



Acing Your Interview: A Guide for Preparing for Different Types of Interview Processes

The interview process is a two-way exchange of information in which the employer is asking you questions to determine if your skills and qualifications match with their candidate profile. In addition, they are seeking to determine if your personality will be a good fit for the team they have already assembled. At the end of the interview, you are provided with the chance to ask questions to help you evaluate if the job opportunity will meet your career goals and match with your personal needs. However, not all interviews are conducted in the same way, and it is important to know about the differences with each so you know how to prepare, how to set up your environment, and how to highlight your skills and qualifications. This guide is going to review the 5 most common types of interviews and provide you with tips on how to ace them!

Phone Interview

A phone interview is often the first step you will need to complete in the interview process. The person conducting the interview will most likely be a member of the HR team or a Recruiter who will be asking questions to determine if you have the skills and qualifications needed to perform the internship or job. You are being screened to determine if you are eligible to move forward to the next round. Use these tips to help you get to that next round!

- Prepare your interview space:**
Plan for your interview to occur in a place with minimal background noise. Have a glass of water within reach, a laptop or notepad to take notes on, and your application materials (resume and cover letter) in front of you to refer back to if needed.
- Match your qualifications to the job description:**
Create a list of how your qualifications match the candidate profile outlined within the job description and then talk about this during the interview. This will enable you to show the interviewer why you should move on to the next round.
- Use your voice to communicate energy and enthusiasm:**
Since the employer cannot see your face you will need to use your voice to show you are engaged in the conversation and excited about the opportunity. Smiling, gesturing, or standing up are ways to prevent your tone of voice from being tired, bored, or disengaged.
- Use good communication etiquette:**
This is not the time to be chewing gum or eating. You will want to speak slowly and clearly when answering questions. Avoid interrupting the interviewer, but do use your notepad to jot down thoughts you want to share or questions to ask. Avoid ending your responses to questions with something like "... so yeah..." Instead, end with something clear like "The customer left with their questions answered and the items they came for."

Online Video Interview

An online video interview is often the second, and final, step in the interview process. The person conducting the interview will most likely be the Manager or Supervisor for the internship/job you are applying for. The interview could also include a member of the team you will be joining.

- Practice using your technology before the interview:**
You may need to download the platform the employer has chosen to use for the interview. Once you have the platform downloaded practice using it with a friend or family member who can help you verify your audio and video is working prior to your interview.
- Prepare your interview space:**
Choose a location with a simple background where there are no distractions or loud noises. Face your light source to avoid having shadows, but check to ensure there is no glare from glasses, jewelry, or a watch. Position your laptop so your camera will be at eye level.
- Frame the shot:**
Leave 10-20% of the screen above your head empty so you avoid cutting yourself off, but your head and shoulders are visible.
- Prepare answers to common interview questions and have stories ready to answer behavioral interview questions:**
Your interviewer/s are evaluating you to see if you have the skills and qualifications necessary to perform the job. By matching your qualifications with the job description and having stories ready which communicate your achievements and experiences you will be able to have a conversation instead of reading from a script which could make you come across as rehearsed.
- Use professional body language:**
Avoid leaning in as this causes you to look too large and close on the interviewer's screen. Demonstrate you are engaged in the conversation by sitting up straight, smiling and nodding, and maintaining good eye contact.

Onsite Interview

Some employers may choose to have the second interview occur on-site at one of their office locations. The person conducting the interview will most likely be the Manager or Supervisor for the internship/job you are applying for. The interview could also include a member of the team you will be joining.

- Conduct a practice run:**
The day of your interview is not the time to be driving to the interview site for the first

time. Conduct a practice drive to the site so you know how long it takes and if there is any construction you need to be aware of.

Bring the necessary materials:

You will want to bring a padfolio containing pens, a notepad for you to jot down thoughts or questions, copies of your resume for yourself and everyone you are interviewing with, a list of your references, and any other materials submitted with your application such as a cover letter or a portfolio of your work.

Make a connection with everyone you interact with:

Your interview begins when you arrive at the office site and you never know who will be asked to provide feedback about you. Be polite and professional to everyone you interact with- from the receptionist to other employees and of course those interviewing you.

Ensure your body language communicates confidence:

When you go to shake hands, maintain eye contact and use a firm grip. Avoid slouching or crossing your arms. Instead, sit up straight and rest your arms to your sides or fold your hands in front of you.

Match the interviewer's tone:

The interview is your opportunity to show you are a good match for the company culture. One of the ways you can accomplish this is to match the interviewer's tone. If that individual leans back in their chair, take a more relaxed and casual approach to the conversation. If they seem formal and methodical, adopt that same tone.

Prepare answers to common interview questions and have stories ready to answer behavioral interview questions::

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Panel Interview

A panel interview can appear to be one of the most intimidating forms of an interview to undergo, but these tips should assist you in calming your nerves. An employer may opt to conduct a panel interview for a few reasons, first, they are trying to determine your ability to fit the culture of the company based on your qualifications. Second, the employer is seeking to determine how you perform under a stressful situation. Finally, the employer is trying to mimic the job requirements like with a sales position to determine if you have the skills and attitude needed to perform the job.

Find out who will be on your panel:

When you know the job titles of who will be on your panel you can start to get an idea of what aspects of your qualifications and skills will be of most interest to them. If you are not provided with this information, ask the individual who scheduled your interview if they could tell you a little bit about who you will be meeting with.

- Build a connection with everyone on the panel:**
You want to engage all the members of your panel so you are creating a conversation, rather than it feeling like an interrogation with them just asking you question after question. You can accomplish this in a few ways. First, try to have your responses to questions apply in some way to each person on the panel. You can also acknowledge those on your panel in your answers by saying things like “As Joe mentioned earlier, clear communication helps projects get completed on time.”
- Be prepared for questions to be asked at a fast pace:**
Each person on your panel will have their own set of questions they are trying to get through and you can help them get through them all by keeping your answers brief and to the point. If you do get asked a question before you have finished your current thought, say something like “Before I answer your question, I’d like to share a final thought on the last” and then complete your response as quickly as possible.
- Have multiple, specific stories to highlight your experiences and skills:**
Each person on your panel has their own perspective, and you might get asked a follow-up question to expand further on something you just stated. By having multiple stories at the ready, you will avoid having awkward moments of silence while you try to think of something.

Pre-Recorded Video Interview

A pre-recorded video interview is conducted by recording your answers to interview questions using a platform provided by the employer. You should be aware you are not interviewing with an actual person, but are recording your answers to a platform, where an assessor will watch your answers later and score you.

- Prepare your interview space:**
Choose to record in a space that is free of loud noises and contains a neutral background. Avoid recording in a space where there are shadows or too much backlight. Have your camera positioned so that it is at eye-level when you sit down and ensure you have a strong Internet connection so there are no disruptions to your recording.
- Maintain eye contact with the camera:**
Within the platform you are using there will be a box with your picture in it and a box containing the question you are being asked. By maintaining eye contact with the camera you will be helping to establish a connection with the assessor, be easier to understand while delivering your answers, and come across as confident.
- Use professional body language:**
Avoid leaning in as this causes you to look too large and close on the assessor’s screen. Sit up straight and smile to help you communicate energy and enthusiasm.
- Utilize the practice and re-record features:**
The practice feature will assist you in knowing how questions are displayed and how long you will have to answer questions.