

The purpose of a job interview is to reveal if a candidate will do good in the position and in the company. The employer will explore your experience, skills, abilities, personality, motivation and career interests to determine this. Although interviewing can be nerve wracking, remember that the employer wants you to be their 'perfect fit' just as much as you do – they're on your side.

Phase 1

Interview preparation

- **Research the company.** Visit their website or LinkedIn and learn about their vision, mission, values, projects, media coverage, etc. If you know anyone who has worked with or for them, or has interviewed there, ask them about their experiences.
- **Review the job posting.** Always save a copy of any job posting you apply for. If you forgot and it has been taken down, review similar job postings online. Refresh your memory on the job requirements, responsibilities and expectations.
- **Review your application.** Be ready to talk about any information shared on your resume or cover letter.
- **Practice.** See our [list of interview questions](#) and practice answering them with friends, family, or by yourself in front of a mirror. Make some brief notes about key stories and examples where you demonstrated your ability to perform components of this job.

Tip: Career Services offers one-on-one interview prep sessions with a professional. [Book an appointment](#) before your next job interview.

- **Dress for the job.** Check the mask culture and requirements of the company. Choose an appropriate outfit and make sure it is clean and wrinkle-free beforehand, even if the interview is virtual.
- **Prepare for the location.** If the interview is in person, know how to get to the location, how long it takes to arrive, which bus to take or where to park. For a virtual interview, find a quiet room with good lighting and internet. Make sure all links and equipment are working (such as your camera and mic), and that no mess shows in your background. Be mindful of different time zones.
- **Gather your supplies.** Bring two or more copies of your resume, a pen and paper for taking notes, and a list of questions you have about the company and position. Prepare and bring your [interview portfolio](#) if it is requested. The interviewer may ask for references, so it's a good idea to bring a [list of references](#). Bring any other documents the employer requests.

Phase 2

Actual Interview

- **Build rapport.** For an in person interview, the interview starts when you walk in. Arrive 10 minutes early with your phone already off and away. Be polite and professional with everyone you meet. Greet the interviewer with a handshake, elbow bump or slight bow, depending on your comfort level. Wait to be seated until a chair is offered. Use the interviewer's last name unless asked to do otherwise. Sit straight, maintain eye contact, control nervous behaviour and smile.
- **Answer questions.** You will likely be asked about motivations, strengths, weaknesses, achievements, experience overcoming obstacles, career plans and supervision preferences. Take the time to collect your thoughts, and don't be afraid to ask for clarification. If you have little experience in an area of questioning, provide an example of when you succeeded at something similar and let them know you are looking forward to developing further in that area. Avoid giving yes/no or vague answers. Instead, answer using the **STAR** formula:

Situation – present a challenging situation that you were in

Task – clarify your responsibility in that situation; what you needed to achieve

Action – describe the steps you took to overcome the challenge

Result – recount the outcome of your actions; a success story or a lesson learned

Phase 3

- **Show your knowledge.** Always be trying to highlight your most relevant qualifications. Show the employer that you would benefit their business. And, when possible, link some of your answers to information you learned about the company.
- **Keep it positive.** Even when asked about negative experiences, focus on what was learned. Do not talk negatively about previous employers or colleagues, even if asked.
- **Ask questions.** Come prepared with at least three thoughtful questions about the job, company or industry. Questions may be left to the end of the interview or you may ask them throughout. Remember that an interview is not just about the employer discovering if they like you. It is also about you discovering if you like the employer and the company. Ask about accountabilities, work environment, organizational culture, reporting structure and career building opportunities.
- **End professionally.** Last impressions are also important. Use the opportunity to confirm your interest in the position. At this point of the interview, you may be asked for references. Ask when you can expect to hear from the employer or when you can reach out to them. Thank the interviewer(s) for their time, ask for business cards and offer a handshake, elbow bump, or slight bow again.

Post-Interview Actions

- **Summarize the interview.** Make notes about questions, impressions, information received and promises made. Think about what you did well and what you would have liked to do better. This can help you prepare for future interviews.
- **Reflect on the interview.** From what you learned, do you think you will be happy in the position and at that company? Is it the type of work environment that you will thrive in?
- **Send a thank you.** Within 24 hours, send a note or email to each interviewer. Remember to thank them for their time and reiterate your interest in the position.

The results

- **You got the job!** Respond within 48 hours. Don't immediately accept the job offer without considering pros and cons. Discuss terms of employment, salary, hours, benefits and working conditions before you accept. If you want to negotiate compensation, do your homework on starting rates. If you cannot negotiate a higher salary, consider negotiating on hours, salary review dates or vacation days. Once you have received a formal letter of employment, provide a formal letter of resignation to any current employers with at least 2 weeks notice.

Tip: If you are unsure of how to negotiate the terms of your employment, read our tips on [negotiating](#).

- **We've chosen another candidate.** Stay gracious and polite. Ask for feedback on what you did well in the interview and what you might improve on. Use the opportunity to network and ask about industry contacts who may be hiring. Don't let it get you down and keep going with your job search.

Tip: If you can find out which candidate they chose, try checking what their last job was on their LinkedIn. Their previous position might now be available.

Tip: If you are having trouble finding and landing a job, brush up on the steps required to successfully and effectively [carry out a job search](#).

Phase 4

NEED MORE HELP?

Book an appointment with us through [MyCareerHub](#).

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