



# PREPARE FOR YOUR INTERVIEW

**Preparation is key to a successful interview. It's more than having good answers to likely questions—when you're prepared, you're more relaxed and confident. When you're prepared, you *look* prepared.**

It pays to take the right steps before—and after—a job interview to maximize the chances of making a positive impression and getting the offer. Here's a step-by-step guide to making sure you're ready!



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## STUDY THE JOB AND MATCH IT TO YOUR STRENGTHS

The first step in your preparation is to carefully review the job description. Make a list of the knowledge, skills and other qualifications outlined in the description. Then, list your strengths and qualifications and match them to the description. Write out examples of these strengths in action. This will prepare you for job- and you-specific interview questions.

2

## RESEARCH THE COMPANY

Be sure to walk into the interview fully prepared for the inevitable “So, tell me what you know about us” interview question. Review the website, starting with the “about us” section. Know the way they describe their mission, their business, their products and services, and their customers. Search the web for industry articles. Reach out to your network for any insights. Jot down a few notes. Think of questions to ask about the organization.

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## PRACTICE FOR THE INTERVIEW

Take the time to write out likely questions and your answers. Practice your delivery with a career center advisor or peer. This will help you feel relaxed and confident in the interview.

*Also check out DePaul's “Interview Basics” [handout](#)*

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## PLAN YOUR CLOTHING

See our “*Dress for Success*”  
handout for some ideas.

What you wear will play a significant part in the impression you make, especially initially. Regardless of the company or position, you’ll want to dress in clean, well-pressed, reasonably new attire. Err on the side of more formal—underdressing for the interview can reflect negatively on your interest in the position. If you need interview-friendly attire, check out the Career Center’s Career Closet—you can get up to four articles of clothing, including jackets, tops, and accessories for free!

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## BE PREPARED, LOOK PREPARED

What to bring to the interview? It’s a good idea to bring extra copies of your resume, a list of references, your notes on the company, questions you’ve prepared and blank paper for note-taking. Leave your phone—turned off—in your purse or pocket.

*Worried about  
being focused?*

*You can bring a journal  
or notebook to jot down  
short notes about their  
answers to your questions  
or even just to give your  
hands something to do!*

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## BE PROMPT

Be sure you’re familiar with the interview location and the best way to get there. If you drive, know the parking situation. Give yourself plenty of time—it’s much better to spend a few minutes in the lobby or parking lot with a last review of your notes than rushing in, breathless and apologizing.

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## MAKE IT A CONVERSATION

A successful interview is a conversation that starts with a firm handshake. Be a great listener, making eye contact and asking questions as appropriate. Maintain eye contact when you speak. Understand the point of the question and get to the point in your answer. Observe body language. You can tell when the interviewer is ready to move on to the next subject.

Be sure to have questions of your own. Toward the end, let the interviewer know you think you’re an excellent fit for the position and you’re highly interested. And thank them for their time!

See our “*Ask Great  
Questions*” Career Center  
handout for some ideas.

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## FOLLOW UP WITH A NOTE

A personal thank you note, whether email or handwritten, is always a good idea. Tell them how much you enjoyed the conversation. Briefly reiterate your belief that you’re the right person for the role and the reasons why.