

Interviewing Strategies

PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS

You will want to research the organization that you're applying to. Be aware of any industry or company news that could come up in the interview. Check the company's website, newsletters, and social media to be sure you're knowledgeable of current events. Consider talking to your network to get valuable insight and tips.

TYPES OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Opener/Self-descriptive- Opening questions are generally similar, and because of this they are easy to be prepared for. Your answer should address your experiences, qualifications, and goals.

Examples

- Tell me about yourself.
- Introduce yourself
- How would you describe yourself?
- What is your greatest strength?

Behavioral- Behavioral questions are designed to see how you've handled challenges in the past.

Examples

- Tell me about a time when you worked on a team.
- When was a time when you had to work under pressure?
- Describe the most innovative or creative thing you have done in your work experience

Negative- Negative questions address one of your weaknesses or failures in order to determine if you have some level of self-awareness. You should also demonstrate that you are able to put into action a process for improvement.

Examples

- What is your greatest weakness?
- Tell me about a time when you failed.
- Tell me about a time when you had a conflict with a co-worker. How did you handle it?

Situational- Situational questions are designed to see how you would make decisions on the job. You may be given a situation or case and asked to describe how you would handle it. It is advisable to give examples if possible.

Examples

- What would do if you found out a co-worker wasn't contributing to a project?
- If you were to put together a team, what qualities would you look for in teammates?
- What would you do if you faced resistance or opposition when introducing a new idea or policy to a team or work group?

Closing- Closing questions are always asked in some form. You should summarize your skills and abilities, directly addressing why you are a good candidate.

Examples

- Why should we hire you?
- Why do you believe that you are a good candidate for this position?
- Is there anything else that you would like to add?

RESPONDING TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

When answering interview questions, your answers should typically be 30-90 seconds. Think of your responses to those questions as opportunities to share who you are and what you could bring to the organization, as it relates to the job. When responding to questions:

- Touch upon aspects of your skill-set, education, and experience that are relevant to the position you are applying for. In addition, offer examples.
- If a weakness or an area of development comes up during the interview, explain how you are improving and developing that skill set.
- When outlining your career goals be sure they align with the position and company you are applying to.
- Ask your own questions about the company, position, training, and working environment- doing so shows genuine interest.
- Request that your interviewer clarify their question if necessary or inquire whether you've fully answered their question.

S.T.A.R METHOD

The S.T.A.R. Method is a technique for answering questions that helps you structure your answers in a way that gives the interviewer all of the relevant information about a specific qualification for a job.

Situation- Tell the interviewer about a specific challenge or situation. Give your audience context and enough detail to understand the story.

Task- What were you trying to achieve? What was the assignment? Tell the interviewer what you were trying to get accomplish in this situation

Action- What did you do? If there was a problem or challenge, how did you handle it? Tell your interviewer what you did and why.

Results- What was the outcome of this situation? Did you meet your objective? Don't forget to tell your interviewer what you learned from this experience, and how have you applied that knowledge since.

TIPS FOR INTERVIEWS

- Always greet interviewers with a firm handshake.
- Use titles such as Ms., Mr., Dr., etc. unless prompted to do otherwise.
- Speak clearly and deliberately at a conversational speed.
- Maintain eye contact with interviewers
- Sit up straight in your chair. Don't lean too far forward or too far back.
- Be confident friendly and sincere

PRACTICE

- Stop by the CRC for an Express Drop-In Mock Interview
- Log into Gator CareerLink and use the Virtual Mock Interview Module
- Make a Career Planning Appointment to practice with a CRC staff member

FEEDBACK



ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS

- Turn off your cell phone completely.
- Arrive approximately 10 minutes early
- Bring a few copies of your resume on resume paper to provide to interviewers
- Dress business professional in a suit and have clean, polished dress shoes
- When entering an interview room, shake hands, make eye contact, and introduce yourself to every individual in the room.
- Always ask for contact information, such as a business card, after an interview.
- When exiting the room, shake hands, make eye contact, and thank each of your interviewers.
- Never discuss salary in a first round interview unless the interviewer brings it up.

FOLLOWING UP AFTER AN INTERVIEW

Follow-up with a thank you email or card within 24 hours of an interview. After an interview, you may not hear right away as to whether or not you've been hired. You can email either the HR Representative or Hiring Manager a week after an interview to see if they have any additional questions or need further information. After that, only initiate contact via email or phone once a week. The hiring process can be lengthy, so be patient.

PHONE INTERVIEWS

Phone interviews are typically short interviews typically designed to help the company decide whether to schedule a face-to-face interview. To help you maintain your focus during a phone interview:

- If possible, perform the interview in an empty room to eliminate distractions.
- Turn off call-waiting to avoid any interruptions.
- Minimize background noise, e.g., avoid typing, playing music in the background, or taking the call on speaker phone.
- Answer the phone by stating your name.
- Have your resume and a short list of accomplishments nearby to remind of things to mention during the interview.
- Smile. Even though your interviewers cannot see it, smiling brings energy and excitement to your voice.
- Be concise. You will not have non-verbal cues from the interviewer about when to stop speaking.

VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS

Virtual interviews help companies save resources while still seeing your personality and mannerisms. Here are some tips to make your virtual interview a success:

- Be sure that your username or handle is professional
- Make sure that you are in a quiet, well-lit location with a solid internet connection.
- Close other applications on your computer, especially if they might make noise during the call.
- If you are using a laptop, be sure that you are plugged into an outlet.
- Address any technology problems immediately. It's better to stop the interview than to give an inaccurate answer, because you didn't understand the question.
- Dress like you would for an in-person interview.
- Be sure your background is not cluttered or distracting to the interviewers
- Avoid wearing patterns like stripes, hounds tooth or gingham. They have an odd effect on the camera that can be distracting
- Look directly into the camera, not the screen. It gives the impression of making eye contact.
- Be sure that the camera gives a good shot of your head, shoulders, and hands. Body language and non-verbal cues are important, so you want to be sure that the upper half of your body is visible.
- Smile and try to keep a pleasant facial expression for the duration.
- Use your notes sparingly. The interviewer can see your eyes, so it is important that you are not obviously reading from your notes.