



# Interviews

The interview is often the scariest part of the job search process for most students - but it doesn't have to be! When you are called for an interview, it means that the employer has reviewed your resume and believes that on paper you have the skills required to do the job. This means you can feel confident in the first impression you made with your cover letter and resume!

From an employer's perspective, interviews are all about three things:

- ✓ **Can you do the job**
- ✓ **Will you do the job**
- ✓ **Will you 'fit' with the company culture – the “personality” of the company and what it stands for?**

And from an individual perspective, during an interview you are really trying to decide:

- ✓ **Can I do this job?**
- ✓ **Will I want to do this job once I have it?**
- ✓ **Is this company a good fit for me?**

The best way to avoid failing an interview is to do everything you can ahead of time to prepare! If you are well prepared you will feel more confident and the employer will notice this too.

## How do I prepare for an interview?

It is important to be *as prepared as you can* for an interview, no matter how confident you feel when you get the call from the employer. Before going in, consider the following:

### Research

- Take some time to research the company, your interviewer, the position and the industry you are entering
- You can use Google, Linked In, the company website, social media platforms, as well as other news outlets
- Make sure you can answer potential interview questions related to content on the company's website, what the position entails, and anything related to specific industry specific news/language/key terms/labour market information

### Review

- Hopefully you saved a copy of the job posting you applied to, as the posting itself can be one of the most helpful tools in preparing for the interview
- Go through the posting and highlight key words or ideas and anything that is bolded, underlined, italicized or repeated. These are likely things that will be woven into the questions asked at your interview. Take some time to come up with examples of how you have demonstrated these skills in the past.
- Look at the resume, cover letter and transcript you submitted for the posting as the interviewer will likely ask you questions about your previous experience and current/past education. Be familiar with what you highlighted in your documents.

### Plan

- Consider what you will wear, where the interview will be located and how you will get there
- Plan to arrive at the interview 10 minutes early
- Dress professionally, regardless of the industry. See below for examples of professional interview attire.
- Don't forget to bring a copy of your resume and cover letter, as well as 3 copies of your reference page
- If you plan on taking notes, bring a pen and paper



## What interview questions will I be asked?

There are thousands of possible questions you could be asked in an interview. It is impossible to prepare for every single question ahead of time, as you truly don't know what will be asked; however, in your effort to be as prepared as you can the following is a list of questions that are commonly asked.

Interview questions can generally be divided into two categories:

### 1. Information Gathering Questions

This type of question allows the interviewer to get to know more about you as a person, understand how you view yourself and your ability to do the job, and provides the interviewer with information about why you want to work at their company

#### Sample questions may include:

- ✓ **Tell me about yourself**
  - Use your 'Elevator Pitch', introduce yourself as a professional, touch on your skills, education, experience and accomplishments and if applicable, discuss career goals
- ✓ **What is your greatest strength?**
  - Discuss your top strengths as they relate to the position, your program and your skills. Share examples and accomplishments from previous jobs or from projects and classwork. With this question the employer is trying to find out what assets you are bringing to their business.
- ✓ **What is your greatest weakness?**
  - When asked this question, the employer is trying to judge your self-awareness and ability for continuous learning/improvement. Be honest and be real – but do not state a weakness that makes you look less qualified for the position. Make sure you always provide an example of how you are overcoming the weakness. Example: *"I tend to have bad spelling, but I am working on this by using a new software program to help me check my work and continuously reminding myself to go back over my writing and double check it."*
- ✓ **Why did you apply for this job?**
  - Show off your research about the company, what do you like about the company? What attracts you to the job? Be honest!
- ✓ **Why should we hire you?**
  - The employer is asking this question to make sure they understand how you stand out from the crowd. Be prepared with a summary of your top qualities related to the position.

### 2. Behavioral Based Questions

This type of question provides the employer with an understanding of how you will respond to different situations on the job. As you may have heard before, **the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior!**

When answering a behavioral based question, make sure to use the **SAR** format:

**S**ituation – spend about 25% of your answer explaining the situation. Make sure never to speak poorly of a previous employer or coworker and stay focused on the facts involved in the situation.

**A**ction – spend about 50% of your answer explaining your actions, why you decided to take those actions and any skills you used. This is the part of the answer that indicates to your employer how you would act in a similar situation if you are working for their company.

**R**esult – spend the last 25% of your answer sharing the outcome of your actions. Employers want to



know if the actions you took had a positive result on the situation you were involved in. Even if the situation in your example did not end the way you had hoped it would, you can tell the interviewer what you would have done differently and why.

**Sample questions may include:**

**Tell me about a time when you delivered exceptional customer service.**

**Give me an example of a time you had to work with someone with very different ideas than you.**

**Tell me about a time when you went above and beyond in your job.**

**Have you ever had a conflict with a supervisor? How was it resolved?**

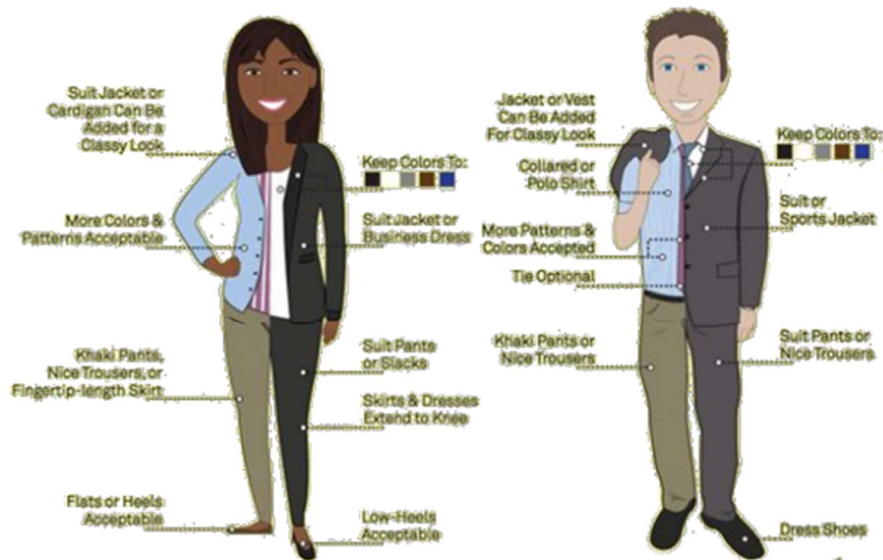
**Describe a time you set a goal for yourself and achieved it.**

There is a website linked that listed 27 of the most common asked job interview questions and sample answers that you can provide as well as online sites to practice mock interviews and increase your skills.

**I'm feeling prepared, now what do I wear?**

## Business Casual vs. Professional

Have an interview or professional event coming up? Learn how to decode dress code.



### Tips for Success in Any Business Situation

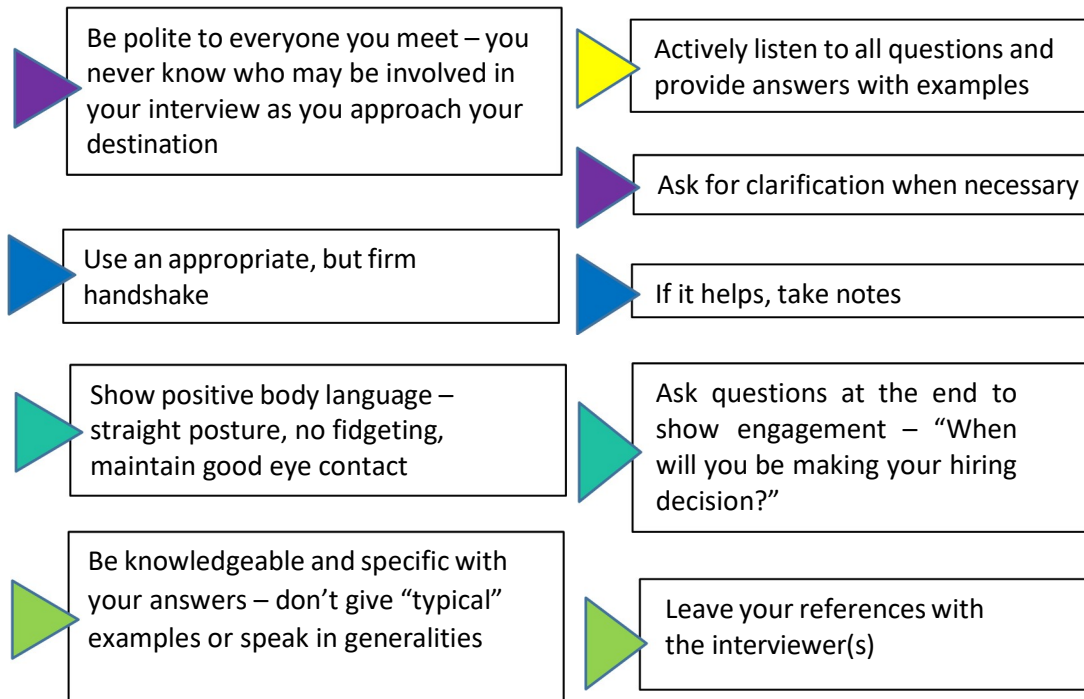


- 1 When in doubt, dress conservatively.
- 2 A suit (suit & tie for males) will suffice in most situations
- 3 Make sure your outfit is wrinkle-free.
- 4 Stick with solid colors and tighter-woven fabrics or simple patterns.
- 5 Accessories should be kept simple: basic pumps, modest jewelry, light make-up & light perfume.
- 6 Wear a belt and a watch.
- 7 Be sure your hair is neatly trimmed or groomed. Avoid the "messy" look.
- 8 Shirts with lettering or graphics should not be worn.
- 9 Check your outfit for missing buttons, lint, or a crooked tie.
- 10 A skirt should be no shorter than the tips of your middle fingers (or just above the knee for good measure).

Image Source:  
<https://purduecco.wordpress.com/2014/04/18/dress-to-impress-business-casual-vs-professional/>



## Are there any other interview tips I should know about?



## After the Interview

When you leave an interview, most people feel relieved and just want to go home and relax. However, if you take a moment to do three things it could mean the difference between getting the job or not:

1. **Thank your interviewer(s):** send an email, leave a voice message, or drop off a handwritten note to your interviewer(s) within 24 hours of the interview. This note should be personal, but *short*, and should refer to some of the most positive parts of your interview. During an interview, always ask for the business card of your interviewer(s) so you have the information required to follow-up.
2. **Reflect back:** Spend at least 5 minutes reviewing the interview, reflecting on what went well? What could be improved on? What else may be asked in a follow-up interview? Make a few notes in your job search record about the interview and details about when you should find out if you are the successful candidate.
3. After about a week or so, **follow up** if you have not heard anything yet. This conversation could lead to a job offer! If you find out you didn't get the job, make sure you ask for feedback so you can continue to improve.

**Remember, you got this!**

**If you have questions about the interview process, please contact us!**