

Interviewing Skills

Office of Career Services

Interviewing Skills

Interviews allow employers to assess you as a person rather than qualifications listed on a resume. Employers want to gauge whether or not you will be a good fit for their organization.

The interview is also an opportunity for you to learn more about the employer. The interview is considered to be the most important part of the “hiring decision”.

What Employers Want

- Self-confidence
- Effective communication skills
- Dependable work ethic
 - Promptness
 - Accuracy and efficiency
 - Teamwork
 - Leadership
 - Initiative
 - Flexibility
- Critical thinking and analytical skills
- Personality
- Creativity
- Interpersonal skills

Interview Process

If an employer is interested in you after reviewing your application packet (resume and cover letter) they will contact you to set up an interview. The following are some tips to keep in mind before, during and after the interview:

Before the Interview

- Research the employer
 - Industry news
 - Hiring trends
 - Current events
 - Diversity policy
 - Clients
- Practice interviewing with a Career Counselor
- Write out questions you may have
- Determine what you are going to wear and have it dry cleaned if necessary
- Take care of all grooming needs at least 1 day prior to the interview
- Get directions to the interview site
- Know the names and job titles of the interviewer(s)
- Arrive 15 minutes early

Items to Bring With You

- Directions to the interview site
- Extra copies of your resume
- A list of references
- Portfolio of work samples (if applicable)
- A good writing ink pen
- A portfolio or briefcase to carry your paperwork

During the Interview

- When making initial contact with the interviewer(s), use a firm handshake and introduce yourself
- Maintain eye contact, good posture and pleasant facial expressions
- Listen carefully to the questions being asked and think your answers through. Ensure that you fully understand the question before providing a response and ask for an example for clarity
- Express a positive attitude about former employers even if discussing an unpleasant situation
- Be truthful about your background and qualifications

During the Interview

- Do not give short or rambling answers to questions, find a balance
- Do not be afraid to ask the interviewer to repeat a question or give an example
- Do not use slang and “um” “uh” “you know” “like”
- Do not address the interviewer by their first name
- Do not dominate the conversation or appear arrogant
- Do not interrupt the interviewer when they are speaking
- Do not discuss your personal problems
- Do not discuss salary and benefits; wait until an offer has been made

After the Interview

- Ask the interviewer(s) what the next step in the process will be and their expected timeline to contact their preferred candidate
- Thank the interviewer/panel for their time
- Send a thank you letter or email to everyone who interviewed you reiterating how your skills fit the company's needs and your excitement about employment with them no later than the next day
- Review your notes and research the information that was presented in the interview
- Be patient and continue your job search until you hear back from the employer
- Contact the interviewer if you do not hear back from them when they said you would

Questions You Will Be Asked

You will generally be asked two types of questions:
Traditional or Behavior-based

Traditional Questions

Traditional interview questions are designed to pinpoint aspects of your basic personality, work ethic, and attitude. When practicing answers to traditional interview questions, try to develop answers that illustrate how your education and life experiences will benefit the employer.

Traditional Questions

For Example: Tell me about yourself?

“I bring many skills and abilities to your organization. I will be graduating from Fayetteville State University in May with a major in Business Administration. I have outstanding organizational, interpersonal, and technical skills. My key strength is the ability to communicate effectively with all types of people which is a skill that your company values.”

Traditional Questions

Remember, this is a job interview, not a psychological or personal interview. The interviewer is interested in the information about you that relates to your qualifications for employment, such as education, work experiences and extracurricular activities.

Traditional Questions

Additional questions that may be asked:

- What are your strengths, weaknesses and interests?
- Why should I hire you for this position?
- What are your long-range goals?
- What can you tell me about our company?
- How do you think a friend or professor who knows you well would describe you?
- Describe the ideal job for you?

Traditional Questions

- What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
 - What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
 - What criteria are you using to evaluate the organization for which you hope to work?
 - Are you willing to relocate?
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- Describe a situation in which you worked as part of a team. What role did you take on? What went well and what didn't?

Behavior-based Questions

The other type of questions you may be asked are behavior-based. These questions are designed to examine how you have responded to specific situations in the past and serve as an indicator of how you may behave in the future.

*See the Behavior-based Interviews presentation for more information

Questions You Should Ask

- What are the company's strengths and weaknesses compared to its competition?
- Could you explain your organizational structure?
- How will my leadership responsibilities and performance be measured and by whom?
- What are some of the skills and abilities necessary for someone to succeed in this job?
- What kind of work can I expect to be doing the first year?

Questions You Should Ask

- What is the organization's plan for the next 5 years and how does this department fit in?
- What are the day-to-day responsibilities of this job?
- Could you describe your management style and the type of employee who will fit well with it?
- What is the company's policy on providing seminars, workshops, and training for employees?

The 2nd Interview

The 2nd Interview

If an employer would like to speak with you in more detail you will be asked to come in for a second interview. During the second interview, you may meet with senior management and your potential colleagues and supervisor. This is an opportunity for you to learn more specifics about the job you will be performing and to follow-up on your post-interview research. Use this interview to further expound upon your skills and to get answers that will help you make an informed decision if you are offered the job.

Interviewing Skills

Following these steps should help you will feel confident about your ability to perform well in an interview and hopefully, you will land that dream job.

Contact the Office of Career Services to schedule an appointment for a mock interview, discuss career options, or get assistance in writing your cover letter and resume, and other career-related matters.

Monday, Wednesday 12:00pm – 4:00pm

Tuesday, Thursday 9:00am-1:00pm

Friday 10:00am-12:00pm

SBE Suite 230 or 672-1205

www.unctsu.edu/CareerServ/

*Resource used in gathering this information : CAREER Planning Guide 2007