



FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY

**SUCCESSFUL  
INTERVIEWING**

CAREER SERVICES, HELPING YOU BECOME CAREER READY.

# SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWING

Career Services, Fort Hays State University  
Sheridan Hall 214, (785) 628-4260

The interview process is often termed a two-way street. It is an opportunity for two parties to provide and evaluate information that will lead to a mutually satisfying conclusion. An interview is “a conversation with a purpose.”

Your role in this conversation is to provide adequate and accurate information that will assist the employer in evaluating your skills, experiences, goals, objectives and personal traits for the position he/she is trying to fill. Your other role is to listen and obtain information from the employer regarding the position, work environment, and the employer that will assist you in determining whether you want to continue pursuing the opportunity. Recognize that you are selling a product – yourself – and that you have very limited time (26 minutes average) in which to convince the potential employer that you are the best person for the job.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>Preparing for the interview .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Writing the thank you letter.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Answering questions and communicating effectively .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Behavior-based interview questions .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Questions to ask during an interview.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Online interviewing .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>The second interview .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Dress to impress.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>What do recruiters seek .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Interview knockout factors .....</b>	<b>21</b>

# PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

## RESEARCH THE POSITION

Attempt to find out as much as possible about the position you are interested in or you are applying for. You may request that a job description be sent to you. Know what is expected in the position for which you are applying. Visit with any contacts you may have in the organization. Employer expectations run very high regarding your readiness for the interview.

## RESEARCH THE COMPANY

Look into the organization's purpose and/or products. Read any information that the organization publishes such as annual reports, newsletters, and brochures. You can contact the organization's public relations department to request such literature. Visit with your contacts at the organization and persons who are very familiar with its operations. Researching the organization prior to the interview not only saves an interviewer's time in explaining basic company opportunities and information, but also displays your initiative and interest in pursuing a career with the organization.

## KNOW YOURSELF

Knowing yourself and being able to determine what you are really looking for can lead you to a successful interview. Based on what you know about the opening and the organization, list whatever traits and skills are needed for the job. Now, consider your experience, skills, and strengths in terms of the qualifications for the job. Identify examples of activities or work experience where you have used skills you have listed as necessary for the position. Think about your career goals and be able to state them clearly.

## ANTICIPATE QUESTIONS YOU MAY BE ASKED

Review the section on "answering questions and communicating effectively" in this handout and formulate well developed answers for the sample interview questions. Remember, this is your opportunity to sell yourself and to let the employer know what you can do for the organization.

## PREPARE QUESTIONS TO ASK THE EMPLOYER

Review the list of possible questions that are listed in this handout. This is your opportunity to increase your understanding of the organization, the personnel, the job, and future opportunities.

## CONCENTRATE ON RELAXING

Before going to the interview, concentrate on relaxing and acting naturally. Focus on your positive skills and strengths. You will not project your qualifications adequately if you are nervous and tense.

## DRESS TO IMPRESS

The most important thing in dressing appropriately for an interview is to wear clothes in which you feel comfortable, yet look neat, professional, and well-groomed. Your appearance is an important factor in the employer's decision, as research shows that the first four to nine minutes of an interview will affect the outcome. Proper attire can create an impression of professionalism and leadership.

Dress to reflect your competence, your function, and your comfort. Be sure to consider the organization's dress code and watch for styles preferred by the organization's leaders. Company literature can often be helpful. Observe the photographs and check for styles, colors, and formality of dress.

## JOB SEARCH TIP

### BASIC BUSINESS DRESS HINTS

- BE AWARE OF INDUSTRY DIFFERENCES WHEN DRESSING FOR THE INTERVIEW AND FOR WORK.
- LESS IS MORE. IT IS BETTER TO DRESS CONSERVATIVELY AND WEAR A MINIMAL AMOUNT OF JEWELRY.
- AVOID FADDISH CLOTHES AND JEWELRY WHICH WILL CHANGE EVERY SEASON. STYLISH CLOTHES TEND TO CARRY OVER FROM SEASON TO SEASON AND OFTEN ARE GOOD FOR MANY YEARS.
- SELECT BETTER QUALITY FABRICS. IT IS BETTER TO HAVE A FEW GOOD QUALITY OUTFITS RATHER THAN MANY OF LESSER QUALITY.
- STUDENTS STARTING OUT MAY WISH TO PURCHASE TWO SUITS AND SEVERAL COORDINATING SHIRTS.
- CHOOSE CLOTHES FOR DURABILITY AND DEPENDABILITY. CHOOSE FABRICS THAT TRAVEL WELL.
- CHOOSE AMONG THE MOST RECOMMENDED SUIT COLORS – NAVY, GRAY, BLACK, AND BURGUNDY.
- WEAR COMFORTABLE SHOES – PREFERABLY LEATHER. SHOES SHOULD ALWAYS BE DARKER THAN YOUR OUTFIT. WOMEN SHOULD WEAR PUMP SHOES RATHER THAN SANDALS.
- MAINTAIN A NEAT HAIRSTYLE.
- FOR WOMEN, SUITS OR DRESSES ARE PREFERRED. MEN SHOULD NEVER MIX AND MATCH SUIT JACKETS AND SUIT PANTS.
- PERFUME, COLOGNE, AND MAKEUP SHOULD BE WORN CONSERVATIVELY.

## WHAT TO BRING TO YOUR INTERVIEW

- At least two copies of your resume (even if the interviewer already has one on file).
- Names, addresses, and phone numbers of at least three references typed on your stationery.
- If appropriate, a portfolio of your work with samples and any supportive materials.
- Your professionalism, enthusiasm and positive mental attitude!

## AT THE OPENING OF THE INTERVIEW

- Be sure to arrive early for your interview – at least 15 minutes to accommodate for any unforeseen delays.
- When greeting the interviewer, be pleasant, smile, and shake hands firmly but not aggressively (it is appropriate for the candidate to initiate the gesture). Maintain eye contact and introduce yourself in a confident manner.
- Greet the interviewer by the individual's title and last name in a friendly but businesslike manner. Never address the interviewer by his/her first name.
- Remember to send confident, energetic, nonverbal signals before saying anything (smile, posture, dress, walk, etc.). Body language is a powerful tool; lean forward, make eye contact, and look interested, but don't exaggerate.
- Learn the names of all the people who are interviewing you. Use their correct name(s) in the discussion, if possible, and make sure to pronounce/spell names correctly (try to learn them in advance).
- When you get to the interview room, remain standing until you are offered a seat. Once seated, show a reserved confidence. Let the interviewer start the dialogue and listen until you are prompted to talk.

## DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Be courteous and professional when visiting with everyone at the organization. The secretary is often asked of her opinion of the candidates, so treat all members with respect and professionalism.
- Provide the interviewer with a copy of your resume.
- Listen carefully to understand questions. In answering, pause to give yourself time to compose an answer which is concise but thoughtful. Don't be afraid to ask for clarification for hard to understand questions.
- Welcome all questions with a smile. Give direct, honest answers, and ask relevant questions in return. Do not respond with just "yes" or "no" answers.
- Answer questions in terms of your skills and accomplishments. Give examples of how you have used your skills. Avoid general statements such as "I want to utilize my education and ability" and "I like to work with people." Focus your responses based on previous experiences relating to the employer's needs and how your skills can contribute.
- Avoid writing notes during the interview; however, immediately following the interview, take a few moments to jot down key points.
- NEVER make negative comments about former employers or co-workers.
- Always be honest. Even though you need not volunteer negative information, answer truthfully when questioned.
- Be very aware of your body language – it conveys the way you feel about yourself. Sit comfortably but do not sprawl, slump over, or hold your body rigid.
- Do not smoke, chew gum, or fidget. Aim to project enthusiasm, flexibility, ease of communication, and a willingness to take on more than the duties in the job description.
- Be sensitive to the interviewer's body language. When people's eyes stop focusing on you, and they start shuffling papers, they are sending you a message, such as "I'm losing interest" or "I don't follow." Respond to the silent message by altering your course.
- Act natural – be friendly, courteous, and professional.

## AT THE CLOSE OF THE INTERVIEW

- Let the interviewer initiate the close and be alert for indications of closure.
- Summarize the skills you have to offer, your interest, and your enthusiasm about the position.
- If the interviewer has not already requested a list of references, ask if he/she would like a list of your references.
- Do not ask questions about salary and benefits until you have been offered the job. If the employer asks you about salary requirements, postpone discussing it or answer it in terms of a salary range (try to get them to state the range if possible). If it is brought up before you have been offered the position, respond with "open" or "negotiable." Talk opportunity, not security, in the early stages.
- If you are offered a job, you need not respond on the spot. Reaffirm your interest and ask to be given time to think it over.
- Make sure you leave on a positive note. Shake hands, thank the interviewer for his/her time, and indicate your sincere interest in the position. Clarify call-back procedure. Express your interest by asking how long it may be before you are notified of a decision, or if you should initiate the call, and when.

## AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Within two days of the interview, follow-up with a letter thanking the interviewer for his/her time and restate your qualifications and interest. A general outline for thank you letters and sample thank you letters are included in this handout.
- After a reasonable period of time, if you have not heard from the employer, you may want to inquire about the status of your application. This may be accomplished either by letter or telephone. Briefly recap the history of your application, indicating dates of correspondence and/or interviews. It is courteous to let the employer know why you need to know your status (perhaps you have another offer). Show your continued interest and express your appreciation for the employer's time and cooperation.
- If you are told that someone else was hired, it is OK to ask how you compared with the other candidates. Even though asking such information can be awkward, such a discussion can be invaluable, even yielding other job opportunities and leads.

### JOB SEARCH TIP

#### BE YOURSELF!

A YOUNG COLLEGE STUDENT PREPARING FOR HIS FIRST JOB INTERVIEW WAS ADVISED BY FRIENDS TO EXAGGERATE HIS WORK EXPERIENCE. HE WAS ALSO ADVISED TO BE SERIOUS, DOUR, SOPHISTICATED AND A LOT OF OTHER THINGS HE WAS NOT. WHEN HE ARRIVED FOR THE INTERVIEW, HE WAS ESCORTED TO AN OFFICE BY A GENIAL WOMAN HE ASSUMED WAS A SECRETARY. THEY BEGAN CHATTING AND BECAUSE SHE SEEMED SO OPEN AND FRIENDLY, HE DECIDED HE COULD FIND OUT ABOUT WHAT THE JOB INVOLVED BY ASKING THE SECRETARY QUESTIONS. THE CONVERSATION WENT SMOOTHLY AND AFTER AN HOUR, FEAR AND TREPIDATION HAD BEEN REPLACED BY ENTHUSIASM ABOUT THE POSITION. HE WAS ABOUT TO ASK SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COMING INTERVIEW WHEN THE WOMAN INFORMED HIM THAT THE JOB WAS HIS. THE PLEASANT CONVERSATION HAD BEEN THE INTERVIEW. THE YOUNG MAN HAD LEARNED AN IMPORTANT LESSON: BE YOURSELF!

# WRITING THE THANK YOU LETTER

- After your interview, write a brief follow-up letter. Fewer than one percent of people interviewed take the time to send a follow-up letter, so you can be certain that if you do, it will be noticed. It may be brief, but the letter should express your appreciation for the interview, mention a key point that was discussed during the conversation, reiterate your continued interest in the possibility of employment and convey your desire for a favorable response.
- The thank you letter should be written within two days of the interview. This letter displays a common courtesy, professional etiquette and your ability to pay attention to details. It also reinforces your continued interest and brings your name across the employer's desk again.
- The thank you letter should always be typed on 8-1/2" x 11" bond paper, using personal business letter format.

## GENERAL OUTLINE FOR A THANK YOU LETTER

Your Mailing Address  
City, State Zip Code  
Phone Number  
Date of Letter

Employer's Name  
Employer's Title  
Organization Name  
Mailing Address  
City, State Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

**OPENING PARAGRAPH:** Remind the interviewer of the position for which you were interviewed, as well as the date and place of the interview.

Be sure to express your appreciation for the interview.

**MIDDLE PARAGRAPH(S):** Confirm your interest in the position and in the organization. Highlight your qualifications and relate them toward the various points the interviewer considered as important for the job. Mention a key point that was discussed during the conversation. If you have done anything since the interview which demonstrates your interest in the position, such as talks with alumni, faculty, other persons, or research in the library, etc., be sure to mention it.

Include any information not previously presented to supplement your resume, application letter, and the interview. If travel, location, or a similar subject was stressed during the interview, be sure to confirm your willingness to comply with these conditions.

**CLOSING PARAGRAPH:** Indicate that you look forward to hearing from the employer regarding possible employment.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)

Your Name Typed

# SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER

1818 Shadow Lane  
Hays, KS 67601  
(785) 625-0000  
Date of Letter

Ms. Helen Hastings  
Human Resources Manager  
ABC Corporation  
P.O. Box 2000  
Wichita, KS 67202

Dear Ms. Hastings:

Thank you for meeting with me on Thursday to discuss entry-level positions with ABC Corporation. The Customer Service Representative position you described sounds both interesting and challenging.

ABC Corporation appears to be a dynamic and exhilarating place to work. As I mentioned during the interview, my internship experience with IBM Corporation has given me insight into the operations of a large corporation and the interdependence of the various departments. I am eager to apply the knowledge I gained through my internship and education and begin a career with ABC Corporation.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding possible employment. It was a pleasure visiting with you. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)

Your Name Typed

# SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER

359 West First  
Victoria, KS 67671  
(785) 735-0000  
Date of Letter

Mr. Daniel Jaimes  
Principal  
Lawrence Central Junior High School  
1400 Massachusetts Drive  
Lawrence, KS 66046-3498

Dear Mr. Jaimes:

Thank you for the time you spent visiting with me last week about the English opening at Lawrence Central Junior High School. I thoroughly enjoyed our meeting and appreciate being given the opportunity to become acquainted with the school, its programs, and staff.

I was very impressed with your description of the English Department and am excited about the opportunity to bring my experience and qualifications to the position. I am also very interested in the tennis coaching duties you mentioned.

I would enjoy teaching and coaching at Lawrence Central Junior High School and feel that I could make a positive contribution to the school and professional staff. Thank you again for your time and courtesy. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)

Your Name Typed

# ANSWERING QUESTIONS AND COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

Every interviewer has a different style of interviewing. For this reason, you shouldn't try to memorize the questions or your answers. Preparing for common questions, however, will help to ensure that you are not caught off guard when a particular question is asked. Having a general idea of the points you are trying to convey will not only help you to give a complete, structured answer, but will also allow you to appear spontaneous in your response. Your goal is to leave the interviewer with the impression that you were prepared but natural. Because the interviewer's purpose is to find out more about you, open-ended questions are commonly used in interviews. An open-ended question is one that invites a broad, detailed response. An example might be "Tell me a little about your experience as a youth counselor." A closed question asks for specific data (usually a short answer). As the interviewee, you might want to turn a closed question into an open one, so that more information can be shared. For example, in response to the question "Did you hold positions of leadership in any organization?" You might reply: "I was President of Alpha Gamma Delta Sorority during my senior year. During that time, I initiated and organized five successful fund drives to benefit local community assistance centers." It may be helpful to think of the interview questions as following a continuum, which serves as an excellent frame when preparing for your interview.

## PAST

In past-oriented questions, the interviewer is looking for examples of prior accomplishments that could prove that you would be a good employee in the future. A popular (and sometimes dreaded) past-oriented question is "Tell me a little about yourself." Quite often, the interviewee takes this as a cue to recite his or her entire resume. While this tactic does permit you to elaborate on your accomplishments, it also repeats everything the interviewer has already read about you. To attract the interest of the interviewer, divert the conversation away from your resume by relating anecdotes about specific situations or accomplishments. For example, you could explain your motivation for attending your university or college, or how you happened to choose your major. These items are certainly not listed on your resume, but they do help the interviewer learn a bit about how you think. When describing your past accomplishments or experience, it is important to emphasize the ways in which you are different from other candidates. You should try to show how you have gone beyond the call of duty or used opportunity to your advantage. Sometimes you will be given a negatively framed question. For example, "What was the most difficult problem you dealt with during your student teaching?" Simply listing an unsolved problem is sure to leave the interviewer unimpressed. Instead, give a positive response, thereby creating an opportunity to showcase your problem-solving skills. We recommend using the STAR technique interviewing approach to allow the interviewer to "walk through" the situation with you:

1) state the Situation or Task,

2) explain the Actions you took to resolve the problem, and  
3) describe the Results of your actions.

Remember: Always emphasize what makes you stand out from all the other candidates. You want the recruiter to remember you.

## PRESENT

Present-oriented questions help the recruiter to determine why you might (or might not) be an excellent candidate for the position. Common present-oriented questions include "What can you offer this organization?" and "Why should we hire you?" In this situation it is tempting to simply list a number of adjectives that describe yourself (e.g., "I'm a motivated, energetic, organized, strategic-thinking kind of person who communicates ideas well ...").

At this point, the recruiter is most likely thinking, prove it. And that is exactly what you must do.

It is a good idea to group three to five of your strengths with examples that illustrate each strength. If, for example, you feel that one of your strengths is organization, you might "prove it" to an interviewer by using an example such as:

"I am a very organized person. As you can see from my resume, I stay very busy. I'm a full-time student and a staff writer for the university paper, and I also work 30 hours each week as a waitress. In order to accomplish everything that must get done, I write all my tasks in a daily organizer, prioritize them, and plan my days accordingly. I have found that much more can be accomplished this way."

Interviewers also use present-oriented questions to gauge your real interest in the organization. They may ask, "What do you know about our organization?"

If you've really done your homework, this question is a great opportunity for you to show that you have in-depth knowledge of the organization. If you haven't done any research, however, this question can be devastating! Blowing this question is a sure sign to the interviewer that you're unprepared, knowledgeable, and downright uninterested – none of which is likely to impress. Do your homework; there's no reason to drop the ball on this play.

## FUTURE

Not surprisingly, interviewers use future-oriented questions to find out what your goals are. Perhaps the most common question is "What do you want to be doing in five years?"

It is essential to have your homework done before these questions arise. Otherwise, you run the risk of naming goals that are incompatible with the organization's structure. For instance, mentioning a desire to move to the human resources department after working in marketing for a couple of years wouldn't make sense if the company does not hire human resources personnel from any other department. Such an answer not only makes you look unprepared, but also signals to the interviewer that their organization cannot satisfy your career goals. You can avoid this situation by researching a company before you apply.

# THE #1 INTERVIEW QUESTION... “TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF.”

Throughout your job search and especially when you are in a job interview, you need to be able to introduce yourself in a powerful way to people who don't know you. What you say at that moment will set the tone for the rest of your interaction. To do this most effectively, you need to develop a powerful introduction.

Your introduction is like a “30-second commercial.” It provides just enough information to make the listener want to know more about you and sets a professional tone for the rest of your interaction.

An introduction is composed of three distinct parts and a follow-up question:

1. Your education and credentials
2. Your experience in the field (work experience, internship experience, volunteer work)
3. Your strengths
4. An open-ended probing question about the company's needs, problems, and challenges.

## DEVELOP YOUR INTRODUCTION

### HERE'S AN EXAMPLE:

“Let me tell you about myself. I hold a Bachelor's degree in Biology from Fort Hays State University with a minor in Management. I have a year and a half experience in the field through a summer Internship with Kansas Wildlife & Parks and part-time work experience with the Fort Hays State University Biology Department. I have discovered that I enjoy both field related activities and lab work challenges. I chose this field because I enjoy the outdoors as well as solving problems through lab analysis. I am a hands-on person and I like getting into the thick of things and dealing with tangible concrete issues. What challenges exist for management development positions in your organization?”

### YOUR GREETING:

Let me tell you about myself. I hold a \_\_\_\_\_ degree  
in \_\_\_\_\_ from Fort Hays State University (is your  
minor/certificate in \_\_\_\_\_ related?). I have \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ experience in the field through \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

I have discovered that I enjoy \_\_\_\_\_.

I chose this field because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Now ask your first question – even if they told you to hold your questions until later. For example, “**Is there anything in particular you would like to know about my background?**”

# GETTING HIRED

## TOP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What do you know about our company?
3. Why do you want to work for us?
4. What unique qualities or abilities would you bring to this job?
5. What are your major strengths and weaknesses?
6. Tell me about a time you failed at something, and what you did afterwards?
7. Tell me about a time when you worked on a team project. What was your relative position on the team? Were you satisfied with your contribution?
8. Think back to a situation in which you had to resolve a conflict. Tell me how you did it.
9. Tell me about a project that you had either at work or school. Describe in detail how you managed it and what was the outcome.
10. Have you any questions for us?



# BEHAVIOR-BASED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

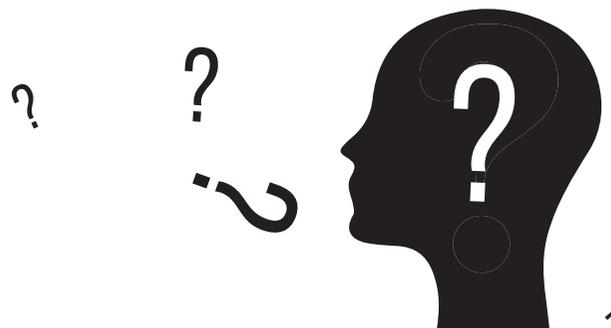
Employers are continually searching for new ways to identify candidates who possess specific skills best suited for the organization's work environment. The following interview questions are typical examples of behavioral based questions now being asked by many employers in their search to identify exceptional candidates.

- Give me an example of a time when you demonstrated initiative.
- Thinking back over your college experience, describe a situation in which you were challenged in using your communication skills. Tell me all about it in detail.
- Tell me about a time when you were able to successfully resolve a conflict with a co-worker.
- Tell me about your experience in dealing with routine work. What problems did you overcome in order to focus on the details the job required?
- Give me an example of a time when you set long-range goals. Tell me what your goal was, how you decided on the goal, and the outcome.
- What is the most difficult decision you have had to make that involved other people who did not agree with your decision? Tell me about the process of making that decision and the results.
- What was one of the most difficult technical problems you have solved? Tell me all about it in detail.
- Accuracy is often critical in producing quality results. Select a job that required you to complete paperwork and tell me what specific things you did to ensure accuracy in your results.

## SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR NON-TEACHING APPLICANTS

- What are your long-range and short-range goals and objectives, when and why did you establish these goals, and how are you preparing yourself to achieve them?
- What specific goals, other than those related to your occupation, have you established for yourself for the next ten years?
- What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
- What do you really want to do in life?
- What do you know about our organization?
- What relevant experience have you had?
- What are the most important rewards you expect in your business career?
- What do you expect to be earning in five years?
- Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
- Which is more important to you--the money or the type of job?
- What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- How would you describe yourself?
- How do you think a friend or professor who knows you well would describe you?
- What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
- How has your college experience prepared you for this career?
- Why should I hire you?

- What qualifications do you have that make you think that you will be successful in business?
- How do you determine or evaluate success?
- What do you think it takes to be successful in a company like ours?
- In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?
- What qualities should a successful manager possess?
- Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and those reporting to him or her.
- What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
- Describe your most rewarding college experience.
- If you were hiring a graduate for this position, what qualities would you look for?
- Why did you select your college or university?
- What led you to choose your field or major study?
- What college subjects did you like best? Why?
- What college subjects did you like least? Why?
- If you could do so, how would you plan your academic study differently? Why?
- What changes would you make in your college or university? Why?
- Do you have plans for continued study? An advanced degree?
- Do you think that your grades are a good indication of your academic achievement?
- What have you learned from participation in extracurricular activities?
- In what kind of a work environment are you most comfortable?
- How do you respond to pressure on the job? In class?
- In what part-time or summer jobs have you been most interested? Why?
- How would you describe the ideal job for you following graduation?
- Why did you decide to seek a position with this company?
- Define cooperation.
- What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
- Are you seeking employment in a company of a certain size? Why?
- What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?
- Do you have a geographical preference? Why?
- Will you relocate?
- Are you willing to travel?
- Are you willing to spend at least six months as a trainee?
- Why do you think you might like to live in the community in which our company is located?
- What major problem have you encountered and how did you deal with it?
- What have you learned from your mistakes?



## **JOB SEARCH TIP PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE!**

WE RECOMMEND THAT IN ORDER TO PRACTICE FOR AN INTERVIEW, YOU PARTICIPATE IN MOCK INTERVIEWS AT CAREER SERVICES AS WELL AS WITH FRIENDS OR RELATIVES. IN A MOCK INTERVIEW, YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO REFINE YOUR ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS. BY REVIEWING YOUR PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND SUCCESSSES IN THIS MANNER, YOU CAN BEST DECIDE HOW TO WORK THEM INTO THE CONVERSATION DURING AN ACTUAL INTERVIEW. YOU CAN NEVER PRACTICE TOO MUCH!

# **BEHAVIOR-BASED INTERVIEWING FOR EDUCATION MAJORS**

## **HOW BEHAVIOR-BASED INTERVIEWING (BBI) HELPS CANDIDATES AND EMPLOYERS**

Even if an employer isn't using questions structured in a BBI manner, candidates can build their answers to indicate positive past performances. When asked, "Tell me about yourself," a candidate prepared for BBI will answer, "I just finished 14 weeks of student teaching (situation), where I was required to teach five history classes a day to a total of 129 students (task). I used the active learning lesson plans I was taught by my professors, and at the end of the semester, 87 percent of our history students passed the pre-graduation sample test (action and result)." That answer will wow an employer.

From the employer's point of view, if the interviewer can't actually watch the candidate teach a group of students, BBI can be a reliable way to assess a candidate's ability to articulate teaching skills and describe past performance.

## **SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS**

### **Content knowledge and curriculum**

- What are some math skills that students in your class room have learned?
- Describe a two-week unit that you have taught.
- Tell me about a lesson on \_\_\_\_\_ that went well.
- How have you integrated writing skills into your curriculum?

### **Methods and planning**

- Describe a lesson plan that exceeded your expectations when you taught it.
- Describe a lesson that did not succeed and how you would change it for a future class.
- How have you ensured coverage of state-mandated standards in your planning?

### **Classroom organization and management**

- Describe an experience you have had becoming established with a new group of students.
- What rules and rewards have worked in your classroom in the past?
- Describe a conflict you encountered with a student and how you dealt with it.

### **Homework and grading**

- Describe a grading policy that has worked well in the past.
- How have you assessed student achievement informally without grading?
- Tell me about a typical homework assignment in your class.

### **Meeting student needs**

- How have you modified assignments for gifted or special education students?
- What are some strategies for teaching your subject to students who may not be good listeners?
- Describe an experience where you identified a student's special need and modified a lesson for that individual.

### **Student diversity**

- How have you modified or adapted lessons to meet the needs of special education students or English Language Learners (ELLs)?
- Today's students often have emotional issues and concerns. How have you been able to help or get help for a student with such a problem?

### **Technology**

- Describe how you have used multimedia or other technology in teaching a lesson.
- How have you been able to get students to use computers and/or internet resources?

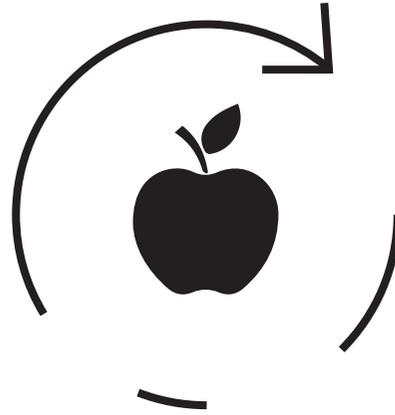
### **Communication**

- Share an example of a communication with a parent that helped you to understand a student in your class.
- Describe a time when you team-taught or co-planned with a colleague.
- Tell about a time when you asked an administrator or teacher for help.

## SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS CONTINUED

### Professionalism

- What parts of your teacher education training do you use on a regular basis?
- How have memberships in professional organizations or attendance at conferences and workshops improved your teaching?
- What have you read recently that led to an improvement in your classroom?
- Why did you choose to go into the teaching field?
- Tell me about your student teaching experiences?



## MORE SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHING APPLICANTS

- Why did you choose to go into the teaching field?
- Tell me about your student teaching experiences?
- What are your extracurricular interests?
- How do you plan to remain educationally current?
- How long would you plan to teach at this school? (or this district?)
- What would you like to ask of us?
- What responsibilities will your students have for their learning?
- What do you want your students to accomplish?
- Tell us something about your grading system preferences?
- What professional journals do you read regularly?
- Would you rather teach the slow learner or the advanced student?
- How would you challenge the slow learner and the advanced student within the same classroom?
- How would you handle a parent-teacher conference where the parent blamed you for his or her child's lack of progress?
- What teaching techniques have you found to be effective for you within the classroom?
- What do you feel are your three greatest teaching strengths?
- What seem to be your three greatest teaching weaknesses?
- What are the most recent books or novels that you have read?
- What do you believe to be the three greatest strengths of the teaching profession today?
- What do you believe to be the three greatest weaknesses of the teaching profession today?
- Discuss the basic philosophy of Bloom's taxonomy.
- Discuss the philosophy of Krathwohl's taxonomy.
- What do you consider an "ideal" class size?
- Do you believe in homogeneous groupings; heterogeneous groupings?
- How do you feel about team teaching? The self-contained classroom?
- Will individualized instruction be a part of your teaching day?
- What are your convictions regarding discipline?
- Students need teacher feedback regarding their efforts. Name several ways that you provide students with such information.
- Do you believe in detailed lesson plans?
- Do you feel that teachers are becoming more militant? Why?
- How do you intend to motivate your students?
- How will you appraise your teaching performance?
- Comment on some leaders in education. Do you agree with their ideas? Disagree?
- Cite several authorities in your major subject of preparation and comment on them.
- Would you feel comfortable when teaching the educationally and culturally deprived child?
- What is your greatest concern when in a classroom?
- Please share with us how you would implement the Effective Schools research in your classroom.
- Please share with us your degree of concern regarding Quality Performance Accreditation as it applies to Kansas schools.
- Do you believe that all children can learn?
- Are you familiar with the concepts of mastery learning and cooperative learning? If so, share with us your background in these areas and whether we would find you implementing them in your classroom.
- Does humor have a place in your classroom? If so, when would it be appropriate?
- Describe the role of the teacher in the learning process.
- What is the role of the teacher in the community?
- How would you individualize instruction in your classroom?
- What special abilities do you have that would benefit your students?
- Do you grade on ability or effort? Why?
- If you found the slower learners in your class could not read the grade-level book, what would you do?
- How do you feel about being observed by your principal?
- Would you be willing to sponsor extracurricular activities? If so, what specifically?
- How are you able to make students feel at ease around you while still respecting you?
- How are you able to stimulate creative expression by your students?
- What is the school's average class size?
- Are there mentoring programs for new teachers?
- What is a typical school day like?

# QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYERS DURING AN INTERVIEW

Keep your questions about the organization itself short and general and do not ask for information that is easily obtained from material readily available to the public. Your questions should reveal all the research you have already done and should be directed to the types of information you are not likely to get elsewhere. They should also include issues you are sincerely curious about.

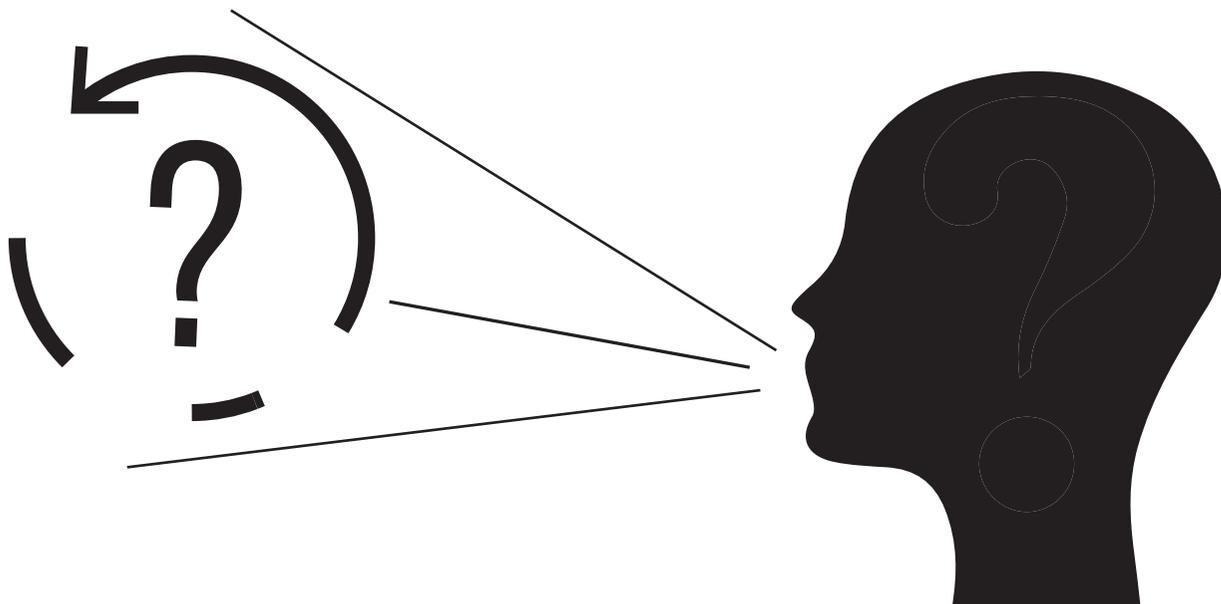
Useful sample questions are listed below. Use only those pertinent to your situation or develop ones which will increase your understanding of the employer, the personnel, the job and future opportunities.

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- What would be a typical first assignment?
- Which of your locations have the type of job I am looking for?
- What type of orientation would I have?
- What type of training programs do you have? How long is the training period?
- What can I expect in terms of job progression in your organization?
- How often would my performance be reviewed?
- Do you have any recent graduates from (University Name) working for you?
- What percentage of supervisory positions are filled from within the company?
- How much travel is normally expected?
- How frequently do you relocate professional employees?
- How much input does the new person have on geographical location?
- Are there any immediate plans for expansion in your organization, either in new offices, new market areas, or new fields? In what directions are you moving?
- How would you describe the atmosphere of the organization? What is unique about it?
- In your opinion, why is your organization a good place to work?
- How is the present economic situation affecting your organization?
- What characteristics are you most likely to find in people in this position?
- What is the most challenging aspect of the work?
- Is this position's scope limited to one department, or does it interact with others?

## FOR TEACHING APPLICANTS

- What is your district's philosophy?
- How does the administration work with teachers to improve instruction?
- Are there school psychologists, counselors, or public agencies who help students and teachers?
- What types of media resources are available?
- What textbooks do you use in this subject area?
- How would you describe the typical professional staff member in this district?
- How involved are parents in school activities?
- To what degree does the community support the schools and the teachers?
- What are the principal's building goals for the upcoming year? Are these goals formalized and shared with staff members?
- Who is responsible for instruction in the use of resource materials in your library or learning center?
- Tell me about the students who attend this school.
- Does the district offer incentives for professional development days during the school year?
- Are there opportunities for team teaching or team planning?
- What is the retention rate for secondary students?
- Has your district adopted particular systems or techniques for classroom management strategies?
- If involved in extracurricular activities, ask questions regarding budget, fundraising requirements, community expectations, additional faculty sponsors, and the activity calendar.
- If the principal has not covered questions regarding curriculum, school discipline, and teacher evaluations, ask pertinent questions regarding those areas.



# TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

Many organizations now use telephone interviewing at various points during the hiring process. It is important for you to be prepared for a telephone interview and be able to communicate effectively with the interviewer. Here are some telephone interviewing tips and sample telephone interviewing questions to help you prepare.

## TELEPHONE INTERVIEWING TIPS

### 1. BE PREPARED

- Have a copy of your resume, transcript, and the job description in front of you during the interview
- Keep a log of companies and titles of jobs applied for, which will help you be better prepared if you are called unexpectedly
- Attend phone interview workshops and participate in mock phone interviews offered by your career center
- Practice, practice, practice!

### 2. BE PROFESSIONAL

- Record a professional message for your answering machine or voice mail
- Have a “canned” response ready for a recruiter if you’re caught off guard (exp: “I am on my way out the door to class. I’m very interested in talking to you about this position. Can I arrange a time to call you back this afternoon?”) This extra time will allow you to review the job description and other reference materials and prepare some questions for the interviewer
  - Turn off music or the TV during the interview
  - Do not eat, drink, or chew gum during the interview
  - Do not type on your computer during the interview
  - Do not put an interviewer on hold to take call waiting

### 3. BE PERSONABLE

- Be enthusiastic—show interest in the position and the organization
- Ask pertinent questions about the job and company, not just about salary, benefits, and/or hours
- Talk slowly and show self-confidence
- Thank the interviewer for his or her time

## SAMPLE TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### 1. FOR AN INITIAL SCREENING

- Tell me about your most recent position.
- Who was your best boss, and why?
- What interests you about working at our company?
- Based on your research, what do you know about our organization?
- You applied for the position and you know what it entails – what are your salary expectations? What is your current salary?
- What is your understanding of the position?
- Why are you looking to leave your employer? Why did you leave your last employer?
- Are you currently authorized to work in the United States?
- What would you consider an acceptable amount of travel?
- In your opinion, what are the top three trends in the field today?
- Based on the description I have provided, what technical/nontechnical qualifications would you bring to this position?
- What questions do you have for me?

### 2. FOR A BEHAVIORAL SCREENING

- What type of opportunity/position are you looking for? Describe your ideal job.
- What are you looking for in this position?
- What is your ideal work environment?
- How would your current employer/teacher/co-workers describe your work?
- What are your top three priorities or motivators?
- What areas in your career are you interested in further developing?
- Tell me about a time when you had to create something new, or look at something from a different perspective.
- Where do you see yourself next year?
- Can you give an example of a time you worked in a team?
- How do you incorporate diversity into your professional practices?
- Tell me about the toughest customer [internal or external] you had to win over and how you did it.
- Tell me about a situation in which you were the underdog and stuck with it until you succeeded.
- Describe examples of how you acquired experience in X and how you have used this experience on the job.
- Identify two accomplishments that you are most proud of.
- Why should we hire you?

# ONLINE INTERVIEWING

More and more companies are opting for virtual interviews by phone, conference call, or videoconference rather than face to face interviews. Online interviews are similar, yet different, than face to face interviews but must be taken just as seriously as traditional interviews. Below are a few steps to guide you through the process of interviewing online.

- Find a quiet space for your interview free of disturbances. If you have children, have someone watch them so you are not interrupted during the interview. Keep your cell phone on silent. If in a location other than your home, put a “do not disturb” sign on the door.
- If you are using a designated site, arrive at the videoconference site early to allow time to get comfortable with the equipment and ensure everything is working properly.
- Practice speaking slowly and clearly in a well modulated voice. Avoid excessive movements and look straight into the monitor to make eye contact with your interviewer. With an interview like this, there will be a delay in receiving the audio and video.
- Appearance matters here just as much as in traditional interviews. Dress professionally and avoid bright colors and glittery jewelry. Use correct posture when sitting during the interview.
- You will be asked the same questions as in a face-to-face interview. Knowing information about the company and being prepared for questions is important in order to stand out. Be yourself, concentrate on the facts, and give clear examples.
- End your interview with a smile and ensure that all your videoconference equipment is turned off before making any comments or gestures. And like in any other interview, send a thank you note!



# THE SECOND INTERVIEW

## GETTING PREPARED

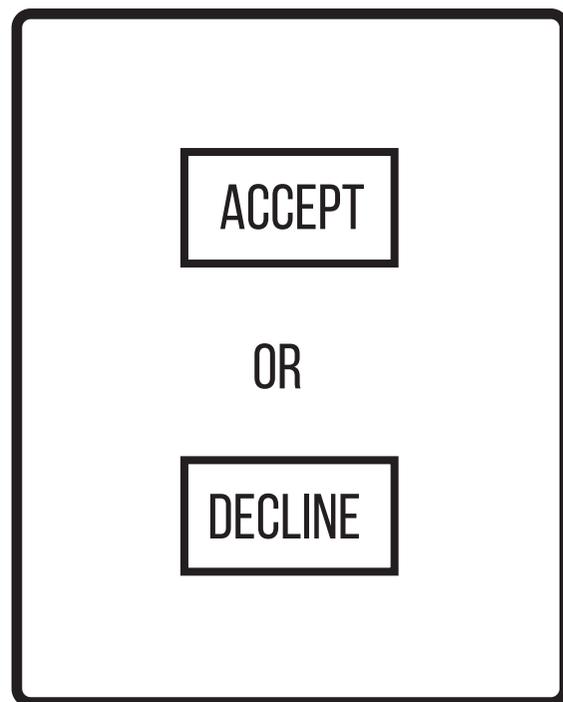
**The Invitation** – Candidates who are being seriously considered are frequently invited for a second interview in the home office or plant. If a company representative considers you to be a qualified candidate for employment, an invitation to continue with the process will be extended. You should acknowledge this invitation with a minimum delay. In many cases, the invitation letter will include a number of alternative dates for your visit, with the selection left up to you. You should choose a date that least conflicts with your schedule. You may also receive a telephone call inviting you to a second interview.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

**The Opportunity** – You should accept an invitation for an office visit only if you are seriously interested in the employer. Some students/alumni have commented on the difficulty of “staying fresh” for a series of interviews comprised of the same questions. There is no magic formula or special technique to suggest other than to keep telling yourself that to each member of the organization the information you provide is new and you should try not to get exasperated by repeat questions. In order to make the interview more dynamic and interesting, we recommend that you ask questions that are specific to the department or individual with whom you are speaking. This not only gives you a broader range of topics to discuss, but provides you with valuable information about the organization which you will need in order to make a wise employment decision. Since the call-back interview is used to measure mutual fit, you should prepare yourself to become more integrally involved in the interview process.

**Expenses** – If the invitation does not mention expenses, contact the employer for clarification. Most employers pay all reasonable expenses incurred on visits, yet the company will expect you to use discretion in reporting your expenses. Keep records for transportation, food and lodging. If you are planning to visit more than one employer on the same trip, inform each of them and they will assist you in prorating your expenses. The following items are not considered to be normal expenses: entertainment, tours, cigarettes, alcoholic beverages, magazines, personal calls, valet expenses, flight insurance, and excessive tips.

**The Interview** – The office or plant visit will be conducted in much the same way as your initial interview. Second interviews can vary in length from half an hour to a full day of interviews, tours, and meals with a variety of company employees. For most of us, talking to all of these people can be draining. Therefore, strategies such as taking notes when appropriate and timing your responses – delaying your questions and reaction – may help you to remember names as well as intelligent questions to ask later. During the interview, candidates may expect to discuss job responsibilities, personal qualifications, observe company operations, visit facilities where they might work, meet other personnel, and perhaps tour the community.



**Business Etiquette** – It is not unusual to be taken out to lunch or dinner as part of your second interview. At such events it is essential to remember and practice everything you ever learned about table manners. Here are some basic guidelines:

- Don't smoke or drink alcoholic beverages (even if invited)
- Order something that is easy to eat (avoid spaghetti, juicy hamburgers, etc.) and which is moderately priced.
- If wine is ordered by your host, have only one glass (if you drink).
- Remember, even though your luncheon host may not be your potential supervisor, you are still being scrutinized and sized up for a correct “fit.”

# ILLEGAL QUESTIONS

## WHAT'S THE RIGHT ANSWER?

Various federal, state, and local laws regulate the question a prospective employer can ask you. An employer's questions—on the job application, in the interview, or during the testing process—must be related to the job for which you are applying. For the employer, the focus must be: "What do I need to know to decide whether or not this person can perform the functions of this job?"

## OPTIONS FOR ANSWERING

If you are asked an illegal question, you have three options.

- You are free to answer the question - but if you choose to do so, realize you are giving information that is not job-related. And, you could harm your candidacy by giving the "wrong" answer.
- You can refuse to answer the question. By selecting this option, you'll be within your rights but also run the risk of coming off as uncooperative or confrontational – hardly the words an employer would use to describe the "ideal" candidate.
- Your third option is to examine the intent behind the question and respond with an answer as it might apply to the job. For instance, if the interviewer asks, "Are you a U.S. citizen?" or "What country are you from?" you've been asked an illegal question. You could say, however, "I am authorized to work in the United States." Or, if your interviewer asks, "Who is going to take care of your children when you have to travel?" You might answer, "I can meet the travel and work schedule that this job requires." Here are some examples of illegal questions – and their legal counterparts:

INQUIRY AREA	ILLEGAL QUESTIONS	LEGAL QUESTIONS
National Origin/ Citizenship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are you a U.S. citizen?</li><li>• Where were you/your parents born?</li><li>• What is your "native tongue"?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are you authorized to work in the United States?</li><li>• What languages do you read, speak, or write fluently?</li></ul>
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How old are you?</li><li>• When did you graduate from high school?</li><li>• What's your birth date?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are you over the age of 18?</li></ul>
Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Any question regarding an applicants religious affiliation or beliefs.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• After an individual is hired an employer may inquire about religious accomodations.</li></ul>
Marital/Family Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What's your marital status?</li><li>• Who do you live with?</li><li>• Do you plan to have a family? When?</li><li>• How many kids do you have?</li><li>• What are your child care arrangements?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Would you be willing to relocate if necessary?</li><li>• Travel is an important part of the job. Would you be able and willing to travel as needed?</li><li>• This job requires overtime occasionally. Would you be willing to work overtime as necessary?</li></ul>
Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How tall are you?</li><li>• How much do you weigh?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are you able to lift a 50-pound weight and carry it 100 yards, as that is part of the job?</li></ul>
Disability/Medical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do you have any disabilities?</li><li>• Please complete the following medical history.</li><li>• Have you had any recent or past illnesses or operations? If yes, list and give dates.</li><li>• When was your last physical exam?</li><li>• How's your family's health?</li><li>• When did you lose your eyesight? How?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Based on the job description, are you able to perform the essential functions of this job?</li><li>• Can you demonstrate how you would perform the following job related functions?</li></ul>
Arrest Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have you ever been arrested?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have you ever been convicted of _____?</li></ul>
Military	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If you've been in the military, were you honorably discharged?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In what branch of the Armed Forces did you serve?</li><li>• What type of training or education did you receive in the military?</li></ul>

Adapted from "Legal Issues: Navigating the Interview Process and Avoiding a Legal Landmine," by G. C. Hlavac and E. J. Easerly, 2014, February 3, National Association of Colleges and Employers. Retrieved from <http://www.nacweb.org/public-policy-and-legal/legal-issues/legal-issues-navigating-the-interview-process-and-avoiding-a-legal-landmine/>.

# INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

## WHAT IS AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW?

- An information-gathering conversation between you and someone employed in the career field in which you are interested.
- An opportunity to find out what the job is like directly from someone doing it.
- A carefully planned interview, in terms of what questions to ask that will help you obtain the information desired without taking too much of a person's time.
- An opportunity to network with someone in your field of interest and to make a good and lasting impression.

---

## WHY DO I NEED TO DO AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW?

- To confirm information you have already learned about the career field, while also doing a reality check about what you've heard, read, and believed.
- To get an honest and personal evaluation of the career.
- To make contact and a favorable impression on someone in the field, who may eventually hire you or be able to recommend other employers to you.
- To experience an interview situation, even though in this case, you will be asking the questions.

---

## WHO DO I CONTACT FOR AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW?

- Professionals who are recommended by faculty members or the Career Services staff.
- People you meet at school, work, church, meetings, etc., that work in a career field that interests you or that know someone in that field.
- Family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers—anyone you know—can be sources of information.

---

## WHAT DO I PREPARE FOR AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

- Know what kind of information you want, which requires researching the career.
- Determine what questions you have about how this person chose their career, the preparation they recommend, the advantages and disadvantages of the field, etc.
- Set up the interview by phoning in advance and requesting 30 minutes of the person's time—and then stick to that!
- If someone has referred you, give the person's name and indicate why you are calling and that you are not asking for a job, but to get information about the type of work they do and how they got into that field.
- Be on time for the interview, dress neatly, and take notes.
- Send a thank you after the informational interview and consider enclosing a resume.

---

## EXAMPLES OF HOW TO MAKE THE CONTACT:

If someone you know has given you the name of someone to contact for an informational interview, use their name when making your phone call:

*"Hello, my name is Kari Smith. John Green is a friend of mine and he suggested I call you. I am a student at Fort Hays State University and I'm considering going into the field of environmental science. I'm not looking for a job at this point, just more information and any advice that you might be willing to share with me about the field. Could we set up a time where I could meet with you for about 30 minutes to talk about this?"*

If you don't have a personal reference, but have gotten the name in some other way, mention that in your phone conversation:

*"Hello, my name is Kari Smith. I am a student at Fort Hays State University and I'm considering going to law school. I saw your name in the local newspaper recently in an article about the United Way funding of Prairie State Legal Services. I'm very interested in combining my interests in social work and the legal field. I was wondering if you could share information with me about how you got interested in this type of work? It would be helpful to get your personal perspective about your job. I would not take more than 30 minutes of your time. Could we arrange an appointment for next week?"*

# INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING CONTINUED

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS?

Being prepared is the key to a successful interview, whether it is an informational interview or an actual job interview. After researching the career field, select six to eight questions that will help you get the most out of a 30 minute information-gathering interview. The following is a list of possible questions from which to choose:

1. What interested you most about getting into this type of work?
2. How did you prepare yourself for this career and what classes or activities would you suggest to me?
3. Knowing what you know now, would you go into this career? Why or why not?
4. What do you like most and least about your job? What is most rewarding?
5. What skills or personal qualities are necessary in this career?
6. What do you do in a typical day and what type of people do you encounter?
7. How stressful is your job? What are the frustrations associated with your work?
8. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working in your field?
9. Would you advise people to enter this career area today? Why or why not?
10. What, in your opinion, is the job outlook in the career area?
11. How much variety is connected with your work?
12. Can you recommend the names of other people or employers I can consult to find out more about your field? May I use your name to introduce myself?

## DRESS TO IMPRESS

### YOUR APPEARANCE REALLY MATTERS

A nice appearance is an investment in your career. Although it will not take the place of a good education or competence in your job, it will enhance those requirements and increase your chances for getting ahead in the business world.

An interviewer's decision not to hire a job applicant is usually made within the first thirty seconds of an interview. That's a lot of sizing up in a little time – mostly on the basis of appearance. Your looks – with or without appropriate business attire – will make up approximately 80 percent of that impression before you even open your mouth. The right makeup and hairstyle can make a person look more professional and not only increase his or her chance of being hired, but increase his or her starting salary by as much as 8 to 20 percent.

### BUSINESS CASUAL

Business casual is slightly less dressy than regular business dress. Women's casual wear may consist of slacks or a casual dress. Men could wear an open-collared shirt with a sports jacket with coordinated slacks. Jeans, shorts, or t-shirts are not acceptable. When in doubt, go for the conservative side.

### FORMAL & SEMIFORMAL ATTIRE

Formal wear is generally not required; however, if the occasion arises, a "white tie" tuxedo and full ball gown is preferred. For semiformal attire, women should wear a knee-length cocktail dress, a tea length dress, or a long dress. Men should wear "black tie" apparel which is a tuxedo or a dark suit.

### A FEW GENERAL TIPS

- Be clean and use (unscented) deodorant liberally.
- Arrive early. In a restroom, check your clothes, hair, hands and nails, and face. Carry and use a travel mouthwash.
- Take off your jacket prior to an interview or while traveling to keep it wrinkle free and to keep yourself cool.
- Hair should be neatly (and recently) cut and men's faces well shaven.
- Cologne or perfume is used in moderation so that the smell is not overpowering.
- Nails should be well manicured and hands should be well moisturized.
- Carry breath mints with you, but don't use them during the interview.
- Do not chew gum in an interview.
- Glasses should not be tinted. It is important for an interviewer to make eye contact with you.
- Always carry extra copies of your resume.
- Don't tap your feet, yawn, stare at the interviewer, touch your hair or otherwise appear nervous or bored during the interview.
- If you have a coat, umbrella, backpack, etc., ask if you may leave them with the secretary or ask if there is a designated area for storage.

# MEN

For men, a pin-striped or plain colored suit, preferably in dark gray, gray, black, or navy is appropriate with a tasteful tie in a small pattern or stripe. A conservative style suit worn with a white shirt is appropriate for the interview. Make sure the collar is comfortable, because unbuttoning your top button in an interview is not appropriate. Cotton or cotton/poly blends are appropriate. Also, an undershirt is a good idea.

Your ties should also be conservative in length, width (2¾ to 3½), and design. The tip of your tie should just cover your belt buckle; 100% silk is the best bet in terms of quality and ease of care. Bow ties and clip-on ties should not be worn. You want the interviewer focusing on your ideas, not your tie.

Shoes are important, too: always buy leather, preferably brown or black. Lace-up or slip-on styles are fine, but avoid wearing boots to most interviews.

The socks you pair with your shoes should also be dark, and should complement the suit. Make sure to buy over-the-calf socks with good elastic to avoid the top of the sock showing if you cross your legs. Choose a belt to match your shoes closely; it should be plain and have a small, simple buckle.

Keep jewelry conservative. A good watch with a nice leather strap or metal band may be worn. One tasteful ring on a ring finger is appropriate. Earrings should not be worn during the interview.

It is preferable that men do not have long hair; however, if you must have long hair make sure that it is neatly pulled back into a ponytail. Beards and mustaches should be neatly trimmed and well maintained.



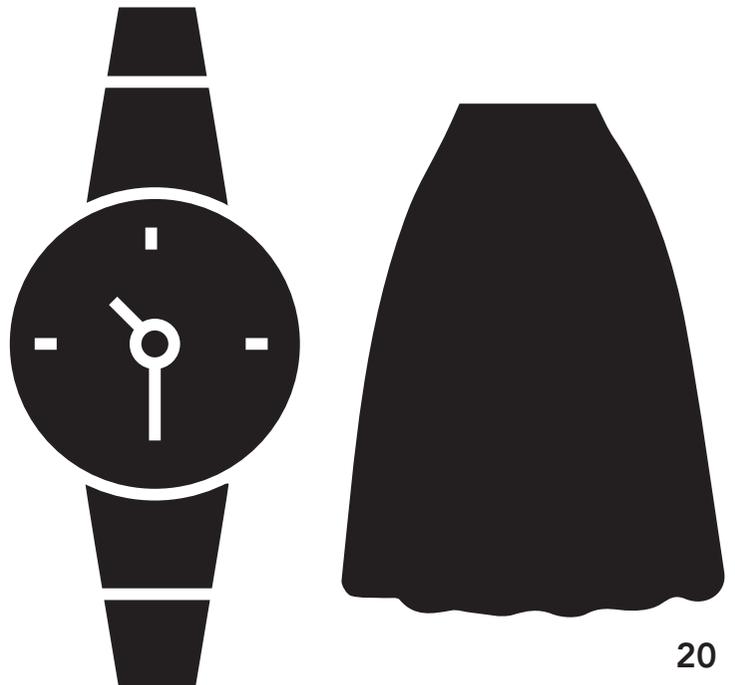
# WOMEN

Any suit pattern should be subtle; preferred colors are navy, any shade of gray, black, dark maroon, and taupe. A light-colored polyester or silk blouse in white or cream is a good choice to pair with your suit, which has more leeway than a man's, but should still be conservative. Your skirt should be neither too long nor too short, falling within an inch or two of the knee either way. Pant suits are also generally accepted as appropriate dress by employers.

Your shoes should be leather, closed toe pumps with a low to medium heel, no taller than two inches. The best way to choose a shoe color is to have the shoe match or be darker than the hem color of your skirt. Brown or black shoes are always good options. Always make sure your hose are lighter than your shoes; in fact, try to match you skin tone. Check for runs carefully, and it wouldn't hurt to carry a spare pair in your purse.

Ideally, you should carry personal items in a pocket of your briefcase to avoid any confusion with straps. Make sure the pocket can be sealed closed. Remember: if you take a briefcase, do not carry a purse. The color should match your shoes as closely as possible. For women, black shoes and bags are an excellent choice.

Women, you may add one pair of small earrings, preferably studs, and you may wear a matching necklace and/or bracelet. One ring per hand is permissible, preferably on your ring fingers. Stay away from colorful or largely patterned scarves because they distract from your outfit. Stay away from drastic haircuts that require a lot of hair products to stay in place or hair that is brightly colored. When painting your nails, try to stick with neutral or light shades of polish and medium length nails. Make up should be light and simple, with no bright colors. Try to stay away from bright lipstick and blush; natural and subtle colors are most appropriate.



# WHAT DO RECRUITERS SEEK?

The National Association of Colleges and Employers surveyed over 600 employers who recruit on college campuses to indicate the qualities they look for in new college graduates. Results from the survey indicate the following eight career-ready competencies.

- **Communication:** Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside of the organization. The individual has public speaking skills; is able to express ideas to others; and can write/edit memos, letters, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively.
- **Teamwork/Collaboration:** Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively with others in a team setting through shared responsibility, empathy, and respect. Seek and appreciate the viewpoints of those from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, and lifestyles.
- **Leadership:** Motivate, organize, and delegate work by leveraging the strengths of individuals. The ability to use empathetic skills and a positive attitude to guide and influence others while reaching a shared goal through adaptability and effective decision making.
- **Creativity/Problem Solving:** Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems. The individual is able to obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data in this process, and may demonstrate originality and inventiveness.
- **Professionalism/Productivity:** Demonstrate integrity, resilience, accountability and ethical behavior. The ability to take initiative, maintain effective work habits, (prioritize, plan and manage work) to produce high quality results and project a professional appearance.
- **Application of Information Technology:** Leverage existing digital technologies ethically and efficiently to solve problems complete tasks, and accomplish goals. The individual demonstrates effective adaptability to new and emerging technologies.
- **Career Management:** Identify and articulate one's skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals. Identify areas for professional growth. Navigate and explore job options, take steps to pursue opportunities, and self-advocate in the workplace.
- **Global Perspective:** Respect the viewpoints of those from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions to build collaborative relationships and communicate effectively. The ability to appreciate, value, and learn from other cultures and perspectives to move beyond tolerance.

# INTERVIEW KNOCKOUT FACTORS

## REASONS WHY JOB APPLICANTS ARE REJECTED

- Job goals and objectives not well defined; lack of career planning.
- Achievement motivation not evident; no record of achievement experiences.
- Not prepared for the interview; failure to research the organization.
- No real interest in the job vacancy or in the organization.
- Interested only in the money and benefits; unrealistic salary demands.
- Inadequate knowledge of the job position or the occupation.
- Little or no social poise; inability to communicate clearly.
- Disrespectful, rude, coarse; lack of tact, courtesy, and civility.
- Poor personal appearance; poor posture; lack of eye contact.
- No sense of humor; lack of enthusiasm; indifference; passive attitude.
- Not able to take constructive or well-meant criticism.
- No evidence of handling responsibility, leadership, or initiative.
- Belittling and disparaging previous employers and supervisors.
- Expects too much too soon; job expectations are unrealistic.
- Makes excuses for unfavorable comments on records, such as poor work habits.
- Education or previous work experience has no relevance to job being sought.
- Asks no questions or poor questions about the job or the organization.
- Late to interview without plausible reason.
- Attitude of "What can you do for me?"





**FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY**  
CAREER SERVICES

*Forward thinking. World ready.*



(785) 628-4260



careers@fhsu.edu



[www.fhsu.edu/career](http://www.fhsu.edu/career)

