



Successful Interviewing

Preparation

- **Know the process**

First-round interviews are typically 30 - 60 minutes and have 3 stages:

1. Introduction - the interviewer will introduce him or herself as well as any other panelists who you will be interviewing with. You can establish positive rapport with the interviewer by giving him or her a firm handshake, smiling, making eye contact and making appropriate small talk.
2. Proving yourself - the interviewer will ask questions to attempt to determine your qualifications and fit with the company and position. Your job is to use concrete examples to show that you are the most qualified candidate.
3. Closing - the interviewer will ask if you have any questions. You should always ask a few questions to show interest in the company and position. If the interviewer does not tell you about the next step in the interview/selection process you may ask about it

- **Do the research**

One of the things your interviewer will be looking for will be your knowledge of the company and position. In order to obtain this information you will want to read the company's web site thoroughly. You can also check out web sites such as www.vault.com, www.wetfeet.com and www.linkedin.com for additional information. To make sure that you are clear about the position, carefully review the job posting or any information you have about the job for which you are interviewing.

- **Match your skills**

After you have done your research you will need to think about why you would be a good match for the job and the company. For every skill or personal quality that the employer is seeking, think of a specific example from your work, school, or extracurricular experience that demonstrates this skill.

- **Practice**

You can do a mock interview in the Career Center to practice answering typical interview questions. In addition you can review lists of sample questions (available in the Career Center) and practice with a friend who will give you candid feedback. You can also use Perfect Interview, an online resource that takes you through a virtual interview, which you can record with a webcam and review (or send to the Career Center for feedback). A link to Endicott's free Perfect Interview account can be found on the Career Center page on Gullnet.

- **Prepare questions**

Prepare some questions to ask during the interview that will help you learn more about the company and position. After conducting your research you will be able to ask richer, more specific questions which will help you to learn as much as you can.

- **Decide what to wear**

In general men should wear a suit, preferably in a dark color with white or blue, long-sleeved shirt, and a reasonably conservative tie, along with dark socks and well-polished dress shoes. Women should also choose a dark suit, with a professional looking blouse or sweater. Shoes can have mid-size heels, but don't wear open-toe or open-heel shoes. For more conservative industries, like banking, a skirt is preferred, but for most other industries, pants are acceptable. Keep jewelry and make-up to a minimum. This advice tends

to be on the more conservative side of dress, which should be fine for any interview, but it is always good to ask your networking contacts or do some research to find out the culture of your industry and the particular company. Even if the company has a business casual environment, in most cases you should dress more formally for the interview. Keep in mind that you are trying to present a mature and professional image.

At the Interview

- **The interview begins the moment you walk into the building**
In addition to arriving on time, act professionally at all times and be respectful to everyone in the organization that you meet, even those who aren't involved in your interview. Keep in mind that you are being evaluated at all times.
- **Use a firm handshake**
This conveys confidence and professionalism.
- **Be concise and keep to the point**
Listen carefully to the interviewer and give the specific information he or she is seeking. If the question is unclear, ask for clarification before your answer. If you are asked a difficult question, take the time to formulate your answer and avoid saying "um" and "uh" as a verb filler.
- **Be positive**
Avoid saying anything negative about previous supervisors, professors, or experiences. Even when you are asked a negative question, such as, "what is the worst job you've ever had," try to find a way to answer in a positive way. In your response, you could briefly describe a negative experience in the most neutral way possible, and end by saying that you learned from the experience.
- **Convey your knowledge**
Share knowledge you have learned about the company when opportunities arise during the interview. For example, if the interviewer mentions a product or program that you have read about you may want to acknowledge that you already have some knowledge of it through your research.
- **Ask questions**
While you don't want to bombard the interviewer with questions during the interview, asking a couple of thoughtful questions will show that you are engaged and are interested. It will also help you gather information about the company and position. After all, you are also interviewing the employer to make sure that the job is the right fit for you. Visit the Career Center for a list of questions to ask an employer.

Ending the Interview

- **Say "yes" to closing questions**
If the interviewer asks you if you have any questions at the end of the interview always say "yes" and ask one or two thoughtful questions that weren't addressed during the interview. If the interviewer has already addressed all of your questions you can always ask about the next step in the hiring process.
 - **Find out the next step in the process**
In all likelihood, the interviewer will tell you when a decision will be made about bringing candidates in for the next round of interviews or about making an offer. If not, you should ask when you can expect to hear from the company. It is appropriate to ask if you can follow up and in what way the interviewer would like you to follow up (via phone or email).
 - **Get a business card**
Not only will you be able to follow up with the interviewer if you have his or her card, but you will also have the correct spelling of his/her name, as well as title. If you are interviewed by more than one person, get the business card of each person who interviews you.
 - **Send a thank you note**
Send one to each person who interviewed you. The thank you note can be handwritten (if you have neat handwriting) or can be typed and mailed or emailed. If you send an email thank you, make sure that you
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check spelling and grammar, just as you would for a written letter. In any case, it should be brief, thanking the interviewer for his/her time, summarizing how you believe you can contribute, and reiterating your interest and enthusiasm for the position. Thank you notes should be sent within 24 hours if at all possible.

- **Evaluate your performance**

Take the opportunity to learn from your experience. There are many more interviews in your future throughout your career! Think about what you did well as well as what you could do to improve your next interview.

Helpful Resources

- **The Career Center**

The Career Center has books on interviewing, along with handouts on sample interview questions. You can also schedule a mock interview in the Career Center.

- **Interviewing Websites**

www.collegegrad.com

<http://career-advice.monster.com/>

www.jobweb.com

www.rileyguide.com

www.perfectinterview.com/indicott