

Interview Guide

The interview is your final and best opportunity to sell your skills to an employer. Confidence in yourself and your abilities, professionalism, and preparedness are the key aspects of a successful interview.

In order to master your interview, you need to understand the typical format of an interview and be as prepared as possible for questions you may be asked.

BEFORE YOUR INTERVIEW

Research the position and the organization, and be sure you understand the position for which you are applying.

Write down your skills and relevant work and extracurricular experience, including specific personal and professional successes that demonstrate how you can contribute to the organization. Also list your weaknesses and how you are working to overcome them.

Prepare yourself for open-ended and factual questions from the interviewer and come up with questions to ask the employer.

[REVIEW OUR LIST OF SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ON PAGE 2](#)

DURING YOUR INTERVIEW

On the day on the interview, dress professionally and arrive at least five minutes early.

A typical interview consists of three segments:

1. The ice-breaking period is the opportunity to make your first impression; it sets the tone for the interview. Some Human Resources professionals say it takes 20 seconds to form an opinion of the candidate and the rest of the interview to confirm it.
2. The body of the interview is an information exchange. The interviewer tells you about the company and the particular position and asks you questions about yourself. You can use this portion of the interview to volunteer information, as well as ask questions about the position.
3. The closing is your chance to reiterate your interest in the position and find out the next step. Ask if they will call you or if you should call them.

[REVIEW OUR HELPFUL TIPS FOR INTERVIEW SUCCESS ON PAGE 3](#)

AFTER YOUR INTERVIEW

- Record your impressions and thoughts about the interview.
- Follow up with a thank-you letter or e-mail and any requested materials within a few days.
- Be (professionally) persistent and maintain an optimistic outlook. Employers will assume you can perform the job successfully.
- Follow up again after an appropriate length of time has passed!
- To find out about exciting job opportunities, please contact your local Westaff representative.

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SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Tell me about yourself.
- What can you do for us?
- What are your short-term goals?
Long-term goals?
- What motivates you?
- Why are you changing fields?
- How do you define cooperation?
- How do you define success?
- How well do you work under pressure?
- What is your greatest strength?
Greatest weakness?
- What are your most important accomplishments thus far in your career?
- Could you have done more/better in your last/present job?
- What do you know about our company and our industry?
- In what way do you feel you can make the biggest contribution to this firm?
- What suggestions have you offered former employers that were actually adopted?
- What would you do to improve this firm?
- Are you willing to relocate?
- What did you like best about your last/present job?
- Give a specific example of your:
 - Creativity
 - Adaptability
 - Analytical skills
 - Innovative abilities
 - Leadership skills
- What direct supervisory experience have you had?
- How do you interact with subordinates?
- How do you motivate people?
- What are your thoughts regarding promotion for yourself? For your subordinates?
- How did you get along with your last boss?
- Under what sort of supervision do you work best?
- How would you describe the “ideal” boss?
- Is your present/past income commensurate with your abilities?
- What salary range are you seeking?

QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYERS

- Why is the position available?
- What are your company's growth plans?
- What outside influences affect your company's growth?
- What are some common traits of your successful employees?
- What are some characteristics of your company that make it attractive?
- What is the greatest challenge facing your staff (department) now?
- What types of assignments may I expect the first six months on the job?
- What type of training is available?
- Why do you enjoy working for this company?
- Is relocation likely or required?
- What are your expectations for new hires?
- How will the person who accepts this position be evaluated? By whom?
- Do you have a detailed description of the position for which I am being considered?
- When can I expect to hear from you?

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HELPFUL HINTS FOR SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWS

- Be positive, speak slowly, and pause before answering.
- Listen attentively to the questions.
- Ask for clarification when you don't understand a question.
- Give complete answers and use specific examples whenever possible.
- Don't be negative about previous bosses, employers, or companies.
- Be prepared with extra copies of your résumé and with your list of references.
- Be courteous to everyone you meet: receptionists, assistants, etc. You never know who could be helping make the decision whom to hire.
- Meet the interviewer with a firm handshake, a friendly smile, and a polite greeting.
- Be confident and poised.
- Show interest and enthusiasm.
- Be professional and use professional language.
- Use body language to show interest (appropriate posture, facial expression, and eye contact).
- Ask about follow-up procedures and collect a business card.