



Interview Guide

The Master's University | Career Services

Interview Guide

GOALS

Preparation | Bring any anxiety before God in prayer (Phil 4:6) and be diligent in your preparation.

Honesty | Answer questions truthfully so that you and your potential employer can accurately evaluate whether you are a good fit for the company.

Connection | A perfect answer is far less important than forming a genuine connection with your interviewer.

BEFORE

Defining Success | A successful interview does not always result in a job offer. While you may initially hope to be hired, many positions will not align with your skills, abilities, and personality. In such cases, not receiving an offer may be a better alternative to being hired by a company that turns out to be a poor fit. In preparation, prioritize how you are going to interview and trust God with the results.

When should I turn down an interview?

If you see the interview as a learning opportunity, it is always worthwhile to accept the interview. If you are unsure about the position, the company, or your own qualifications, the interview is a chance to find out whether your concerns are well-founded. Even if you decide to turn down an offer, simply completing the application process will prepare you for future opportunities.

PREPARATION

Pray:

- Philippians 4:6 says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."
- Prayer is an opportunity to ask God for help, praise Him for the opportunity, and set your intentions correctly. This will help you to guard against the temptation to be proud or anxious during the interview process. Continue to rely on His help, not only before, but during and after the interview as well (1 Thess 5:17, Luke 17:11-19).

Research:

- Review the job description.
- Explore the company website to learn about their values, products, services, and culture.
- Take advantage of sites like bls.org, onetonline.org, and indeed.com to familiarize yourself with the industry.

Review your qualifications:

- Look over your resume and note applicable skills and achievements.
- Write down any additional experiences that may be relevant beyond what is listed on your resume. Think about extracurriculars, volunteering, hobbies, projects, class assignments, or anything you can think of that you may want to reference.
- Take the extra step of considering how your experience relates to the employer: how is it relevant to the company? How did it prepare you for the position? What valuable skills did it teach you?

Rehearse interview questions:

- Put together a list of possible questions (see "Sample Interview Questions").
What are common questions within the industry?
If you were conducting the interview, what would you ask?
- Once you have a list of questions, write down some notes on how you might answer the questions.
- Prepare specific examples from your experience to support your answers.
- Know what you want to communicate and be comfortable responding to the different types of questions without relying on a script.

Practice:

- Note the format of your interview (individual, group, zoom, phone, etc.) and practice accordingly.
- Schedule a mock interview with the Office of Career Services.
- Film yourself answering the questions you have gathered, and review your body language, your tone of voice, and the quality of your responses.

DURING

01 | Dress professionally. As a general rule, dress one step above what you would wear to work at the job for which you are interviewing.

02 | Prepare a portfolio with several copies of your resume (and notes if you need them).

03 | Arrive early to give yourself plenty of time to familiarize yourself with your surroundings.

04 | Turn off your phone before you enter the building to limit distractions.

05 | Introduce yourself to the receptionist and observe what's around you while you wait.

06 | When you walk in for your interview, introduce yourself and try to make a connection with the interviewer. Look around their office and ask questions to find something you have in common.

07 | Be mindful of your body language as you answer the interviewer's questions.

08 | Rather than hyper-analyzing yourself during the interview, focus on the person you are talking to, the questions they are asking, and the flow of conversation.

09 | Most likely, you will be asked if you have any questions at the end of the interview so have a few questions prepared.

10 | Thank everyone involved for their time and for the opportunity as you leave.

A Note on Body Language

A correct understanding of body language requires a high level of self-awareness. You do not have to put on an act, but you should make sure that your nonverbal cues match your intentions. Here are a few to consider: handshake, posture, eye contact, facial expression, composure (do you appear relaxed or nervous?), etc. If you prepare well, relaxed and confident body language will come more naturally.

AFTER

- Record any information that you need to remember.
- Write down what went well and what needs to improve so that you can improve next time.
- Send a simple, 2-4 sentence thank you email 24 hours after your interview.

Hello Dave,

I want to thank you for taking the time to interview me yesterday. It was a pleasure to meet you and your team, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thanks again,
John Smith

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

Almost every interview will start with some version of this question. Think of your response as a very brief narrative about yourself:

- Past: discuss previous relevant experience to establish context
- Present: address your current role and recent accomplishments
- Future: discuss what you want to do next, why you're interested in this job, and why you'd be a good fit

How did you find out about this position?

This is a great opportunity to show your passion for and connection to the company.

Why do you want this position?

There are two parts to this question: "Why do you want to work in this specific role?" And "why do you want to work at this company?"

What are your greatest professional strengths?

Talk about strengths that are a) genuine: not just what the employer wants to hear b) relevant: focus on your skills that will provide the most value to the company.

What do you consider to be your weakness?

Don't dodge the question ("I'm a perfectionist," "I care too much about my job"). Be honest and identify a genuine area you want to improve on, and how you are working to do so.

Tell us about a challenge or conflict you have faced and how you dealt with it.

Much like the first question, frame your answer as a story. Share an actual case from your experience that demonstrates your ability to overcome difficulty, rather than offering an abstract solution.

Was there ever a time that you disagreed with a decision that was made?

Always be professional in how you talk about your past employer.

What do you know about our company/organization?

Take time to research the company before the interview. Become well-versed in their focus and culture.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

Hiring managers want to know if you are realistic, motivated, and if this position fits in to your goals.

Tell us about one of your most fulfilling achievements.

Start by giving context but spend most of your time describing the action you performed and the results that you produced.

What is your leadership style?

Provide a specific example to validate your claim and to avoid conventional, formulaic answers.

What do you like to do outside of work?

This is a case where your answer does not have to relate directly to the job. Interviewers want to get a feel for your personality so open up and share some of your hobbies and interests.

Do you have any questions for us?

This is a great opportunity to learn more about the company. You can ask about the position, the team, the company, or about the personal experience of the interviewer.

- What would your expectations be for me in this role; how can I go above and beyond?
- How did you first learn about the company?
- What opportunities are there for progression and training?
- Can you describe the work culture of this organization?
- What is your favorite thing about working for this company? What's been the most valuable thing you've learned?