

Interview Tips



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Rawls College of Business

Ideally, the interview is a mutually informative dialogue where an employer learns about a candidate and vice versa.

The candidate uses the interview as an opportunity to share information about her/his background and qualifications, to express interest in the hiring organization, and to pose questions to the interviewer.

The employer uses the conversation to promote the hiring organization and to determine if a good match exists between the candidate and the position.

While this exchange of information is an integral aspect of the conversation, the “fit” between you and the interviewer(s) — how natural the conversation is, how much you enjoy one another’s company, how confident and positive you seem, and how interested they are in being stranded at an airport with you for 5 hours — can be just as important.

The more interest, enthusiasm, and motivation you display in an interview, the better your chances are for moving forward in the process. Regardless of industry, most employers are interested in the following:

- *Communication (written and verbal) Skills*
- *Proficiency in field of study*
- *Positive attitude towards work*
- *Confidence*
- *Self-motivation*
- *Interpersonal and Teamwork Skills*
- *Leadership Qualities/Potential*
- *Knowledge of the industry*
- *Organizational Skills*
- *Analytical and Problem-Solving Ability*
- *Maturity*
- *Poise*

Always remember, depending upon the nature of the job and the organization, other competencies may be evaluated more rigorously.



HOW TO PREPARE

While you cannot anticipate every question, you can prepare yourself to make the most of whatever you are asked. **Know yourself, know the organization, know the industry, and know what to ask.**



NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

This can give as much information, if not more, than your words. Be conscious of slouching back in a chair (boredom?), twiddling your thumbs (nervousness?), and crossing your arms (hostility?). If you are asked a particularly tough question, maintain your composure and take extra time to think before replying. Be sure to maintain good eye contact, which conveys confidence and honesty. During the interview, be sure to listen carefully to the interviewer and answer the question that is asked. Don’t be afraid to ask for an explanation if you don’t understand the question. It is fine to take a few moments to think before answering difficult questions, so don’t rush into your answer until you are ready (silence during an interview is perfectly acceptable, even if it is slightly uncomfortable).



STAR METHOD

Covered more in depth on page #22

You will almost always have an interview that revolves heavily around questions regarding a specific example of a past experience which s/he can use as a predictor for your future behavior. In answering these questions, be certain to describe a SPECIFIC example. After setting the context, describe your role, contribution to, or influence on that situation. Finally, always provide a statement describing the outcome of your efforts.

Interview Questions



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FREQUENTLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Tell me about yourself.
When did you know you wanted to be an xyz?
How would your friends describe you?
What makes you tick or what motivates you?
Why should I hire you?
Why did you choose your major?
What do you know about our organization?
Where do you see yourself in five years?
What is your greatest asset?

DIFFICULT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I see you received a very low grade in XXXX. Why?
How do you feel about working with numbers? What is 12% of 69?
How did you figure that out?
You strike me as graduate school material. Why are you applying for jobs?
What do you think of our organizational structure?
What is your greatest liability?
What was the worst part of your college experience?
How much do you expect to earn?

QUESTIONS TO ASK INTERVIEWERS

What areas need the immediate attention of the person you hire?
What are the major responsibilities of this position?
What attracted you to this company?
What qualities and skills are most valued at this firm?
What characteristics must one have to thrive at this organization?
What are the company's growth projections?
Whom do you identify as your major competitors?
What are your plans for new products or services?
What kind of training would I receive?
What activities could I engage in now that might help me on the job if I'm hired?
What do you see as the key issues/challenges facing the person in this job?
How has this organization/facility been affected by all the changes in the xxxx industry?
What is the time line for filling this position? (Will there be additional interviews? When can I expect to hear back?)

STAR METHOD INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Tell me about a time...
Give me an example when...
Describe how...
Have you ever led a team before?

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE AT A LOSS FOR WORDS

What if an interviewer poses a question that catches you so completely off guard that you cannot come up with an answer at all? Ideally, you can use some of the following suggestions to buy time and come up with a response:

Stall for time – ask to have the question repeated, repeat it yourself.

Ask for clarification.

Try to redirect your thought process and find an answer.

... and if all else fails ...

In a gracious and polite way, say something like "May we return to this question later on? I seem to be at a loss at the moment." (Then think of something to say as the interview proceeds!)

... and if the interviewer returns to the question and you still don't have an answer ...

"This is a question that has really stumped me for some reason. May I have your card so that I can follow up later on today with an email?" (This is a last resort, of course, but if you go this route – make sure you follow up as promised!)