



# EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWING

## TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

- **One on One:** One interviewer interviews an applicant.
- **Panel:** Several interviewers interview an applicant.
- **Group:** Multiple applicants interviewed at the same time.
- **Screening:** Initial interview to refer potential applicants to a second, in-depth interview.
- **Live Video:** Interview via Skype, Zoom or other interface.
- **Recorded Video:** Series of answers are recorded in a specified amount of time.
- **Second Interview:** More in-depth interview at the employer site. (half hour to all day)
- **Meal Interview:** Interview that includes a meal such as lunch or dinner.

## HOW TO PREPARE FOR AN INTERVIEW

- Attend *Resume/Cover Letter, Interview and Salary Negotiation* workshops.
- Watch *Big Interview* videos, practice answering questions, and record your interview responses.
- Schedule mock interviews with a career counselor.
- Find out the 4 Ws: Who, What, When, Where.
- Research the company on their website and Linked In.
- Dress professionally: Take advantage of *Cougar Closet* and *Suit Up* events.
- Bring your resume to the interview, maybe even a portfolio.
- Plan to arrive early to allow time for the unexpected (traffic, parking).

## AREAS COVERED IN THE INTERVIEW

### Introduction

- Establish relationship with interviewer and provide first impression through appearance, manner, and personal energy.
- Show enthusiasm for the job and interest in the employers' organization.
- A solid handshake, confident smile and direct eye contact are essential.

### Discussion of Qualifications and Goals

- Communicate skills, experience and goals.
- Employers are looking for skills and qualifications that fit the position and personal qualities required for success in the job, as well as goals appropriate to the organization.

### Closing

Summarize strengths and interests.

- Ask how and when employer will be in touch concerning next steps.
- Ask for a business card/contact information to send a follow up email or handwritten card within 24 hours (thank interviewers for the opportunity and express your interest in the position).

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) Tell me about yourself (academics, relevant work experience, activities and interests, personal qualities valued by the employer).
- 2) Why are you interested in this position?
- 3) Describe your most recent role.
- 4) What extracurricular activities were you involved in and what did you learn from them?
- 5) Why should I hire you?
- 6) Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- 7) Why do you want to work as a ...?
- 8) What led you to choose your major field of study? ...this chosen career?
- 9) Why did you apply for a position with our organization?





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## SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

- What are 3 of your strengths? What is a weakness?
- What was your most successful life experience? Why do you think it was successful?
- How do you handle criticism?
- What qualifications do you have that will make you successful in our organization?
- What motivates you to put forth your best effort?
- Describe a problem or challenge you had in your last job and how you handled it?

## CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

**Demonstrate your interest by asking questions; it's good to have 2-3 questions prepared**

- What are you looking for in this position?
- What are the biggest challenges the person in this position will face?
- What are prospects for future growth in your organization?
- How would you describe your organization's culture and management style?

## BEHAVIORAL

- Describe a situation where you led a team with diverse interests and objectives.
- Tell me about a situation when you demonstrated initiative.
- Describe a time when you went above and beyond what was required.
- Use STAR to answer questions (Situation, Task, Action, Result).
- Look at job description to decide which highlights will STAR in your story.

### **\*STAR EXAMPLE:**

“Tell me about a situation requiring both big picture and detail oriented thinking.”

• **Situation** - *I was elected to the Campus Visiting Speakers Bureau for 2018-2019 and was responsible for getting 3 to 5 speakers with a budget of \$56,000.*

• **Task** - *My goal was to generate a list of speakers for the planning committee who would make the final decision. The speakers needed to appeal to the entire campus community, be available within budget when the auditorium was available, and convey a motivational message.*

• **Action(s)** - *I reached out to the rest of the planning committee, students in my dorm, and my Marketing class for speaker suggestions. Then, I used their suggestions to identify 15 speakers who fit the budget. I researched the speakers' career profiles and reviews of past speaking events. I led 3 student focus group to generate a prioritized list of speakers. I connected with speakers' agents to check for availability, verify fees and travel and submitted the top 5 to the committee for their decision.*

• **Result** - *The planning committee was "wowed" by the speakers I submitted as well as my attention to detail. From my list, they selected motivational speaker Cindy Jones to appear on September 15. We sold all 2,500 tickets and received positive evaluations from attendees.*





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## ILLEGAL QUESTIONS

If you're asked an illegal question during an interview, typically it's because the interviewer is new to interviewing or unfamiliar with employment law. It's generally best to assume good intentions and consider the following strategies:

### Reframe the question

**Interviewer:** "Do you have children?"

**Your response:** "If you're concerned about my availability to work, I have an excellent attendance record and have been recognized by previous supervisors for my dependability."

### Answer with a question

**Interviewer:** "Were you born in the U.S.?"

**Your response:** "Are you asking if I am legally authorized to work in the U.S.?"

### Clarify the question

**Interviewer:** "Are you married?"

**Your response:** "I'm willing to answer the question but I am curious about how it relates to the position. Can you please clarify?"

Inquiry Area	Illegal Questions	Legal Questions
<b>National Origin/ Citizenship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you a U.S. citizen?</li> <li>• Where were you/your parents born?</li> <li>• What is your "native tongue"?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you authorized to work in the United States?</li> <li>• What language do you read/speak/write fluently? (This question is okay only if this ability is relevant to the performance of the job.)</li> </ul>
<b>Age</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How old are you?</li> <li>• When did you graduate?</li> <li>• What's your birth date?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you over the age of 18?</li> </ul>
<b>Marital/ Family Status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What's your marital status?</li> <li>• With whom do you live?</li> <li>• Do you plan to have a family? When?</li> <li>• How many kids do you have?</li> <li>• What are your child-care arrangements?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would you be willing to relocate if necessary?</li> <li>• Would you be able and willing to travel as needed for the job? (This question is okay if it is asked of all applicants for the job.)</li> <li>• Would you be able and willing to work overtime as necessary? (This question is okay assuming it is asked of all applicants for the job.)</li> </ul>
<b>Affiliations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What clubs or social organizations do you belong to?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List any professional or trade groups or other organizations that you belong to that you consider relevant to your ability to perform this job.</li> </ul>
<b>Personal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How tall are you? How much do you weigh? (Questions about height and weight are not acceptable unless minimum standards are essential for the safe performance of the job.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you able to lift a 50-pound weight and carry it 100 yards, as that is part of the job?</li> </ul>
<b>Disabilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you have any disabilities?</li> <li>• Please complete the following medical history.</li> <li>• Have you had any recent or past illnesses or operations? If yes, list them and give dates when these occurred.</li> <li>• What was your last physical exam?</li> <li>• How's your family's health?</li> <li>• When did you lose your eyesight? How?</li> <li>• Do you need an accommodation to perform the job? (This question can be asked only after a job offer has been made.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job? (This question is okay if the interviewer has thoroughly described the job.)</li> <li>• Can you demonstrate how you would perform the following job-related functions?</li> <li>• As part of the hiring process, you will be required to undergo a medical exam. (Exam results must be kept strictly confidential, except medical/safety personnel may be informed if emergency medical treatment is required, and supervisors may be informed about necessary job accommodations, based on exam results.)</li> </ul>
<b>Arrest Record</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you ever been arrested?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you ever been convicted of _____? (The crime named should be reasonably related to the performance of the job in question.)</li> </ul>
<b>Military</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you've been in the military, were you honorably discharged?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what branch of the Armed Forces did you serve?</li> <li>• What type of training or education did you receive in the military?</li> </ul>



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\*NOTE: There may be some exceptions to the following guidelines—research the organization.

<b>HAIR</b>	Neatly trimmed. Hair out of face. Tie back if long hair. Shave facial hair.
<b>JEWELRY</b>	Keep it simple and conservative. Remove all body piercings other than earrings and cover tattoos.
<b>BODY ODOR</b>	Avoid strong perfume or cologne to avoid triggering allergies.
<b>CLOTHES</b>	Skirts and dresses should hit at or just above the knee. Jacket sleeves just below the wrist. Belts and shoes same color. Ties touch top of belt. Need professional clothes? Check out the <i>Cougar Closet</i> and attend <i>Suit Up!</i>
<b>HANDS</b>	Clean and trim fingernails.
<b>SHOES</b>	Close-toed polished shoes—no scuffs.
<b>ACCESSORIES</b>	Folder or padfolio to hold extra copies of your resume or related work. No cell phones. Small purse (shoulder strap preferred) or briefcase/laptop bag.

## DINING TIPS: INTERVIEWING OVER A MEAL

- Turn off cell phone/personal technology device during an interview or meal.
- Don't apply lipstick, comb your hair, blow your nose or use a toothpick at the table.
- Put purse or wallet on your lap, chair, seat next to you or on the floor under your seat.
- Place your napkin in your lap when you sit down and keep it there throughout the meal. Keep your free hand on your lap while you eat.
- Lean forward when you take a mouthful of food to avoid spilling on your clothing.
- Pass the salt and pepper together even if only one is requested.
- Break off bite-size portions of bread over bread and butter plate before buttering. Use the bread and butter plate to hold olives, radishes and other finger foods.
- Cut food two to three slices at a time. Pass dishes or bread baskets to the right.
- Don't gesture with utensils or rest your utensils half on or half off the plate like oars.
- Bread plates are on the left and drink glasses are on the right.
- Avoid alcohol while interviewing.
- Order something easy to eat and avoid the most expensive item on the menu; ask your host for recommendations.
- Leave eating utensils across the center of the plate to signal you've finished eating.
- When you leave, fold your napkin and place it on the left side of your table setting.

**To gain dining confidence, plan to attend one of our Etiquette Dinners!**

