

# INTERVIEW SKILLS

## PREPARE TO ACE THE INTERVIEW

When interviewing for a new opportunity, the majority of your time should be spent preparing. Preparation boosts confidence, and helps you stand out from the competition. Here are some interview questions to prepare for ahead of time. Stop by the Career Center to discuss interview preparation with a career counselor.

### Common Interview Questions

- Tell us a little about yourself.
- Why does this position appeal to you?
- Why do you want to work for this company/organization?
- What are your greatest strengths/weaknesses?
- What experiences have prepared you for this position?
- How would a colleague or previous supervisor describe you?
- What questions do you have for us?

### Behavioral-Based Interview Questions

These questions determine if you have the skills needed for the job, and what your reaction could be when faced with a similar situation in the future. Themes typically include teamwork, leadership, conflict resolution, problem solving, failure, time management and customer service. To prepare, match your experiences (school/work/organizations) to the themes that appear in the job description. Below are examples:

**Team Player** – Tell me about a team project on which you worked.

**Leadership** – Tell me about a time when you demonstrated leadership skills.

**Conflict** – Tell me about a time when you experienced a conflict at work or on a team project.

**Problem Solving** – Describe a situation in which you solved a difficult problem.

**Failure** – Tell me about a time you made a mistake. What did you learn from it?

### Technical Questions

Specific companies/industries may ask questions to assess skills and knowledge. Examples may include writing samples, computer coding and business case interview questions.

### Questions to End the Interview

**Always have 3-5 questions prepared for your interviewer. They can include:**

- What are the top goals for the first six months in this position?
- What is a typical day like in this role?
- What types of training and professional development opportunities are available?
- What are characteristics of the ideal candidate for this position?
- What is the best thing about working for this organization?  
What is the greatest challenge?
- What is the next step in the selection process?

### Technique to Answer Behavioral-Based Interview Questions

<b>S</b> <b>T</b> <b>A</b> <b>R</b>	<b>SITUATION</b>	Detail in the background. Provide a context. Where? When?
	<b>TASK</b>	Describe the challenge and expectations. What needed to be done? Why?
	<b>ACTION</b>	Specify the action taken. What did you do? How? What tools did you use?
	<b>RESULTS</b>	Explain and quantify the results: accomplishments, recognition, savings, etc.

CONTINUED ON THE BACK 

## 10 Tips For Successful Interviewing

1. Research the company/industry. Impress the interviewer with your knowledge of the organization's core products/service, clients and accomplishments. Online resources, such as CAREERINSIDER and CareerShift, offer this valuable information. Access these by visiting [careers.ucr.edu](http://careers.ucr.edu), and logging in to UCR Handshake. [Glassdoor.com](http://Glassdoor.com) offers company reviews, CEO approval ratings, salary reports, interview reviews/questions, benefits reviews, office photos and more — all shared by those who know the companies best, the employees.
2. Review the job description for key skills and qualifications, and identify how your abilities and experiences are a good match for the job.
3. Practice, practice, practice answering typical interview questions. Be upbeat and use specific examples to demonstrate your skills. To get started, make an appointment with a career counselor for a mock interview.
4. Prepare questions for the interviewer. These demonstrate that you are interested in the company and the job. Avoid questions about money/benefits.
5. Know what to expect. Ask the recruiting coordinator about the type of interview (group/panel/individual), and with whom you'll be interviewing.
6. Wear a suit! Your attire and appearance will make a strong first impression. You want to be viewed, and remembered, as a professional and not as a student.
7. Arrive 5-10 minutes before your interview. Get good directions to the interview location, and know how traffic will impact your travel time.
8. Turn off your mobile device. The interviewer should have your full attention. Distractions, such as calls and texts, demonstrate a lack of interest in the company and the job.
9. Smile, relax and be confident – even if you don't feel like it. Interviewers want to connect with you as a professional and as a person. Try to be yourself, even if you're nervous.
10. Follow up with a thank you note or email within 24 hours of the interview.



## Day of Interview Checklist

- Dressed to impress
- Mints
- Portfolio:
  - Extra resumes
  - List of references
  - Paper/pen
  - Questions for the interviewer
  - Recruiter contact information
- Parking/emergency money
- Mobile devices turned off
- Ace the interview
- Send a thank you note

This information is accurate and reliable as of the date of publication, but may change without notice. Please contact the Career Center for the most up-to-date information. (09/18)