

INTERVIEWS

The main purpose of an interview is to exchange information. The employer wants to see if you will be a good fit for their organization, and you want to see if you want to work for them!

The employer wants to find the right person for the job and they are hoping you are that person. During the interview employers will be looking to:

1. **Gain knowledge about you that didn't appear on your resume**
2. **See if you have a clear career direction**
3. **Evaluate your personality and attitude to see if you would make a good fit with the organization**
4. **Try to evaluate your skills based on a discussion of previous experiences**

During the interview you will be trying to find out:

1. **The exact duties of the position and further information/policies about the organization**
2. **How your personality and attitude fits with the organization**

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Preparation shows a potential employer your interest in their company. You should find out:

- **What their products and services are**
- **Who their primary customer base is**
- **What the company's target market is**
- **How the company is organized**
- **Where the company is located**
- **What is company's history & mandate**
- **How many employees there are**
- **Who their competition is**
- **Whether the company is an industry leader**
- **Who owns the company**

Good sources to use when you are trying to research a company include the internet, friends, family, teachers, previous and current employees and the resources at the Career Education Department.

You should become knowledgeable of the different types of interview questions. **Behavioural based questions** are the most common, where you related examples of the things you have done that support your skills as they relate to the job, but there are also **directive interview questions**, where answers are usually "yes" or "no," **traditional interview questions** where the questions are open-ended and **stress interview questions**, which test your skills and abilities under pressure.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Tell me more about yourself.
- Why do you want to work here?
- Why should we hire you?
- What contributions do you see yourself making to this job/company?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- Describe your personality.
- How would a friend/supervisor/co-worker describe you?
- What is your greatest strength/weakness?
- What have you achieved that has given you the most satisfaction?
- Describe an environment that you excelled in, and one you have not excelled in?
- Do you prefer working alone or in a team?
- Describe a time when you displayed initiative in the workplace.
- Tell me about the most creative school or work project you have completed.
- Share a time when you had a conflict with another student or co-worker.
- Give examples of how you have shown leadership.
- What are your long term career goals?

INTERVIEW TIPS

- Get a good night's sleep before your interview
- Know how you're getting to the interview and check the parking situation before hand
- Review the cover letter and resume that you sent to them and bring extra copies of your resume to the interview
- Arrive a few minutes early for your interview so you can gather your thoughts. Take advantage of the time by reading some of the organization's pamphlets, and materials
- Be friendly to all staff; remember that they could be your future co-workers
- Present a professional appearance and attitude
- Show positive body language, remember to smile
- Try and get the interviewer to describe the position early in the interview so you can relate your skills and experience to the position
- Show awareness of the employer's needs and how you will meet them
- Give descriptive and accurate examples throughout the interview of past achievements, accomplishments, experiences and skills. Make sure the information you are giving is correct, as they might verify it with your references
- Watch the interviewer's body language to gauge your answers as to whether they're looking for more details
- Ask for clarification on a question if you are not sure you are interpreting the question correctly
- Don't criticize or talk badly about previous employers or co-workers
- If you are asked about a weakness do not give a weakness that will get you disqualified from the job. Keep it related, simple and brief
- Be sure to ask questions about the organization and position to show your interest
- Set up a mock interview before hand to practice. Remember practice makes perfect, and that includes interviewing
- Send a thank you card to each of the interviewers after the interview