



## INTERVIEW TIPS

### FIRST THINGS FIRST

- **Be excited and confident**
  - Interviews are an investment of time and money for a company, and an invitation to interview means that the employer is serious about you as a candidate.

### HOW TO PREPARE

- **Prepare the basics**
  - Ask: What does this company do?
    - Review the website past the home page and take notes on what stands out to you.
  - Ask: What would I do in this job?
    - Review the job description and take notes on what stands out to you.
  - Ask: Why did I apply? / Why am I a good fit?
    - Write down what appeals to you about the company and the job and what makes you a logical fit.
- **Practice standard background interview questions**
  - Tell me about yourself. Why Texas Tech? Why your major? Tell me more about XYZ on your resume? What are you involved in on campus?
    - Practice talking through your background and be able to talk about anything on your resume. Always stay positive in your answers.
  - Why should we hire you? Why our company?
    - Draw from your preparation and research on the company and position.
  - What are your strengths and weaknesses?
    - When talking about strengths, give brief examples to back up each strength. When talking about weaknesses, stay professional and describe how you're working to improve.
  - Other types of questions: What are your career goals? What motivates you? What is your greatest accomplishment? What is something we should know about you that isn't on your resume? How would you describe yourself in three words? Do you work best alone or as part of a team? What do you do when you don't know the answer to something? Describe your process for completing tasks/projects?
- **Practice behavioral/situational interview questions**
  - Tell me about a time when: You failed? Someone called you out or criticized your work? You had to work with someone difficult? You didn't have what you needed for a project? You faced an ethical dilemma? You were under a lot of pressure?
    - These are all the same type of question, essentially asking how you handle challenges. Prepare several examples (~3-5) describing times when you faced a challenge and worked to overcome it as an individual or as part of a team.
    - Keep the STAR format in mind: S (Situation), T (Task/Problem), A (Action), and R (Result). Focus on listing your Actions and explaining Results since that tells the most about you. Remember to talk about what you learned in addition to what happened.
    - Draw examples from different areas to show versatility, e.g. work, projects, classes, student orgs, extracurriculars, time abroad, etc.



- **Be ready for tricky interview questions**
  - If you were an animal, what would you be? What is the angle between the hour and minute hand at 3:15pm? How would you explain the internet to a 5yr old?
    - Don't panic! These types of questions are asked because you can't prepare for them. Interviewers are looking for your thought process more than a right answer. Break down the question, explain your thought process, and ask clarifying questions if needed.
    - Don't be afraid of silence with any question. It is okay to pause and think for a moment.
- **Prepare for technical interviews**
  - Technical questions vary based on the role and may not be asked for internships or entry-level positions. You can always ask – will this interview have a technical component? If so, is there a recommended way to prepare?
  - If they cannot give detail, check the job description: what type of technical skills are listed as required for the job? Be prepared to talk about/demonstrate your skill level with each.
  - You should also be prepared to give examples of how you've learned/developed any technical skills listed on your resume.
  - Don't panic! Talk through your thought process with each question and show your work if there is a written component. If you get stuck, don't give up; ask questions and remain positive. Interviewers are often looking more for your attitude under pressure than a right answer.
- **Prepare questions for the interviewer**
  - Even though it's great to ask questions throughout an interview, you should also prepare for what will probably be their last question: "Do you have any questions for me?"
  - Assuming you fully understand the role at this point, ask about personal experience at the company (e.g. What has your career path been like within the company? What is your favorite part of working here? What is a typical Tuesday like for you? What skills have been most helpful to you? What qualities have you seen make a successful engineer or intern at X company?)
  - Do NOT ask about salary or benefits, especially in the initial interview.
  - End with a question about process if not already covered: What does the rest of the application process look like from here? When can I expect to hear back?
- **Concluding the interview**
  - End on a positive note by thanking them and reiterating your interest in the role. If you don't already have their contact information, ask for a business card or a way to follow up.

## PHONE, VIRTUAL, AND PRE-RECORDED VIDEO INTERVIEWS

### Phone, Virtual, and Pre-Recorded Video Interviews

- Prepare for the content of the interview just like you would for an in-person interview (see above)
- Try to create the same environment as an in-person interview. Dress professionally, sit or stand at a desk or table, keep your shoulders back, smile, and limit distractions and interruptions.

### Video/Pre-Recorded Interview Extra Tips

- Test lighting – try to get consistent lighting that highlights your face.
- Test camera angle – prop up your laptop where you are looking directly into the camera.



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- Test background – try to have as professional and as non-distracting of a background as possible. It's okay to be in your room, but ensure your room is neat and as professional as possible.
- Plug in your device to ensure a strong battery charge throughout the interview, and connect to ethernet if possible for strong internet connection.
- If you are answering pre-recorded questions, ensure that you fully read the instructions in advance since employers can set their own guidelines. You will need to be extra mindful of smiling and maintaining your enthusiasm throughout the interview since an interviewer won't be giving you cues. You should also be mindful of giving adequate detail in your answers since clarifying questions can't be asked.

### Phone Interview Extra Tips

- Ask to schedule a time if someone calls and asks to interview you on the spot.
- Take advantage of the situation! You can have all your notes in front of you for a phone interview.

### PRESENTING YOURSELF AT INTERVIEWS

- Practice non-verbals before the interview.
  - Do a mock interview at the EOC or UCC, record yourself answering questions, and/or practice with family/friends to work on phrasing and to catch habitual movements and filler words.
- Get plenty of sleep and arrive early to the interview.
- Dress comfortably but professionally. Your default dress code should be business professional, i.e. Job Fair attire, unless directed otherwise.
- Keep an open, relaxed stance with good posture and shoulders back.
- Smile, make eye contact, and nod appropriately to indicate that you are listening.
  - During a virtual interview, try to look into the camera to make eye contact.
- Practice good personal hygiene, especially before in-person interviews. Take a shower, wear deodorant, brush your teeth, etc.

### WHAT TO HAVE AT HAND

- A portfolio or nice folder with a few copies of your resume.
  - For virtual interviews, have your resume saved in an easily accessible location.
- A notepad and pen
  - Always ask if you can take notes – this will help you remember key details and provide an opportunity to break eye contact naturally while writing.

### FOLLOWING UP

- Send your interviewers a brief thank you email or connection request on LinkedIn with a thank you note within a couple days of the interview.
- **Tip:** When taking notes, use a different page for each interviewer. Write down your interviewer's name at the top of the page and take notes on your conversation. This will make it easier to write your thank you note after the interview.

**Contact Career Services at [coe.careers@ttu.edu](mailto:coe.careers@ttu.edu) with any questions.**