

Guide to In-Person Interviews

Before the Interview

- Research the position and organization/employer thoroughly
- Obtain the interviewer's name and title
- Confirm the time, date, and location of the interview
- Identify your skills that relate to the job; review your resume, and be able to elaborate on it
- Review frequently asked questions, practice interviewing, and request feedback from others for improving your interview skills; do a mock interview with a Career Connections staff member
- Prepare 3-5 questions to ask the interviewer
- Know the general salary range for the position
- Plan what to wear

During the Interview

- Arrive early (10-15 minutes) and bring extra copies of your resume
- Relax, be yourself, and be positive
- Follow the lead of the interviewer (Do not try to take over)
- Listen closely to the questions; ask for clarification if needed
- Be concise in your answers; give concrete examples to back up your claims
- Never slight a former employer or colleague
- Be aware of your posture and body language
- Be sure to clarify any follow-up arrangements

After the Interview

- Write a thank you letter to the interviewer(s)
- Evaluate your performance by asking yourself questions such as: "How well did I present my qualifications?," "Did I use clear, concrete examples?," "What points did I make that seemed to interest the interviewer?," "How can I improve my next interview?"
- Follow up with a phone call to find out the status of your application if the employer has not contacted you within the stated timeline

STAR Technique

Brainstorm your top 10 power stories. Think about specific instances when you made an impact for an organization and displayed strong leadership, communication, teamwork, and problem solving skills, for example. Then use the STAR technique to share the story in an interview.

Situation: Describe the situation. For instance, if using a class project, what class was it for? How many people were in your group? When did it happen?

Task: What was the problem? What was your role? What was the assignment?

Action: How did you handle the task? Focus on your own actions, not those of your group.

Result: What was the result of the situation? This is a VERY important part of the answer.

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Types of Interviews

Traditional: Gain basic information about an applicant's background, interests, skills, and reasons for applying. To prepare: Know yourself, know the company, know the fit, and tailor your answers to make them fit.

Behavioral: Based on the premise that past behavior predicts future behavior on the job. Questions are situation-based and often start with "Tell me about a time when..." To prepare: Utilize the STAR Technique.

Cases: Present the interviewee with a problem to solve. Getting the correct answer is not as important as your analysis of the problem. To prepare: Think out loud so the interviewer can see how you solve problems.

Situational: Present the interviewee with a scenario to solve. The interviewer will pose a hypothetical situation and ask the interviewee how to resolve it. To prepare: Be sure to describe desirable actions and steps you would take to resolve the situation.