do not use a virtual background (may result in unnecessary technical issues.)
- Lighting: Be in a well-lit room. If possible, add a desk lamp on both sides of your screen to balance the lighting and mitigate any glare and shadows.

Technology:

- Use a laptop or desktop, not a phone.
- Do not ask if you can record the interview.
- Test your mic, applications, and camera with someone prior to your interview.
- Use a high-quality microphone or the earbuds that come with your phone.
- Look at the webcam on your laptop (not at the screen) to maintain eye contact.
- Close other applications and silence notifications so nothing “dings” during your interview.

If you need an interview space/technological assistance for your virtual interview?

Reach out to Career Connection at careers@owu.edu or drop by [Slocum 207!](#)

Complete a Mock Interview!



It's important to PRACTICE! Mock interviews help spruce up your interview skills so you are ready for the big day!

Career Connection offers...

- A "Speed Mock Interview" event every fall
- Recorded Mock Interviews from Career Catalysts & Alumni in Residence
- * See instructions below to schedule yours TODAY!



Log in to Handshake



Career Hub



Schedule an Appointment



OR email careers@owu.edu!



THE OWU CONNECTION

THINK BIG. DO GOOD. GO GLOBAL. **GET REAL.**