

# PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW



Preparing for an interview can be nerve-wracking, but with a few preparations and the tips below, you can set yourself up for success. Whether you are applying for your dream job or you need to improve your interview skills, take notes on how to ensure you're fully prepared and confident on the big day.



Research  
the company



Review the job  
description



Practice the  
answers



Dress  
professionally



Bring a copy  
of your resume



Arrive  
early



Ask  
questions!



Follow up

## 1 BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW

"Tell me about a time when..." or "Give me an example of a situation where..." are prompts that seek your best examples of how you would satisfy the requirements of the job.

The purpose of a behavioral style interview question is to see how you behaved in the past in a certain situation as a predictor of future behavior. These behavioral interview questions are frequently asked in interviews of all types.

## 2 PHONE

This is typically the method used for the first round of interviews and will be your first "live" interaction with the employer. Make sure your cell phone has a strong signal and connection or use a landline phone. Be sure to have a professional sounding voicemail set up so that if you happen to miss the call, the employer can leave a message.

Dress professionally to help get yourself into a professional mindset and be free of distractions and background noise.

## 3 ASSESSMENT

This method will provide you the opportunity to prove your knowledge, skills, and abilities pertaining to the job. You may be required to do one or several activities in front of the interviewers and key stakeholders. These activities may involve a presentation or role-playing, for instance, and last from an hour to several days. You may have limited knowledge on what to expect in these cases. Do research with others who have interviewed with the same company to see what information you can gain to help you prepare.

## 4 VIRTUAL/VIDEO

Software such as Zoom, Skype, HireVue, Yello, and Montage (among others) are more and more commonly used to connect you, as a potential candidate, with the hiring committee in a convenient, cost-effective way.

Prepare and test your video/audio equipment by practicing with a friend or by having a Zoom or Skype mock interview through the CMC. Your video screen name should be professional and appropriate. For the interview, make sure your backdrop is plain and the lighting is appropriate. Dress professionally and look at the screen or person conducting the interview to maintain eye contact. Ask the CMC how you can use Quinnacia to prepare for virtual mock interviews.

## 5 GROUP

You, along with multiple candidates, will be assessed in the same room for the same job. Candidates may be asked to all respond to the same question or different sets of questions in either a roundtable or random format. Group interviews often involve interaction between candidates, which will allow the interviewers to see if you stand out and how well you interact with others. The interviewers will also be able to assess your ability to deal with pressure, take on leadership roles, work well with a team, and remember details such as the other candidates' names and responses.

## 6 INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Connect with professionals in your desired industry and request the opportunity to do an "Informational Interview" with them. This can help determine if that type of job would be suited to you and your personality. You can also learn more about the company and what the culture is like. Consider asking these questions:

- What trends do you see happening in your industry right now?
- Are there specific certifications I should be seeking to help me get into this field?
- As someone trying to get into this field, how would you suggest I start?
- What has added to your success in your job?

Remember, this is not asking for a job, it's gathering information that is helpful for you in your career.

## Business Casual vs Professional

Decoding the Dress Code for Interviews and Professional Events

### Business Casual/Professional

Suit jacket or cardigan can be added for a classy look .....	Suit jacket
More colors and patterns are acceptable .....	Jacket or vest can be added for classy look .....
Khaki pants, nice trouser or fingertip-length skirt.....	More patterns and colors acceptable.....
Flats or heels acceptable.....	Skirts and dresses should be appropriate length
	Suit pants or fingertip-length skirt



### Business Casual/Professional

Collared or polo shirt.....	Dress shirt and tie .....
Tie optional.....	
Jacket or vest can be added for classy look .....	
More patterns and colors acceptable.....	
Khaki pants or nice trousers.....	
	Suit jacket and pants should match – wear black, grey, or navy blue
	Dress shoes and belt should match



### TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN ANY BUSINESS SITUATION

- When in doubt, dress conservatively.
- A suit will suffice in most situations.
- Make sure your outfit is wrinkle-free.
- Stick with solid colors and tighter-woven fabrics or simple patterns.
- Accessories should be kept simple: basic pumps, modest jewelry, light makeup, and only light perfume or aftershave.
- Wear a belt and a watch. The belt should match the shoes.
- Be sure your hair (including beard) is neatly trimmed or groomed. Avoid the "messy look."
- Shirts with lettering or graphics should not be worn.
- Check your outfit for missing buttons, thread "Xs" on skirts and jackets, lint, or a crooked tie.
- A skirt should be no shorter than the tips of your middle fingers (or just above the knee for good measure).

## Qualities Employers Evaluate During the Interview

1. **Self-concept, self-confidence, goal setting, realistic assessment of strengths and limitations**
2. **Mature behavior and judgment**
3. **Communication skills, the ability to interact with others, the ability to listen actively**
4. **Leadership potential, often demonstrated in extracurricular activities and on the job**
5. **Personality, enthusiasm, poise, cheerfulness, flexibility, sense of humor**
6. **Patterns of accomplishment**
7. **Problem solving and analytical abilities**
8. **Interest in and knowledge of career field**
9. **Work ethic, acceptance of responsibility, ability to keep commitments**
10. **Appearance, dress and grooming**
11. **Knowledge about the company or organization, such as mission, vision, and values**

### Did you know...

The interview begins the moment you walk through the door. You will be sized up immediately by all who meet and see you throughout the day. For each person you meet during the process, including the office administrative assistants and the entire interview panel, consider the following tips:

- Always introduce yourself and greet other professionals with a firm handshake, smile, and eye contact.
- Bring with you a contagious excitement, enthusiasm, energy, and passion for your field.
- Be yourself: show you are poised and confident about your skills through your body language, posture, and facial expressions.
- Be knowledgeable about the company's mission, vision, and values and be able to communicate them effectively.

#### Follow these general rules regarding interview attire:

- Hair should be clean, well-groomed, and away from the eyes (this includes all facial hair, even in November!).
- Tattoos and/or body piercing may not be acceptable in certain industries. Be sure to present yourself in a professional manner.

- Strong smells, including mints, perfumes, or aftershaves in excess should be avoided.
- Briefcases or portfolios provide an excellent outlet to store and organize documents.
- Clothing should fit properly. A professional business suit is appropriate in most cases. Avoid low necklines, short skirts, and heels higher than three inches. Trendy clothing generally does not project the most professional image.
- Crisp, clean, and well-pressed is non-negotiable.

**For any type of career-related event, fair, informational interview, conference, or job shadow, always dress professionally based on your industry. Be sure to avoid:**

■ Ripped jeans	■ Short shorts and short dresses
■ Flip-flops	■ Clothes that are too tight
■ T-shirts	■ Showing too much skin
■ Wrinkled clothing	



## STAR METHOD INTERVIEWING



### Situation

Define the general context

Who/What/When

Mention the problem you had to overcome

"Yes, in my management class we had a project to create a mock product, and I was designated as the group leader."

**Remember: It is very important to include your results. This is a common mistake. Your statement will be more effective if you can summarize the outcome.**



### Task

Identify the key objective and issue that you addressed

"The project was critical not only from a grade standpoint, but I wanted to prove to my professor that I could manage all aspects of the team from conception to marketing, to development, and presentation. However, I quickly realized that not everyone shared my enthusiasm with the project and had two team members drop the ball on their parts."



### Action

Describe the action you took or initiated, emphasizing the skills you used to complete the task

"As a team captain in high school, I loved the challenge and responsibility of leadership. I dove into action by encouraging my team members. I recognized the need to see the big picture and evaluate what areas needed improvement and where we could make changes for a positive impact. In the end, I feel that my actions enabled us to grow as a more cohesive team."



### Results

Summarize the outcome in business terms

"Though it was additional work on three of the team members, we got an A on the project and the professor recognized our project as the outstanding marketing project. We are currently working with her and some of her contacts to take the product to market. It felt great to put in the hard work and be recognized."

## MOCK INTERVIEWS THROUGH THE CMC

Schedule a "Mock Interview" appointment in Handshake today!

For company/job specific mock interviews, please provide the CMC with the job description 48 hours ahead of time.

Ask the CMC how you can use Quinnacia to prepare for virtual mock interviews.



### Face-to-Face?

Dress professionally and treat this as a real interview throughout the process.

Prepare as you would for an interview with an employer.

Arrive at the CMC (RCOB 119) 10 minutes early.



### Over the Phone?

Get into an environment without distractions.

Have talking points and notes in front of you for reference.

Be prepared 10 minutes early to receive your interview call.



### Virtual?

Communicate if you will utilize the virtual interview room in the CMC office or will be elsewhere.

Log on 5 minutes before interview time.

Dress professionally and treat this the same as an in-person interview. Remember to consider your background.

## General Interview Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- Why did you choose Texas Tech University and the Rawls College of Business?
- Which classes have you enjoyed most? Least? Why?
- In what extracurricular activities have you participated? Which did you enjoy most and why?
- What are your short-term and long-term career goals, and how do you plan to achieve them?
- What leadership positions have you held? Describe your leadership style.
- What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
- Why are you interested in our organization and this position?
- What do you think it takes to be successful in an organization like ours?
- What qualities do you think a successful manager would possess?
- What three accomplishments have given you the greatest satisfaction?
- How would your previous supervisor and co-workers describe you?
- What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?
- Why should we hire you?

## Questions to Ask the Interviewer

- What would be the first project or initiative for the successful candidate?
- What is your favorite thing about your job?
- What do you anticipate being the greatest challenges of this position?
- What professional development opportunities would be available to the successful candidate?
- What is the timeline of the hiring process?
- What are the next steps in the hiring process?

## Behavioral Interview Questions

- How have you demonstrated initiative?
- Tell me about a time when you successfully interacted with a difficult person.
- How have you motivated yourself to complete an assignment or task you did not want to do?
- Think about a complex project or assignment you have been given. What approach did you take to complete it?
- Tell me about a challenge in which you successfully exceeded expectations.
- Give an example of when your persistence had the biggest payoff.
- Describe a situation where class assignments and work or personal activities conflicted. How did you prioritize and manage your time?
- How have you most constructively dealt with disappointment and turned it into a learning experience?
- Describe a situation in which you effectively developed a solution to a problem for an employer.
- Describe a time when you disagreed with a supervisor. How did you handle it?

## TIP:

**Use what you've learned from the interview to ask specific questions:**

*"You mentioned that..."*

*"I am curious  
to know more about..."*

