

## Career Planning & Job Placement Services



# Interviewing

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# What Is An Interview?

An interview is a meeting of people face to face, especially for consultation. Interviews cause many people to feel anxiety and fear. Understanding the process, along with adequate preparation can help relieve some of this anxiety and fear.

Employers use interviews to assess an applicant's fit and qualifications for the position as well as the organization. Interviews can also be necessary for an applicant to learn more about the company, and decide if the position is a good fit.

## Understanding the Interview

Many applicants get poor reviews in job interviews because they have a fundamental misunderstanding of the event. The dynamics of the interviewer's role is that of buyer.

A misconception of reality leads some job seekers to bring up employee needs and concerns such as salary, company leave policies, and benefits before the employer has offered to hire them. Before you can deal with your personal agenda, you must receive a job offer.

After the offer is made, however, the dynamics change in your favor. Interviewing roles are switched; the employer is selling and you are buying. You are asking the questions, the company is answering them.



If you don't know what type of interview you will be having, call Human Resources and ask!

## Interview Formats

### One-on-One Interview

More commonly used in smaller; rather than larger businesses, or in any size business when recruiting hourly or office workers. It is usually conducted by the hiring manager or the manager's designee.

*Upside:* You can win the job with one great performance. *Downside:* A single negative judgment can sink your chances.

### Serial Interview

You typically are passed from screener to line manager; the recommendation is to use your screening interview behavior on all you meet. By the time you get to the hiring manager, your technical ability to do the job is presumably verified and the decision maker is more interested in the chemistry of how you'll fit in. Being passed through the system is favorable for your chances of getting an offer.

### Collective Interview

You meet with several members of an interview team. The interview may be structured with each member of the team given a specific area to cover, or restructured with members free to probe any areas of the candidate's background they wish.

The team may conduct a group interview, firing a barrage of questions. An undisciplined team's concurrent questioning can turn chaotic and make it difficult to remember who asked what. Carry a notebook and when two questions fly at once, write them down as you explain that you don't want to omit responding to anyone's important concern.

When the collective interview takes the serial form in which you are interviewed by one person after another, be consistent in your answers. You must not tell a rainbow of stories about the same black-and-white topics. When interview team members later compare notes, they should be discussing the same person.

## Lunch Interview

Arrive 15 minutes early. Review the menu ahead of time so you know what you will order. Lunch interviews don't really allow you to have notes available to refer to, make sure you have done the proper research ahead of time.

It is better to respectfully decline an invitation for an alcoholic drink than to accept. A glass of wine could be okay, but turning it down keeps you sharp and shows good judgment.

## Telephone Interviews

This is used as a screening technique to save travel costs for out-of-town candidates, or to conserve the interviewer's time by quickly eliminating modestly qualified people.

Telephone interviews may last one hour. Have paper and pen ready, a copy of your resume, job description, and company's website in front of you. Always end a phone interview with confirmation of the next step and contact information (name, phone number, email) for those you spoke with. If, after seven to ten days you don't receive an invitation to drop by, call the interviewer and ask how the search is progressing.



**Never treat telephone interviews as though they are inconsequential.** Prime yourself for a telephone talk with the same attention to detail that you commit to a personal visit.

Don't forget to smile! They will be able to hear it in your voice.

## Flyback Interview

When an employer spends the money to fly you in, the job is yours to lose. They're interested! On fly-backs, fully understand the itinerary details: date, time, travel mechanics and how expenses will be handled. The employer should provide your airline ticket in advance and arrange to accept billing for your hotel stay. You should have virtually no expenditures connected with the trip.

If you don't receive a letter confirming arrangements, write one.

Just because you're an out-of-towner doesn't mean you should answer yes or no to a job offer on the spot. Go home and think it over. Never change locales without a written offer describing pay, benefits, and relocation package.

## Video Interview

Many companies are using video interviews as another screening tool before offering an in-person interview. There are two types of video interviews.

One-way video interviews are designed so that all candidates respond to the same questions without a re-interviewer on the other end. A two-way, or



live interview, is an interactive exchange between the candidate and the hiring manager.

Make sure to dress appropriately **head-to-toe** just as if you were interviewing in person. Have a clean and appropriate background, with minimal background sounds. Have your resume, company website, and list of questions ready. Some of the in-person non-verbal cues are lost over the video. Be cheerful and smile to help make up for it!

## On-Campus Interview

Recruiters want you to possess good communication skills, initiative, leadership, maturity, flexibility and adaptability-plus a put together appearance. As a rule, the corporate recruiters who travel from college to college are conducting screening interviews. Bring your resume and be ready with good answers to tough questions about your education.

## Job Fair Interview

Job fair interviews may be brief but significant encounters in which you basically hand over documents: either a summary sheet of your qualifications or a longer resume. Carry multiple copies of both types of documents.



Your appearance should be business-ready and you should be well prepared to succinctly summarize your benefits and answer questions pertaining to your interests, goals, experience.

It's wise to collect literature on companies the first day of the job fair; study it overnight. On the second day, offer your resume to recruiters and ask if they have positions appropriate for your background. Take good notes.

## Assessment Process

This is part test, part interview. Some companies ask candidates, often managerial, to perform mock work exercises. Ask for a detailed outline of how it will work.

# Interviewing Styles

## Stress Interview

Stress interviews are designed to see how you will perform under pressure. Remain calm. Stress interviews occur as the interviewer fires statements and questions with every statement made by the interviewee. Don't get rattled. Don't fight back. Do think twice before investing your precious career years with an organization which resorts to stress interviews.



*Tip:* Clarify the question and nature of the answer desired. Communicate your thought process. Focus on the way you're trying to solve the problem, versus looking for a "right" answer. Ask for unknown information.

## Directive Interview

The interviewer maintains complete control and walks you through the talk to uncover what the interviewer wants to know.

## Patterned (Structured) Interview

Similar to the directive interview, the patterned interview works from a written list of questions asked of all candidates. If you are a "mainstream" job seeker (continuous upward record of relevant experience and under 50), you can comfortably allow yourself to be towed in directive and patterned interviews.

Where there are obstacles—age, employment gaps, experience that doesn't seem to fit the job—be ready to jump in with selling points that compensate for those obstacles.

Expect *critical incident* questions to be asked. Where the interviewer gives you a scenario or critical incident and then asks how you would respond.

## Non-directive Interview

Here, you lead the discussion. The best way to be ready for this approach is to be prepared with highlights about yourself and anecdotes of your skills and experiences. Remain respectful of the interviewer's role, and do not dominate the conversation.

## Skype Interview Tips & Tricks



- Use a private location.
- Wear shades of blue, black, or solids.
- Test your connection ahead of time.
- Dress your best from head to toe.
- Smile!
- Have a list of questions/talking points.
- Practice with a friend.



- Panic if you lose the connection, just redial!
- Have a messy, loud, or inappropriate background.
- Have a bad attitude.
- Be unprepared, keep a copy of your resume & the job description visible.

# Before the Interview

## Know Yourself

Understand your interests. Why did you pick the particular career field? What type of work inspires you?

Identify several of your key strengths ahead of time. Have examples ready from past experiences that demonstrate these strengths.

Evaluate problem areas in your history, and have prepared answers ahead of time that offer strong explanations. Do not volunteer negative information about yourself or a former employment experience.

Plan ahead by knowing what key points you want the employer to know about you, think about how you want to make these during the interview. That way when you get the “tell me about yourself” question, you’ll be ready to go!



Tip: You should have a prepared, but not necessarily memorized answer, to the “Tell me about yourself” question!

## Your Professional Image

### Voice Mail & E-mail

Emails are examples of your ability to communicate in writing. Always utilize a professional email address, e.g. ksmith@sunyjefferson.edu, not *ihateworking@gmail.com*. Always use proper grammar. No abbreviations, slang, etc. Double check for spelling errors before sending!

Your voice mail should also be appropriate and professional. If you receive a call, and are not in a situation where you can conduct a professional conversation, let it go to voicemail and call them back. Or, politely answer and tell them you cannot talk at this time and would like to reschedule.

### Social Networks

Never neglect your online image. Employers may search social networking sites or the Internet for information about you.

Posting on the internet is permanent. You can never take it back!

Create and manage a LinkedIn account to network and learn information about other business professionals and companies.



Tip: Google yourself to see what information is out there!

## Research the Company

**This is absolutely necessary, do not skip this!**

Spend time researching the company and industry before your interview. This will impress the interviewer and show you are interested in the company.

Lack of research is consistently cited by employers as reasons candidates do not progress in interviews.

- ◆ Look at the company’s website and any printed literature. Learn their services and products.
- ◆ Learn more about the industry’s trends, issues, and news.
- ◆ Familiarize yourself with key information about your interviewers, such as their name and position at the company via LinkedIn profiles.
- ◆ Visit their social media pages.
- ◆ Learn their mission and values.
- ◆ Talk to people that work there already.

## Interview Preparation

Confirm directions, location, time of your interview.

Know what type of interview you’re going to have. Ask if you don’t know.

Have all materials ready and printed the day before your interview.

Know the name and title of the person you are scheduled to meet with.

Get there early!



# Day of the Interview

## First Impressions & Physical Appearance

First impressions only happen once. Be confident. Taking yourself seriously is the first step to getting others to take you seriously. If you want the job, act like it.

For most interviews wearing a two-piece matching business suit is appropriate. Rules can change depending on the industry. So make sure you do your research. It's always better to be overdressed than underdressed.



Clothing should be clean and fit properly. This is not the time to wear your casual weekend attire.

Occasionally, business casual might be appropriate for the interview. Business casual is a classic look. It's not the time to put on your weekend lounge wear. Keep it clean, fitted, and crisp.

## Professional Business Etiquette

- BE NICE TO EVERYONE!
- Smile!
- Offer a firm handshake, make eye contact.
- Have some safe conversation topics ready.
- No gum or other candies.
- Maintain good posture!
- Be aware of your nervous habits i.e. fidgeting, hair twirling, foot shaking.
- Never gossip.
- Be on your best behavior at all times.
- The interview starts the moment you walk in the door!



# Wardrobe on a Budget

Looking into your closet and seeing old sweatshirts, jeans, and t-shirts can make you panic as you prepare for job interviews.

Stick to pieces you can mix and match. A few staples in your wardrobe will give you hundreds of options that you can personalize with accessories.

Look for staples at thrift stores, consignment shops, online discount sites, off-price retailers, friends and family! This way you have the look, but don't you have to break the bank.

## The Basics

- The suit. The first one you purchase should be navy, it will go with everything. The color navy evokes power. Skirt or pants is appropriate.
- Button down shirts/blouses in neutral colors. The first button down you purchase should be white. White goes with everything! Keep it clean and pressed.
- Dress pants. Keep them tailored and in neutral colors.
- Dress socks. Black or navy that go above the calf. Women may feel more comfortable wearing hose.
- Dress shoes. The first ones you purchase should be black. Black goes with everything. Women should wear closed toed heels or flats.
- Belt. The first one you purchase should be black, to match your shoes.
- Briefcase. Even if you can't afford a high quality one yet, you should have something to transport papers and other materials to and from work or job interviews.

## Accessories

Now that you've got the basics in place, buy accessories to help personalize the outfit! Mixing and matching your basics with various, tasteful accessories can give you hundreds of options!

## Additional Purchases

Suits in various colors and styles, sweaters/cardigans, jackets and blazers, khakis, dresses, belts and shoes in various colors.

The trick to building a perfect professional wardrobe is to stick to the basics! Finding a great deal on a beautiful jacket that doesn't go with anything isn't a steal, it's a waste of time!

# How to Dress

## General Guidelines

- Shirts should be clean, wrinkle free, and tucked in.
- No gaping buttons.
- Nothing too tight.
- No shorts or jeans.
- Minimal jewelry.
- No flip flops, boots, or tennis shoes.
- Shoes should be in good condition.
- Don't smoke the day of the interview.
- Stay away from perfume/cologne.
- Nails should be well manicured and trimmed.
- Hair should be clean and in a professional hair style.
- Clothes should be tailored and well-fitting.




## Professional Attire

- Two-piece matching suit in navy, dark gray, or black (pinstripes, pants, or skirts are okay)
- Ties should not be flashy.
- Socks should cover the calf and be dark in color to match the suit.
- Wear a plain white t-shirt under light colored dress shirts.
- Skirts must be at least knee length.
- Hosiery should be neutral or dark (no patterns) and always worn with skirts.
- Closed-toe shoes/heels.
- Minimal jewelry/makeup.

## Business Casual Attire

- Button-down shirts and dress pants are okay.
- Sweaters are appropriate.
- Sports coats and blazers can be worn.
- Belt and dress shoes should match and be in good shape.
- Wear socks that cover the leg when seated.
- No athletic shoes, flip flops, cargo pants, sweatshirts, jeans, shorts, t-shirts, etc . . .
- Minimal jewelry: Watch and one ring per hand only.
- Dress pants/skirts should be worn with blouses or sweater sets.
- Skirts should be knee-length, and not tight.
- Blazers are okay.
- Keep jewelry tasteful.
- Hosiery should be neutral or dark.
- Keep shoes/heels closed toed. Flats are appropriate.
- No cleavage!
- No tank tops, jeans, flip flops, sweatshirts, t-shirts, shorts, cargo pants, etc. . .
- Accessories should be kept at a minimum.



 **Tip:** Make sure that you are matching your dress to the climate and industry! For example, more makeup or fashion forward trends may be appropriate for jobs in the fashion industry.

# During the Interview

## Body Language & Non-verbals

Body language and other non-verbals communicate your thoughts, feelings, level of confidence, and interest level.

The vast majority of your communication comes through your non-verbals.

Remember this when you are interacting with others, or even when you're just being observed (i.e. waiting in reception for your interview to start).

Pay attention to the following:

- Posture (while sitting or standing).
- Facial expressions.
- Eye contact.
- Fidgeting or other nervous behaviors.
- Maintaining personal space/boundaries.
- Hand and arm movements.
- Smiling.
- Handshake (don't be a wet noodle or a bone crusher).
- Voice tone.
- Attitude.

## Arriving

Be prepared to make small talk with office staff, and possibly the interviewers upon arriving. Put your best foot forward and be positive, even if it was a nightmare getting there.

The interview starts the moment you walk in.

## The Employer's Point of View

The Employer has some basic information about you from the documents you've submitted, but this won't tell them everything they need to know. The employer will use the interview to:

- Assess your communication skills.
- Confirm your level of interest/enthusiasm for the position and/or the company.
- Gather information on your problem-solving and interpersonal skills.
- Gain confirmation of skills, knowledge, and education.
- Get a sense of your personality.

Most employers are looking to find out two things during the interview:

1. Do we want to work with you?
2. Will you mesh with the team?



Tip: Use the STAR method when answering questions

**S**ituation

**T**ask

**A**ction

**R**esult

Briefly explain the **S**ituation and the **T**ask that was at hand. Go into detail about your **A**ctions, and summarize the end **R**esult.



## Interviews over a Meal

Meals are a frequent event in both the job search process and when working with clients.

### Dining Manners

- Don't be late! Turn off your cell phone.
- Follow the lead of the employer when ordering. Stay in the same price range or choose an entrée in the middle of the price range.
- Stay away from foods eaten with your fingers. Try and pick something that you eat with a knife and fork.
- Wait to eat until everyone has been served at the table, and your host has started eating.
- At a formal table setting, typically begin with the outermost pieces of silverware and work your way in, towards the plate.
- You are not obligated to drink alcoholic beverages. It is okay to decline a drink. If you choose to drink, limit your intake to one.
- Be respectful to everyone, including restaurant staff.



Tip: Remember "Bread-Meal-Water (BMW)- solids on the left (bread plates) liquids (drinking glasses) on the right to help figure out which ones are yours at the table!

- Try to pace yourself to finish at the same time as everyone else.
- Elbows only belong on the table between courses, not while eating.
- Used silverware should rest on your plate, not the table.
- If you drop a piece of silverware, and can reach it, grab it. Then ask for a new piece from the server. If you can't reach it, let the server know you dropped yours and need a new one.
- If you spill or break something, it's okay. Don't make a big deal. Clean it up if you can otherwise call the server.
- Place your napkin on your chair if you leave the table during your meal. Place your dirty napkin near your plate only at the end of the meal when you are ready to leave.
- Say "no thank you" if you don't like or want something.
- It is not okay to ask for a doggy bag when you are the guest.

## Sample Thank You Notes

### For an Interview:

I appreciated the opportunity to talk with you on (date). The information you shared with me about (company name) was excellent, and I am excited about the possibility of applying my education and experience to the position we discussed.

If I can provide you with any additional information, please let me know. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

### For a Plant/Office Visit:

Thank you for your letter of (date) suggesting a plant/office visit at (time) on the following dates:  
(list dates).

The most convenient date for me would be (date). I will arrive at your office at (time).

Enclosed is a copy of my resume, along with the application for employment. (If necessary.)

I appreciate the opportunity to visit your office/plant. I am very interested and eager to learn more about possible employment opportunities with (organization name).

## Acceptance/Rejection Letters

### Letter of Job Acceptance:

I am very pleased to accept your offer (state offer) as outlined in your letter of (date). (Include all details of offer- location, starting salary, starting date. Mention enclosures- application, resume, employee forms, or other information- and any related commentary.)

I look forward to meeting the challenges of the job and I shall make every attempt to fulfill your expectations.

### Letter of Job Rejection:

After considerable thought, I have decided not to accept your offer of employment as outlined in your (date) letter. This has been a very difficult decision for me. However, I feel I have made the correct one for this point in my career.

Thank you for your time, effort, and consideration. Your confidence in me is sincerely appreciated.



Tip: These are formal business documents, follow rules and formatting for a business letter.

Don't forget to sign your name!

# Questions Employers Might Ask

- Tell me about yourself?

Employer Motivation: Can you communicate and structure your thoughts.

Strategy: Have this answer ready to go in advance. **DO NOT** tell your life story. Use the present, past, future strategy. Give some information on where you're at right now, then segue into the past and what skills/experiences you have, then focus on the future and why you're excited for this opportunity.

- Describe three things that are important to you in a job.

Employer Motivation: Understand your work related values.

Strategy: Be honest about what matters to you professional, do not focus on what matters to you personally.

- What do you know about this organization?

Employer Motivation: Checking to see your knowledge base and interest in the company.

Strategy: Formulate an answer that lets the interviewer know you've done your research. For example: "After talking with some of your employees I feel that this is a great company to work for because . . ." or "I've read that your company is expanding this year in two new locations. I want to work here because the future looks bright and promising."

- What are your three biggest strengths and three biggest weaknesses?

Employer Motivation: To see what your biggest strengths would be to the position, and then to see if you know where you need to improve.

Strategy: Come up with many examples, since the number could be higher or lower than four. Provide specific examples of your strengths that will relate directly to the job. Regarding your weaknesses, discuss what they are, how you are trying to improve them. Try not to share a weakness that directly relates to the job duties.

- Tell me about a time when you worked as part of a team?

Employer Motivation: To understand your teamwork abilities, leadership skills, and interpersonal skills.

Strategy: Utilize examples that highlight your skills and have a positive outcome.

- What specific skills have you acquired or used in previous jobs that relate to this position?

Employer Motivation: To gain knowledge about your understanding of the duties and requirements of the position.

Strategy: Prior to the interview read the job description/duties. Think about how your past experiences, jobs, activities, or classes relate and prove your ability to perform each duty.

- Why did you choose your major?

Employer Motivation: To find out more about your interests or preferences and see how they will mesh with the company.

Strategy: Be open and honest about your interests and try to relate them back to the job.

[These questions are from "Interviewing For Employment" from University of Virginia Career Services Department 2013]

## Additional Common Questions

### Personal information

- How do you handle criticism?*
- How do you think a supervisor/ friend/professor would describe you?*
- Why should I hire you?*
- How do you like to be managed?*
- Are you willing to relocate?*
- How do you work under pressure?*
- What are your future vocational plans?*
- What are your short term goals? Long term goals?*
- What are your favorite hobbies?*
- Why did you leave or are you leaving your job?*
- If you were an animal, which would you want to be and why?*
- What salary are you seeking?*

### Experience

- Do you feel that you received good general training?*
- What did you like best and least about your last job?*
- What qualifications do you have that will make you successful in your field?*
- What did you learn from your extracurricular activities?*
- Are you a leader? Explain.*
- Why did you choose this field?*
- What can you do for us that other candidates can't?*
- Why is there a gap in your employment?*

### Motivation

- How would you describe your ideal job?*
- What motivates you?*
- How do you evaluate success?*
- What rewards do you expect in your career?*
- When were you most satisfied in your job?*

### Education

- How has your college experience prepared you for a career with our company?*
- What class did you like best and least why?*
- What courses did you like best?*
- Do your grades accurately reflect your ability? Why/why not?*

### Decision Making

- Tell me about a time when you were forced to make a difficult decision?*
- Describe a creative solution you developed.*
- Describe a time when you had to think quickly to resolve a problem.*

### Communication Skills

- Tell me about a time when you had to use your written communication skills to get your point across.*
- How would you deal with an angry customer?*
- Do you like public speaking?*

### Company Questions

- Why do you want to work for this company?*
- What do you know about our company?*
- What other sources did you use to learn about our company?*
- What do you think it takes to be successful at a company like ours?*

### Stress/Time Management

- How do you manage your time?*
- What do you do to stay organized?*
- Would you work 40+ hours a week?*
- How do you handle pressure?*
- Tell me about a time you made a mistake?*
- Tell me about a time you had to function in a new environment.*
- Tell me about a time you had to work with an excessive workload.*
- What do you do for fun?*

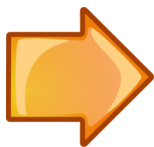
### Teamwork

- Tell me about a time you had to work with a difficult coworker.*
- Tell me about a team project in which you are particularly proud of your contribution.*
- Tell me about a time you had to work as part of a team.*
- Tell me about a time you had to lead a team.*

# Illegal Questions

Interviewers should not ask you questions regarding the following:

- Gender
- Race
- Color
- Sexual Orientation
- National Origin
- Religion
- Age
- Disabilities



If you are asked an illegal question during an interview you have several options if you decide to answer it. (Not answering, while in your legal rights, might run you the risk of seeming uncooperative or confrontational).

1. Answer it honestly. Give an explanation and then try to describe how it will be an asset.
2. State what you assume the employer wants to know by asking the question, then answer in response to that assumption.
3. Use humor or deflect the question, if you're a quick thinker!

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## Illegal vs. Legal Wording of Questions

**Subject:** Nationality

**Illegal:** Are you a U.S. citizen?; Where were you/your parents born?; What is your "native tongue?"

**Legal:** Are you authorized to work in the United States?; What languages do you read, speak or write fluently? (This question is okay, as long as this ability is relevant to the performance of the job.)

**Subject:** Age

**Illegal:** How old are you?; When did you graduate from college?; What is your birthday?

**Legal:** Are you over the age of 18?

**Subject:** Marital/Family status

**Illegal:** What's your marital status?; Who do you live with?; Do you plan to have a family?; When?; How many kids do you have?; What are your child care arrangements?

**Legal:** Would you be willing to relocate if necessary?; Travel is an important part of the job. Would you be willing to travel as needed by the job (This question is okay, as long as all applicants for the job are asked it.); This job requires overtime occasionally. Would you be able and willing to work overtime as necessary? (Again, this question okay as long as all applicants for the job are asked it.)

**Subject:** Affiliations

**Illegal:** To what clubs or social organizations do you belong?

**Legal:** Do you belong to any professional or trade groups or other organizations that you consider relevant to your ability to perform this job?

**Subject:** Personal

**Illegal:** How tall are you?; How much do you weigh?

**Legal:** Are you able to lift a 50-pound weight and carry it 100 yards, as that is part of the job?

(Questions about height and weight are not acceptable unless minimum standards are essential to the safe performance of the job.)

**Subject:** Disabilities

**Illegal:** Do you have any disabilities?; Please complete the following medical history.; Have you had any recent or past illnesses or operations? If yes, list and give dates.; What was the date of your last physical exam?; How's your family's health?; When did you lose your eyesight?

**Legal:** Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job with or without reasonable accommodations? (This question is okay if the interviewer thoroughly described the job.)

(NOTE: As part of the hiring process, after a job offer has been made you will be required to undergo a medical exam. Exam results must be kept strictly confidential, except medical/safety personnel may be informed if emergency medical treatment is required, and supervisors may be informed about necessary job accommodations, based on the exam results.)

**Subject:** Arrest record

**Illegal:** Have you ever been arrested?

**Legal:** Have you ever been convicted of \_\_\_\_\_? (The crime should be reasonably related to the performance of the job in question.)

**Subject:** Military

**Illegal:** If you've been in the military, were you honorably discharged?; In what branch of the Armed Forces did you serve?

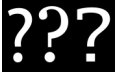
**Legal:** What type of training or education did you receive in the military?

[These questions are from USA Today Careers and Workspace "Illegal Interview Questions" <http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/careers/resources/interviewillegal.html>]

## Questions for Employers

ALWAYS have questions for the interviewer. This shows that you are interested in the company. Your research from before your interview may not answer all of your questions, before you decide to take a job.

Write down intelligent, thoughtful questions that you might have. You will be evaluated on your questions, so choose them wisely.

This portion of the interview will also allow you to determine if the company will be a good fit for *you*.  There is no need to ask a million questions, just a few pertinent ones will do.

Avoid asking questions that begin with *is*, *are*, and *do*. These questions lead to yes or no answers. You want to come prepared with questions that dig deeper into the company's mission and goals.

Some questions you might ask are the following:

- Why are you looking to fill this position? (Is it newly created? Did someone leave?)
- In your opinion, what is the personality of the organization?
- What has it meant for you to work here?
- What do you think will be the biggest challenges the person in this position will face?
- What kind of ongoing training does the organization offer?
- How much travel is normally expected?
- What are the things you like the least/most about working here?
- Outside of my department, with whom will I work?
- What is a typical day like?
- Is there a lot of team/project work?
- What does it take to advance in this field?
- What is unique about the way this company operates?
- What is the next course of action? When should I expect to hear from you or should I contact you?

## Questions on Salary

Salary negotiations are an awkward conversation to have, but a necessity! This will occur after a formal offer has been extended.

Typically, you won't have to bring up the issue of salary. If a company is interested in you, you might be asked "What salary are you expecting?"

This can be a scary question, because you don't want to state a number too high, or a number too low! Always do your research on the salary range for that position and state something on the higher end of that scale. The actual salary can be negotiated later on.

OR

You can always request that this topic is discussed after exploring the job requirements and your qualifications.

If you must answer the question, try and say something like this: "I expect to earn a salary that is appropriate for my qualifications and education—what is the range that your company has in mind?"

Salary ranges can be found on job exploration websites, through professional journals, personal interviews with people in the field, Occupational Outlook Handbook, or the National Association of Colleges and Employers' Salary Survey.



**Tip:** You're better off asking for a weird, odd number instead of a precise one! Ask for something like \$78,500 instead of \$80,000.

# After the Interview

If you have not heard back from an employer in the time frame that was discussed, it is okay to contact them and follow up on your status.

If no time frame was determined, wait two weeks after the interview. Limit the frequency of follow-up contacts. Remember these employers are busy meeting their work responsibilities too!

Send a thank you note within 48 hours!

The thank you note should be brief and polite, thanking all those that interviewed you. Communicate your appreciation for their interest and time spent. Show continued interest in the position.



Thank you notes can be hand written and mailed or done via email, just make sure they are done in an appropriate amount of time!

Follow your thank you note with a phone call within a week to further show your interest!



**Tip:** Ask for business cards of all those who interview you!

Don't forget to alert your references that they may receive an email or phone call. Let them know the employer name, job title, job duties, etc. . .

## Job Offers

### Receiving an Offer

Most likely this will happen via phone by your primary contact person. You do not have to accept right then and there. There are many factors to consider before accepting an offer.

Request a written, formal document outlining the entire offer/benefits.

Don't accept an offer, and then continue the job search. If you need to finish the process with other companies ask for a deadline extension.

### Evaluating the Offer

There are many things to consider before accepting a job offer. If you have new questions that arise, this is the time to ask them. You don't want to commit to an offer, and then regret that decision. Work with your recruiting contact and human resources to get all your questions answered.

### Negotiating the Offer

If you have concerns over parts of your job offer, see if they are negotiable. Be careful though, you don't want to affect the relationship with your future employer!

### Salary Negotiation

Discussion of salary should be avoided during the interview process. Salary negotiation should occur after an offer is made.

If you feel a company's offer is inconsistent with what you had in mind or with market data, share those researched facts.

Don't be too aggressive, you want to further confirm their choice in hiring you, not make them regret it!

Research typical the type of work, and educational



salary ranges for geographical area, experience.

Do not bring your own personal finances into the mix. They will not consider these when determining a fair salary for you.

Do not bring your peers salary into the negotiation. Employees salaries differ for a variety of reasons.

Remember, your requests to negotiate might be denied.

If they accept your terms, you are expected to accept the job with no further negotiation.

### Turning Down an Offer

Be professional and timely when turning down an offer. Decline the offer both verbally and in writing.

## Dealing with Rejection

Getting a rejection letter is not much fun. It is **OKAY** to be let down.

Give yourself some time to process, grieve, and move on.

Take time to think about what you can do differently in the future. Review and revise your resume if necessary, practice those tough interview questions!

Every interview you complete makes you **THAT** much better.



## What Next?

- Schedule a mock interview with us!
- Check out CANNONLink for jobs  
[www.sunyjefferson.edu/cannonlink](http://www.sunyjefferson.edu/cannonlink)
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Tip: If you feel you've experienced job discrimination you can file a claim with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

## Career Planning

&

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