



*You crafted a strong, tailored application and earned the interview — now it's your moment to shine.
Prepare with purpose and confidence, and show them why you're the right fit.*

Interviewing is an opportunity to demonstrate your qualifications, skills, and suitability for a position — and it's also a two-way conversation, offering a chance to learn about the role, team, and organizational culture. It's essential to prepare thoroughly by researching the company, understanding the job requirements, and practicing responses to interview questions. By showcasing capabilities and enthusiasm for the role, you make a positive impression on potential employers and increase your chances of securing the position.

ACING THE INTERVIEW: STRATEGIES FOR EVERY STAGE

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW- Research & Prepare

Own Your Experiences

- Review your master resume, employer-tailored resume, and cover letter you submitted with your application
- Consider how your experiences, skills, strengths, and abilities relate to the position
- Prepare compelling stories from your experiences to use in the interviews

Knowledge of the company

- Visit the website and review the company's purpose, mission, and values
- Search the web for any articles or news reports
- Use LinkedIn to investigate the company and the people who work there

Formulate answers to possible questions

- Review ***Your Personal Introduction*** and the ***Potential Interview Questions*** on the ***Mastering the Interview: Interview Questions*** handout
- Review the job description and develop questions based on the role, responsibilities, and qualifications
- Schedule a mock interview with a Career Advisor or Peer Career Guide in the Career & Employment Hub

Prepare 6-10 questions to ask the employer

- Review ***Questions to Ask the Interviewer*** on **page 4**
- Create insightful questions to ask that demonstrate your interest in and knowledge about the company
- Have extra questions prepared in case the employer addresses some of your questions during the interview

Dress for success

- Review ***Dress for Success***, on **page 3**
- Dressing professionally is a compliment to the person(s) with whom you interview
- Be confident and comfortable, don't wear something you have never worn before
- If you purchase a new suit or outfit, select one that reflects who you are and wear it a few times beforehand
- What not to wear: anything that doesn't contribute to your professional image



DAY OF THE INTERVIEW - *Be Ready. Be Confident. Be You.*

Things to bring with you

- Copies of your employer-tailored resume, cover letter, and the job description
- Typed list of references with contact information (if not previously submitted)
- Questions to ask the employer, written down
- A pad of paper and pen for note-taking
- Proof of identity
- Water
- Padfolio and/or a professional bag/briefcase
- Your phone turned off

What to leave at home or in your car

- Food or drinks of any kind (except your water)
- Chewing gum, candy, etc.
- Large bags or backpacks
- Headphones
- Overly scented perfume or cologne
- Unnecessary items – things that might distract you

You arrive

- The interview begins the moment you enter the building or log on
- Arrive 10-15 minutes early, even if the interview is virtual
- Silence your phone, or better, leave it at home or in the car
- Breathe! An interview is a two-way conversation where you exchange information and get to know one another

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Remember to breathe; it will calm your nerves, improve focus, and help you speak with confidence and clarity
- Before answering a question, take a moment, allow yourself to think, and ask for clarification if needed
- Use stories and speak about your accomplishments
 - Accomplishments come from all aspects of your life - the classroom, the job, volunteering, and in life - they all count towards your experience
- Reference aspects of the job description and how your skills, abilities, knowledge, and strengths align with them
- Maintain your enthusiasm and demonstrate interest, be an active and engaged listener
- Stay present and in the moment
- Focus on your strengths, and remain positive

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Write down the name(s) or obtain a business card(s) from your interviewer(s)
- Send a thank you email within **24-hours** of the interview, Review ***The Thank You Email***, on **page 6**
- If you are not offered the position, ask the employer for feedback on your interview
 - They may not give this to you, however, you can always ask



DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Making a strong first impression at an interview or professional event can open doors. Your appearance is one of the first things people notice, and dressing appropriately shows respect, confidence, and readiness. Whether interviewing in-person or virtually, always dress for success.

WHY DRESSING FOR SUCCESS MATTERS

- It builds confidence in yourself and trust from others
- It helps you feel prepared and professional
- It shows respect for the opportunity and those you're meeting

WHAT DOES 'BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL' MEAN?

Business professional attire is more formal and is often expected at job interviews, presentations, or in corporate settings. It communicates polish, seriousness, and respect for the occasion.

WHAT DOES 'BUSINESS CASUAL' MEAN?

Defined as being between professional and casual dress, it's essential to know which jobs require business casual dress. If you're unsure about whether to dress business casual or professional, err on the side of caution and dress business professional.

Business Professional	Business Casual	Avoid Wearing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tailored/well-fitting suit• Suit jacket, sport coat, blazer• Tie with minimal patterns• Blouse, button-ups, or professional tops• Solid colors or minimal patterns• Closed-toe shoes, loafers, flats, heels, and boots• Minimalistic jewelry• Your belt and shoes match, if possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collared shirts or blouses• Slacks, chinos, khakis, and corduroy pants• Sweaters/cardigans• Appropriate rompers, dresses, and skirts• Closed-toe shoes, loafers, flats, heels, and boots	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sweatpants or leggings• T-shirts with logos• Ripped jeans• Flip-flops or slides• Crop tops or tank tops

Key Tips:

- Try on your outfit ahead of time to make sure it fits well
- Go easy on cologne/perfume and accessories
- Choose something that is clean and ironed/wrinkle-free. Clean is important!
- Wear an outfit that fits; do not try to fit into something too small or too big
- Do not focus on labels; they are not important.
- Do not wear anything too bold. It is okay to include a small pop of color to show personality; however, too much can be distracting.
- When in doubt, dress a little more formal than you think you need to

When considering your comfort level in gender expression, consider researching the employer's non-discrimination policies. Moreover, review the company on the [Corporate Equality Index \(www.hrc.org/resources/corporate-equality-index\)](http://www.hrc.org/resources/corporate-equality-index) to view its benefits, support, and protections for the LGBTQIA+ community.



QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER

Remember, an interview is a conversation between two or more people. Take the opportunity to ask questions during your interview; studies show that not asking questions can hurt your chances of getting the position.

Prepare 6-10 questions to ask. It may seem like a lot, but you may receive answers to several of your questions during your interview, and you still want to have some to ask at the end of the interview.

EXPLORING THE ROLE

Go beyond the basic job description and ask questions to learn more about what the job involves, what the employer expects, how success is measured, and what tools or supports are available for the role.

1. How does this position contribute to the organization's overall success?
2. What key accomplishments would you like to see from me in the first 30, 90, and 6 months if I were hired?
3. What are the biggest challenges someone in this role might face?
4. Could you walk me through the key responsibilities and what a typical day or week looks like in this role?
5. What does the team structure look like, and how many people would I be working closely with?
6. Who would I report to, and if offered the role, would I have the chance to meet them?
7. What type of support, tools, or resources are available to help someone succeed in this position?
8. Is this a new position? If not, what did the previous employee go on to do?
9. Does the organization have a process or policy to help new team members get up to speed and onboard successfully?
10. How do you see this role evolving over the next few years, and how could I grow with it?

DIGGING INTO COMPANY CULTURE

As much as an interview is about assessing your ability to be a culture fit, it is also about gathering as much information and insight into the company culture. You need to determine if the company aligns with your values, passions and interests.

1. What was the department's most significant challenge last year, and what did the team learn from it?
2. What recent achievements or milestones has the company celebrated?
3. How would you describe the company's management style and core values?
4. What are the company's plans for growth and development over the next few years?
5. How has the company evolved in recent years, and where do you see it heading?
6. What are the biggest rewards and challenges of working for this company?
7. What do you enjoy most about working here?
8. What continuing learning or professional development opportunities are available for employees?
9. Does the company give back to the community? If so, in what ways?
10. How does this role contribute to the company's long-term goals and vision?

DAY-TO-DAY RESPONSIBILITIES

Drill down on the everyday tasks and expectations for the position. These questions are ideal for asking your potential manager or another leader on the team.

1. What are the primary tasks and responsibilities I would be handling on a daily basis?
2. Are there any key projects or initiatives I would be expected to contribute to regularly?
3. How does this role interact and collaborate with other teams or departments within the company?
4. What level of autonomy or independence would I have in managing my work and priorities?
5. What are the team's typical work hours, and are there specific in-office requirements or flexibility options?



6. What tools, software, or systems are commonly used in this role?
7. How are tasks prioritized and deadlines managed within this team or department?
8. How does management typically deliver feedback and support professional growth?
9. What challenges or obstacles are most commonly encountered in this position?
10. What opportunities are available for skill development or career advancement in this role?

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Gain insight into the company's offerings in terms of professional growth and development opportunities. After all, if you proceed with this company, you want to know that you have a future there and opportunities to be challenged.

1. How does the company support employees in advancing their skills and careers?
2. Can you describe the typical career path or long-term opportunities for someone in this role?
3. What training programs, mentorship opportunities, or educational resources are available to employees?
4. How does the company encourage employees to take on new challenges and additional responsibilities?
5. Can you share examples of employees who have grown or advanced within the company?

CLARIFICATION

Before the interview ends, take a moment to ask questions that help clarify the company's hiring process.

1. Would you like a list of references?
2. If I am extended a job offer, how soon would you like me to start?
3. What can I clarify for you about my qualifications?
4. When can I expect to hear from you?
5. Are there any other questions I can answer for you?

WHICH QUESTIONS NOT TO ASK, AND WHY?

1. What's the salary for this role?
 - **Why not:** Salary discussions are important, but bringing it up in the first interview can make it seem like money is your only priority. Wait for the employer to initiate this topic or until later rounds.
2. What does this company do?
 - **Why not:** This shows a lack of preparation and suggests you haven't researched the company.
3. How soon can I get promoted?
 - **Why not:** It can make you seem more interested in personal advancement than in performing well in the role.
4. How much vacation time do I get?
 - **Why not:** Asking about perks or time off too early may give the impression that you're not focused on the work.
5. What happens if I'm late or miss a day of work?
 - **Why not:** This raises red flags about your reliability and work ethic.
6. Do you monitor emails or internet use?
 - **Why not:** This might make the interviewer question your professionalism or intentions.
7. Can I work from home all the time? (if not already mentioned as an option)
 - **Why not:** It can suggest you're not interested in collaborating or being part of the team on-site.



THE THANK YOU EMAIL - *Leave A Lasting Impression*

A thank-you email is an opportunity to show your appreciation for an employer's time, reiterate your interest in the position, and help you stand out from the pack!

THANK YOU EMAIL TIPS:

- **Your goal:** To be polite, professional, and appreciative
- **Proofread before you hit send:** Check for spelling or grammatical errors
- **Be mindful of your tone, since emails lack body language and verbal cues.**

COMPONENTS OF A THANK YOU EMAIL

- **Subject line:** State the purpose of the communication
- **Greeting:** **Always** begin with a salutation, and the name of the interviewer
- **Body:** Start with an expression of gratitude, then write a clear, concise message that gives the person plenty of context
- **Closing:** Briefly restate your qualifications and enthusiasm for the role.

SAMPLE EMAIL

Subject: [your name] – *Thank you for your time today*

Greeting: Dear <First & Last Name>,

Body: Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me about the [job title] position at [company name]. It was a pleasure meeting you on [date/today/yesterday] and learn about your background and experience.

I especially enjoyed discussing [topic discussed in interview] and wanted to highlight my experience in [topic] during my time in college or in my previous role at company name. After learning more about the position, I'm confident that my skills and experience can actively contribute to [company name]'s success in achieving [company goal].

If you require any additional documentation of my credentials, please do not hesitate to reach out.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Your name