Interviewing: Everything You Need to Know

In this guide...
Types of Interviews ................. 41
Interview Tips ....................... 42
The Elevator Pitch .................. 42
Mock Interviews ..................... 43
Employer Research ................. 44
Sample Interview Questions ......... 45
Salary & Negotiation ............... 46
Dress for Success .................... 48
Types of Interviews

There are many different types of interviews that you may participate in as you pursue a job or internship. They can take place at different times during the candidate-vetting process and involve different people within an organization. Below is a short list of the different interviews you may find yourself in.

**Screening Interview**
A screening interview is part of the job-selection process used by potential employers and recruiters to evaluate the suitability of a job applicant to fill an opening in an organization. A screening interview typically includes a brief question and answer session, and is typically conducted in a relatively informal manner.

**Behavioral-Based Interview**
This job-interviewing technique involves the applicant being asked to describe a past work situation in order to determine whether he or she is suitable for the current position. For example, an interviewer may say to you, “Tell me about a time when you dealt with a disruptive customer.”

**Patterned Interview**
A patterned interview goal is to assess a candidate’s future behavior by evaluating his or her past performance. The patterned interview has nothing to do with job skills; its purpose is to appraise only personality, motivation and interests.

**Nondirective interview**
A non-directive interview is an interview in which questions are not prearranged. Non-directive interviews are unstructured and generally have no set format. The lack of structure allows the interviewer to ask any questions that may come to their mind, follow up on candidates’ answers, and interrogate points of interest.

**Stress Interview**
A stress interview occurs when employers put a candidate under intense pressure while assessing how they handle work overload, multiple projects and workplace conflict. The main purpose of this type of interview is to find out how a candidate handles stress.

**Serial Interview**
Serial interviews are a prescheduled series of interviews, usually lasting one to two days that each applicant must complete before the employer makes a hiring decision. Candidates come from a distant location to participate in this type of interview process.

**Group Interview**
In one type of group interview, multiple interviewers (sometimes called a group or panel) meet with and interview a candidate. The panel typically includes a Human Resources representative, the manager, and possibly coworkers from the department where you would be working, if hired.

**Lunch Interview**
Lunch interviews allow employers to assess your business credentials, while observing your table manners, social skills and ability to mix business with pleasure. The lunch interview may also be a test if the job you are seeking requires a lot of “working lunches” and meetings, or face-to-face interactions with clients.

**Telephone Interview**
A telephone interview is an interview for employment conducted on the phone. Telephone interviews are used to screen candidates in order to narrow the pool of applicants down to a reasonable number. That smaller pool of candidates is usually invited to attend in-person interviews.

**Video Interview**
A video interview is a job interview that takes place remotely and uses video technology as the communication medium.

**HireVue Interview**
HireVue is a digital recruiting company dedicated to finding the best talent for their clients by using video intelligence for interviews. Banks and accounting firms rely on this type of interview to discover the right candidate at a faster rate without sacrificing the quality the banks are looking.

**Skype Interview**
Skype interviews are interviews held over Skype. Companies with no “brick and mortar” locations, those hiring candidates abroad, or those looking to cut down on costs utilize these types of interviews. Although seemingly easier than in-person interviews, as you can interview from the comfort of your own home, Skype interviews can be quite tricky and require practice because there are unique aspects to consider and keep in mind.
Interview Tips

Have an interview lined up? Review the below list of tips to ensure you leave a positive lasting impression with your interviewer.

Research
Do your research regarding the company and write down any important information on an index card. You can definitely use this information during a phone interview, or when they ask, “Why do you want to work for us?” Look at the company’s history, mission statement, success rating, and goals for the present year. These items can be part of your conversation and show that you have interest in their company.

Resume
Always bring several printed copies of your resume so that everyone in the room has their own copy. Bring at least six copies of your resume just in case there is a group at the interview.

Phone Interviews
Smile while talking on the phone. Smiling when speaking changes your inflection and makes you sound more interested in the job. You may want to try standing in front of a mirror while talking on the phone.

Behavioral-Based Interview Questions
Create stories that you can share regarding experiences from your past employment that connect directly to the job requirements in the position for which you are interviewing. Literally and figuratively take the hiring manager “Over the bridge” so they can see you in this position. Stories can be about being a team player, manager, supervisor, project planner, etc. Find ways to incorporate aspects from the job description into your stories. Use the STAR method when answering these kinds of questions. Learn more about the STAR method on pg. 5.

Greatest Weakness
Prepare to answer the question, “What is your greatest weakness?” Begin answering this question by saying, “I think all of us have areas we need to work on. One area I have worked on is….” Focus on one area on which you have improved.

Elevator Pitch
Always have your “elevator pitch” tailored for the specific job you are interviewing for so you are prepared to respond to the statement, “Tell me about yourself.” during the interview.

Questions to Ask
Be sure to prepare at least three questions to ask the hiring manager at the conclusion of the interview.
1. You hired me as your__________. It is my 90-day review and you are telling me that I am doing an outstanding job. What will I have accomplished?
2. Why do you like working here, beyond receiving a paycheck?
3. I have all of the skills and energy that you are looking for to help your company achieve its goals. I really want to work here and be a part of your team. What are the next steps in the interview process?

Thank-You Note
At the end of the interview, be sure to ask for a business card from the interviewer. Send a handwritten “thank you” letter via the mail to the employer immediately after the interview. Have it stamped and ready to go!

THE ELEVATOR PITCH

Capture your education, skills and employment goals in this important 30-second pitch to potential employers.

What is an Elevator Pitch?
An elevator pitch is a clear, brief message about you. It communicates who you are, what you are passionate about, what your strengths are, and how you can benefit any company or organization. Your Pitch can be used to answer the “tell me about yourself” question during an interview. The elevator pitch is typically about 30 seconds in length, roughly the same amount of time it takes for most people to ride from the top to the bottom of a building in an elevator. You can also use this to introduce yourself to recruiters or employers at hiring events, career fairs or networking events. It is important to have your speech memorized and practiced. Need some help getting started? Take a look at the template below.

Creating Your Own Elevator Pitch
Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. I am , and as you can see from my resume, I am currently attending Ohio Dominican University majoring in: __________ __________.

What I love about the career I am currently pursuing is __________ __________.

The three strengths that I bring to this position are:
1. __________ __________
2. __________ __________
3. __________ __________

I am excited to be interviewing for this position because __________ __________.
Mock Interviews

As the saying goes, “practice makes perfect.” While there’s nothing quite like a real interview, mock interviews can help you prepare to answer some of the questions you can expect, and even some of the curve-ball questions you may not be expecting.

Purpose of a Mock Interview

The purpose of scheduling a mock interview is to provide students and alumni with an opportunity to practice their interviewing skills in an environment that simulates an actual interview, but provides feedback about their performance. During a mock interview, an ODU Career Service Coordinator will:

1. Assess the quality of your elevator pitch and assist you in redeveloping it, if needed.
2. Give you honest feedback if your answers to interview questions are too long or too short.
3. Evaluate the pace and volume of your speaking voice so that you can make adjustments to be easily understood.
4. Train you to remove filler words that weaken your responses to interview questions, such as “um.”
5. Brainstorm ideas on how to respond to difficult or challenging interview questions.
6. Evaluate your interview responses for clarity and consistency.
7. Affirm the importance of energy and enthusiasm when answering unusual questions.
8. Provide honest feedback if you seem to be lacking in confidence, energy or excitement.
9. Warn you about responses that may be considered a “red flag” and eliminate you from consideration.
10. Assist you in evaluating whether or not the job is a good match for your current skill sets.
11. Evaluate and provide feedback regarding body language and eye contact during interview responses.

How to Prepare for a Mock Interview

The best way to prepare for any kind of interview is by contacting Ohio Dominican University’s Career Development Center and scheduling a mock interview with one of the Career Services Coordinators. Prior to this meeting, students or alumni should do the following things in preparation:

1. Forward a copy of your tailored resume and job description to the Career Service Coordinator at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled mock interview.
2. Go over the bullet points in the job description and know what skills you bring to the position.
3. Research the current industry, as well as this specific employer – know the pay range of this position.
4. Memorize a few fun facts about the history of the company or organization.
5. Become familiar with the organization’s mission statement.
6. Read the LinkedIn profile of the person who is interviewing you.
7. Follow the organization on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and other social media channels.
8. Create, memorize and practice your elevator pitch.
9. Create and practice responses to some of the basic interview questions.
10. Dress the same way that you would for an actual interview.
11. Bring a portfolio with extra printed copies of your resume.
12. Arrive on time (Approximately 10 minutes prior to your appointment).
13. Prepare at least three questions to ask the employer at the end of the interview.

Mock Interview Tip

The best way to prepare for any kind of interview is by contacting Ohio Dominican University’s Career Development Center and scheduling a mock interview with one of the Career Services Coordinators.
Employer Research

Looking for a way to impress potential employers? Take some time to learn more about the company to which you are applying. This background information will help you during the interview process.

Adapted from: 12 Tips for Researching a Company before the Interview
by Paulina Jankovic

1. Start with the Basics: The Company Website
Your first stop should always be the company’s website. This is where you will learn the basics of what the company is all about – their history, values, mission, culture, previous work, product/service offerings, and the leadership at the company.

2. Stay on Top of Company News
Google search the company to find articles on their key achievements or anything catching headlines. Access their company news and press releases to keep up to date with the latest company happenings.

3. Use Social Media to Your Advantage
I’m sure we’ve all used social media to procrastinate in the past, but now you can use social media to actually help you do homework on a company! Look up all of the company’s social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Blogs, Google+. By perusing all of this, you will better understand the company’s voice, culture and mission.

4. Know the Industry
Apart from knowing the company, also take time to become familiar with the industry. Understand what the big trends in the industry are and who the company’s competitors are. It is useful to know the industry and the big players in the space. Be sure to find some industry-specific websites, blogs, Twitter accounts, or RSS feeds that covers your industry of interest to make sure you’re well versed.

5. Tap into Your Own Network
Ask around to see if any friends or classmates have ever interviewed or worked at the company. This way, you are getting the first-hand details on how the interview might go and what it is like to work there. If you do not know anyone with a relationship to the company, use LinkedIn to find out. Try to find something in common with someone who already works there, like an ODU alumni or someone who belongs to the same professional affiliation, and send them a message asking for a brief informational interview to learn more about the company.

6. Use Glassdoor.com
This is a like Yelp for the corporate world. Glassdoor features first-hand ratings and reviews on the company and interview process from employees and interviewees. This is a great way to get the inside info, be better prepared for the interview, and understand what employees like (or do not like) about the company.

7. Understand the Job Description
Take time to understand the job position for which you are interviewing by saving the description and underlining key words and qualifications pertinent to the role. If the given job description is sparse, you can search other similar job postings to get a better idea, or even speak to people in that field. By getting a better understanding of what is needed for the role, you can deliver interview answers that speak to those credentials.

8. Know Your Interviewer
There is so much public information online these days, it will not be too hard to find information about your interviewer. Look up more about their professional path and achievements, and even check to see if you have anything in common. If so, this can be a real conversation starter in the interview. For example, if you went to the same school or played the same college sport, that could easily break the ice and you will really establish a genuine connection with your interviewer.

9. Ask yourself, “How Do I Fit Into the Company and Role?”
Now that you have learned all about the company, it is time do some additional research. Take a moment to analyze “if and how” the company fits your values and your career goals. By being able to articulate why you want to work for this particular company, you show that you did your research and seriously thought about this.

10. Incorporate What You Learned into Your Answers
This is your chance to show off your knowledge of any projects the company did or companywide initiatives. Show you are a big fan by stating, “I especially liked the XYZ campaign you did a few months ago.” You can even go into specifics about why you liked these projects or initiatives and how your experience can contribute to projects like these in the future.

11. Use your Research to Form Interesting Questions
Since you did so much research, you can stray away from generic, boring questions for your interviewer. Spice things up and intrigue your interviewer with more sophisticated questions like: 1) “I see this company recently expanded into South America. How does this expansion affect this particular role?” 2) “Does the company plan to expand into other markets as well?”

12. Go Above and Beyond
If you really want to showcase your skills and get extra credit, go ahead and create a presentation or work sample for the interview. Create a marketing plan, an ad campaign, design a sample website, build an app – these will all show that you can apply your skills to the specific job at hand.

Make sure to reflect on why you want to work there, how it aligns with your career goals and values, how your unique background prepared you for this role and how you can contribute to the organization. By doing your research and being prepared, you will feel more at ease and will wow your interviewer!
Sample Interview Questions

While no two job interviews are alike, there are some common questions you can expect to be asked. These questions show potential employers if a candidate has the basic skills, experience and personality to be considered a strong match for the job.

Some of the Most Common Interview Questions/Statements Are:

• Tell me about yourself.
• Where do you see yourself in the next five years?
• Describe your most rewarding college experience.
• What new skills have you gained from your most recent internship experience?
• How has college prepared you for this type of career?
• What words would you use to describe yourself?
• How do you work under pressure?
• What do you know about our company or organization?
• What do you consider your three greatest strengths?
• What do you consider your greatest weakness?
• What motivates you to put forth your greatest amount of effort?
• What do you think it takes to be successful in a company like ours?
• Why should I hire you for this position?
• How does your college education and training relate to this position?
• What qualifications make you a successful candidate for this position?
• Why do you want to work for us?
• What two things are most important to you in a work environment?

Behavioral-Based Interview Questions

Potential employers may use behavioral-based interviewing techniques to evaluate your past behavior in particular situations. Past behavior is a good predictor of how you would act in a hypothetical future situation. If you find yourself in this type of interview, here are some things to keep in mind.

The Art of Telling a Good Story

Create stories that you can share from your education and past work experiences that connect directly to the job requirements in the position for which you are interviewing. Stories can be about school projects, summer or part-time jobs, internships, being a team player/student-athlete/student leadership role/student organization member, etc.

Important Stories to Share

Create six stories to share that relate directly to the following situations from your past experience:

Stories 1, 2, 3 – Three individual stories about your three greatest strengths
Story 4 – Story about your greatest professional accomplishment.
Story 5 – Story about a time when you had to work with a challenging person.
Story 6 – Story about a failure, obstacle, or something that did not go as planned.

Using the S-T-A-R Method

Situation – Where did the actual story actually take place?
Task – What was the task you were responsible for completing?
Action – What action steps did you use to complete this task?
Results – What was the result from the action you took?

Common Behavioral-Based Interview Questions/Statements

• Give me an example of a time when you had to deal with a difficult classmate, professor, or coworker.
• Tell me about a major accomplishment from college of which you are most proud.
• Tell me about an improvement you made in your work progress (inside or outside of school): What action did you take to improve?
• Give me an example of a time when you made a mistake and how it became an opportunity to improve. How did this experience change how you approach your work?
• Describe a situation in which you had multiple solutions and had to decide on the best alternative. Were you happy with the results?
• Describe a time when you had to share unpopular information: How did you approach this task?
• Tell me about a time when you had to alter your plans because of a change in priorities or circumstances. What was the result, and would you do it differently next time?
• Tell me about a time when you had a differing opinion that created a conflict. What action did you take to resolve this conflict?
Salary and Negotiations

Negotiating salary and benefits is just as important as tailoring your professional resume and properly preparing for the interview. Your negotiating style tells an employer what kind of team member you are. It is equally important to ensure that your compensation meets all of your needs, not just monetary ones. Here is a list of guidelines for negotiating salary, steps in the negotiating process, and major negotiation factors to consider before accepting a potential job offer.

Guidelines for Negotiations
1. Make an appointment with the Career Development Center to get assistance with your salary negotiation conversations before meeting with an employer.
2. Start on a positive note — express appreciation for the job offer.
3. Not all job offers are negotiable.
4. Don’t start with negotiations unless you are really interested in the job.
5. Try not to negotiate until after a job has been actually offered to you.
6. Take time to consider an offer and do your research before negotiating.
7. Know what you need or where the bottom line is for you before you begin the negotiation process.
8. Do not say “yes” or “no” until you are ready to do so.
9. Know the actual pay scale of the position so you can properly negotiate the salary.

A Note on Salary Negotiation and Values
Identify and rank your values. This will help you remember an offer is not just about salary, but also about what you value in a position. Some of the values you may consider including location, responsibility, flexibility, stability, benefits, prestige, independence, supervisory style, public contact, mental stimulation, teamwork, salary, personal growth, recognition, freedom to make decisions, low stress level, helping others, challenge, and competition.

Decide on the minimum amount of compensation that will make you satisfied. Establish a budget and do not neglect to account for taxes taken out of your pay. There is no point in accepting an offer if you think you will be unsatisfied and want to look for another job. If an employer refuses to meet this amount, it is to your advantage to keep looking.

Use the Ohio Means Budget tool to get an understanding of your interests and lifestyle to determine your target salary. This tool is helpful because it will help you identify factors such as utility costs for a geographic region, housing costs, transportation, food, health care, etc. Do not forget to factor in your loan repayments.

Know the Employer's Compensation Guidelines
A job offer process actually develops using one of three different viewpoints. Companies fall into one of these three categories depending on their attitude about salary and negotiation. Here are three negotiating philosophies and what the difference might mean to you:
1. Fixed Offer: You can negotiate all you want, but it will not do you any good. They operate on a take it or leave it basis so you may not want to waste your time negotiating.
2. Pay-Grade System: This is a system in which a salary range has been set and you will get paid within this range based on your experience and the duties associated with the job. You may be able to negotiate within the salary range. The pay-grade system is the most common compensation system encountered.
3. The Negotiator: This type of system is rare because most organizations work within a structure. In this framework, the employer will have the authority to raise or lower your salary without going through bureaucratic red tape.

If an employer makes an offer that is below your expectation, you do not want to offend them so you might start the conversation by asking what the benefits include. To proceed, you might want to use one of the following approaches to begin the negotiation process:

Approach 1: “I am very interested in the position, but I would like to discuss the salary you are offering.”
Approach 2: “I really want this position, but I was a little disappointed that the offer was lower than I expected.”

When using either approach, be certain to support your case by stating your skills, the average salary range for your level of experience in your field and the average salaries for ODU graduates in your field. It is best to let the employer respond and then continue the discussion from their lead.

Based on an employer’s compensation guidelines, you may not be able to negotiate a higher salary. However, you may be able to increase your compensation in benefits. Remember, you may be negotiating with the person who will be your supervisor. Stay polite. Try to make it a win-win situation.
**The Negotiation Process**
1. Obtain verbal offer from an employer.
2. Analyze the offer to obtain missing information.
3. Evaluate offer and decide on your professional goals, possible trade-offs, or decide to walk away from the offer.
4. Initiate a negotiation with the employer — Indicate areas of agreement first and then resolve areas of difference.
5. Affirm agreement and accept offer from employer (with changes).
6. Ask for final offer to be put in writing and establish an official start date.

**Salary Range**
Always do your research regarding the starting pay or pay range for this kind of position in the company you are applying. They may ask, so you want to do your homework in advance. Always give the employer a pay range. If they say a range of $40,000 to $50,000, tell them $40,000 – $45,000 (or) $45,000 – $50,000 depending on your experience.

**Resources for salary research**
- linkedin.com/salary
- glassdoor.com/Salaries
- salary.com
- paysa.com

**Assessing the Job Offer – Major Negotiation Factors**
When considering the pros and cons of a job offer, you may want to consider creating a chart, especially if you’ve had more than one offer and you want to compare and contrast them.

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<th>Major Negotiation Factors</th>
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<th>Offer B</th>
<th>Offer C</th>
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Dress for Success

Dressing the part for an interview is just as important as writing a resume or cover letter. The interview is where all of your hard work pays off and you have the opportunity to show why you are the right candidate for the job.

Adapted from: 5 Tips for Choosing What to Wear to an Interview
— by M.A. Smith

1. Dress Better than the Person Next to You
When preparing for any interview, look at the next two positions directly above the one for which you are applying. Review the company website to research typical employee attire, as well as view ‘actual’ pictures/videos of employees who work there. If published online, use the company’s dress policy to determine what to wear to an interview. This shows that you have the drive to move upward within the company.

2. Dress the Part
When it’s time to get dressed for the interview, keep in mind that it’s not so much that you’re trying to get the job with what you wear. You are incorporating your attire into the overall presentation – your personal brand. Hiring managers decide in 10 seconds if they want to hire you. If your presentation is flawless and attire matches the company culture, they may have a more difficult time eliminating you from their list.

3. Stay Up to Date
Interviews are all about sending messages. Wearing fresh, new styles sends the message you are in touch with the here and now. Hiring managers want to know you are part of the 21st century. Wear colors and patterns that are currently in style, but also match the company culture.

4. Remember the Occasion
Suit and tie or other professional clothing may not always be the best route to go. Some jobs simply do not require business professional clothing. Remember, you are painting a picture of the type of candidate you are with the interview dress policy. The best way to avoid embarrassment is to research the actual job and learn about the company policy. Talk to local recruiters and college career centers. They will know the industry and will guide you in the appropriate dress to wear for the interview.

5. Stay Comfortable
Comfort is important in any interview. When deciding what to wear to an interview, pick comfortable fitting clothing. Your attire should complement your personality. If wearing a new outfit remove all stickers, tags, pins, and unstitch pockets or jacket flaps. Make sure all clothing pieces are washed and ironed prior to wearing to the interview. If wearing new shoes, scuff the bottoms so you don’t slip and make sure they are comfortable to wear.

TAKEAWAYS
Dressing for success is not difficult. You just need to do a little homework on interview dress policy and make sure to be yourself. Interview apparel should complement your interview. Consider the industry, position, two positions above you and company culture. These will help you develop a perfect match every time.