



INTERVIEW BASICS

The job interview is one step away from the ultimate goal—employment! You’ve done everything right to get this far.

Because so much of the interview is based on performance, we recommend that you schedule a mock-interview with Career Center staff or peers. You might even find it helpful to script answers to possible questions as a way to prep.



TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

In many job searches, the first interview is a **phone screening**. This is often conducted by an HR representative and is intended to better understand your qualifications and background. One-sided video interviews are starting to fulfill this function as well. The **face-to-face** interview can involve one or multiple staff, asking questions and assessing your candidacy. A **group interview** features multiple candidates for the same or related roles. Typically, you are asked to deliver a group activity or work as a team.

Technical interviews are common among engineering, science or IT roles. Essentially, they assess your technical knowledge—as well as your analytical thinking skills. In a **case study interview**, common for some business and consulting roles, you will be presented with a challenging business scenario to investigate and propose a solution.

Check out the “Master the Video Interview” handout for more details.

You and Your Qualifications

- “Tell me about yourself.”
- “What interests you about this position?”
- “What is your greatest strength and greatest weakness?”
- “What do you think your biggest challenge might be in this role?”

TIPS FOR ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS:

- ✓ Make a claim about yourself and provide evidence.
- ✓ Be positive, specific and succinct.
- ✓ Try to limit your answer to two minutes at most.

EXAMPLE:

“I am interested in this role because I enjoy refining operational systems. In my last role, I audited best practices for cultivating new donors, and I proposed a new CRM tool for tracking stakeholder relationships.”

Behavioral Questions

A behavioral question is a question that asks you to tell a story or give a specific example of something. In general, these questions focus on assessing your soft skills, like conflict resolution, leadership, teamwork or change management.

The parts of the story the interviewer is most interested in are the specifics of the situation you faced and the action you took. Keep it specific, brief, positive and authentic.

EXAMPLE:

"In a previous role, I navigated relationships with diverse stakeholders, including management, staff and customers. Each group had a very different perspective on our product, and I started every conversation by attempting to understand their unique needs/perspectives and creating a solution that was high impact but easy to deploy."

- "Can you give an example of a time you led a project? Describe your approach to working with a team."
- "Tell us about a time you had to change your approach to a project, or how you dealt with an obstacle or failure."
- "Can you describe a situation in which you experienced conflict in the workplace and how you handled it?"

Scenario Questions

- "What would you do if a subordinate or team member's work was not up to expectations?"
- "How would you deal with a colleague at work with whom you seem to be unable to build a successful working relationship?"
- "You don't have the information you need to prioritize your projects. Your co-workers and supervisor are unavailable for you to ask for guidance. How do you handle the situation?"

A scenario question is when you are given a hypothetical situation and asked what you would do in that situation.

Answer the questions thoughtfully, describing your desired outcome and approach to achieving it in challenging professional situations.

This is an opportunity to demonstrate the confidence and decisiveness of a leader. Don't be afraid to ask questions or get clarification!

These questions are designed to see how you think quickly, handle pressure or perform under duress.

First and only rule: RELAX! You've got this! Do your best, and be authentic.

"Gotcha" Questions

- "Describe yourself in one word."
- "Sell me this pen."
- "What would you change about the design of a baseball hat?"
- "What are the last three books you've read?"