INTerviewing Guidebook

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES

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INTERVIEW COMPONENTS

There are three components to a good interview - **Pre-Interview**, **Interview**, and **Post-Interview** - all with tasks important to winning the job. Remember, the interviewer has already seen your resume and they want to meet you. Use these tips to feel prepared and confident going in to any interview.

3 INTERVIEW COMPONENTS

1. PRE-INTERVIEW

Do Your Research

This step is critical to your success in an interview. You may have answered all of their questions about “Why you?” perfectly, but if you can’t in turn answer “Why them?” this shows a lack of interest.

Memorize the job description so that you can tailor all of your responses to refer to exactly what they are looking for in a candidate.

Know the company, the department, all of the details. Memorize their mission statement. Be familiar with all of the people who work in their office and their backgrounds. Research current and past projects, successes of the company, and be comfortable referring to this information during the interview. It is better to be over-prepared and have this information ready than under-prepared.

**QUICK TIP:**

YOU CAN’T WIN THE JOB IN THE FIRST 10 MINUTES OF AN INTERVIEW BUT YOU CAN LOSE IT 100 WAYS IN THE FIRST 30 SECONDS.

Practice Makes Perfect

Interviewstream is a software available free to all GSEHD students on the OCS website. This tool allows you to practice your responses to typical interview questions. Your responses are recorded so you can review them on your own or you can request feedback from the OCS team.

Know Your Route

If you are not familiar with the location, make the trip a day in advance, check out the parking options, and know exactly how much time you need. NEVER EVER BE LATE!
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Come Equipped
Bring a few copies of your resume, more than one pen, and something to write on. You should invest in a professional padfolio to hold your resumes and take notes in.

Be 7 Minutes Early
Seven minutes is the perfect amount of time – you are demonstrating that you are early, but not too early. Being too early gives you lots of time to make yourself nervous and if you are more than seven minutes early, you may be imposing on the manager’s time. If you are 30 minutes early and the manager has 20 minutes of work to do before your meeting it will throw off the timing and rhythm of the interview.

Dress for the Job You Want, NOT the Job You Have
Wear a business suit in a conservative color, even if it is a job that you would not wear a suit to work daily. You want to make the best possible impression, and dressing professionally demonstrates that you are taking this interview seriously.

GOOGLE YOURSELF
Prospective employers will Google you. Make sure you know what they will find.

Make social pages private during your job search. This is about risk management – don’t give employers additional information that might give them a reason to disqualify you. Maybe the employer really hates the Patriots, but you are a dedicated Pats fan on Twitter. You want to make sure they are focused on the important information – your professional identity.

If you are on Facebook - use the “View As” feature to see your page as people you aren’t friends would see it. You may be surprised to see what information is public that you believed to be private.
2. INTERVIEW

Be Prepared

Have a list of questions based on your research ready to ask the interviewer. You should have some questions about the company, office environment, as well as logistical questions. It is appropriate at the end of the interview to ask what their timeline is for filling the position and what the next steps in the process are.

If the interviewer asks "Do you have any other questions?" always ask another question, even if you have already asked all the questions you had prepared.

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions asked by Employer

1. Why did you apply to this job?
2. How are you fit for our team?
3. What do you know about our school/company?
4. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
5. What is a challenge you faced at work and how did you overcome it?
6. Tell me about yourself...

Questions asked by Interviewee

1. How long has this position been open?
2. I have read the job description thoroughly, but what are you looking for in a candidate?
3. How would you describe the company’s culture?
4. When is your desired start date?
5. Why is this position available?
6. What is expected in the first 90 days on the job?
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Get to the Point
Most interviews start the same - “Tell me about yourself.” Be succinct and get to the point. Are your hobbies relevant to the job? Does the employer care where you grew up? No. Use this opportunity to talk about your professional experience framed to fit the job description.

Be Concise
Be concise and confident in your answers. Just because the interviewer does not immediately ask another question does not mean you have to fill the space. You do not want to ramble on and on.

BUT… there is a difference between concise and curt. If asked a close-ended question like “Do you have experience working with SPSS?” your answer should start “Yes, and…” or “No, but…”

Sit Up Straight
Be aware of your non-verbals. What is your posture communicating? Make sure to sit up and make eye contact with interviewers. This communicates confidence and professionalism.

Ask Permission to Take Notes
This will help you to remember questions that may come to mind during the course of the interview. Also, it is critical to write down the names and titles of each person in the interview. If you are taking notes, do not write every detail. Jot notes down quickly and re-engage with the interviewer. You don’t want to have your head down, scribbling notes the entirety of the interview.

Don’t Be Afraid to Ask
An interview is better if it is a conversation and not an interrogation. Asking questions like "Did I answer your question?" and "Was that what you were looking for?" demonstrate that you are engaging in a dialogue. They also provide you with on the spot feedback and give you another opportunity to answer the question with a more on-target response. Your last question should be “Is there anything I may be missing?”
3. POST-INTERVIEW

Follow Up
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Thank You Notes
Thank you notes should be hand-written, do not send an email. A hand written note is a physical reminder of you, whereas an email is one of hundreds of emails the interviewer gets a day.

Your thank you note should be brief. This is a genuine expression of gratitude, it is not an additional opportunity to sell yourself. Say thank you for their time and consideration and mention something specific you enjoyed about the conversation.

The team in the Office of Career Services is eager to help you with cover letters, resumes, interview skills, and career planning. Please call or email to schedule an appointment so we can help you define your brand, recognize employer requirements, make a strong first impression, share your brand, and land the perfect job.

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