



Interviewing

There are two major types of interviewing. Most commonly known is job interviewing, when you have been invited to speak with the employer for a formal meeting to discuss your qualifications for the job opening. The other is informational interviewing, which is often not as formal and is prompted by you, the job seeker. Interviews are done to explore particular fields or employers and learn more about what direction you would like to go.

Job Interviewing

These can be done in a variety of settings and include: one-on-one, phone, panel, group, etc.

One-on-one. This is the most common type of interviewing format. It is often in a more formal setting where the interviewer asks the job applicant questions and there is an opportunity at the end for the applicant to ask questions as well.

Panel or Committee. A panel interview is any kind of in-person interview and there is more than one interviewer from the company. It is important to know different points of the company because the interviewers will likely be at different levels or departments. For example, there may be someone from Human Resources, a manager, and someone from the same level of position that you are applying for.

Phone Interviews. As companies grow, get more applicants from out of the area and are unable to invite applicants to their sites for interviews, phone interviews are becoming more common. Phone interviews can be difficult for some people because they cannot read the expressions of the interviewer on the other end of the phone. You should prepare for this kind of interview as you would any other.

Group Interviews. In the group interview style, several applicants will be interviewed at the same time. Applicants can either be asked the same questions or different ones. They can also be asked the same question and have to come up with an answer together. Interviewers will be looking at the answer, as well as how the applicants interacted while coming up with the answer.

General Tips

- Research the company if you haven't already so you can focus your answers.
- Update your résumé if needed and make extra copies.
- Listen to the questions and ask for clarification if needed.
- Be prepared with examples to show your skills.
- Focus on strengths over weaknesses. Don't mention anything that will discount what you have to offer.
- And PRACTICE your interviewing skills. Contact BTC Career Services to schedule a mock interview.



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Common Interviewing Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why did you apply for this position?
3. Tell me how you feel you meet the qualifications of this position.
4. Do you plan to continue your education?
5. Describe your work and educational history?
6. Why did you leave your last job?
7. What are your career goals? Where do you see yourself in 5-10 years?
8. Why should we hire you?
9. What are your greatest strengths? Weakness or area for improvement? Why?
10. If you had to describe yourself in one word, what would it be? Why?
11. What is your biggest accomplishment or satisfaction? Why?
12. What is your greatest challenge or problem you have faced? And Why?
13. Do you prefer working with others or by yourself? Why?
14. When working in a team environment, what role do you prefer to take? Why?
15. How do you react to criticism?
16. What do you look for in a supervisor?
17. What is your ideal work environment?
18. What contributions do you see yourself making to this company?
19. What qualities would you look for in a person if you were hiring someone for this position?
20. What are your salary expectations?
21. What would I be told if I were to contact a previous supervisor or instructor?
22. How do you solve problems?
23. Have you ever done any training or supervising? Please explain.
24. How would other people describe you?
25. What would your priorities be if we hired you?

Behavioral or Situational Questions

These types of questions provide the employer with a lot of insight about you because they are setup for you to tell a story. When answering behavioral or situational type questions, be sure your answer has the three components below. This will ensure that you have given them just enough information but not too much.

1. *What was the situation in general?*
2. *What did you do?*
3. *What was the result? What did you learn from it?*

Sample Questions:

1. Tell me about a time you have dealt with a difficult co-worker.
2. Provide an example when you had to make a quick decision.
3. Tell me about a time when you were in a team and there was a conflict.
4. Describe a time when you were under a lot of stress.
5. Tell me about a time when you failed or failed to reach a goal.



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6. Give an example of a time you used communication to solve a problem
7. Describe a time when you used leadership skills.
8. Tell me about a time when you used good logic and critical thinking to solve a problem.
9. Provide an example of a time when you went above and beyond to get a job done.
10. Give an example of a recent time you set your sights too high or too low.

Inappropriate Questions from the Employer

Inappropriate questions are those that do not pertain to the nature of the job, your ability to perform the job, or those which are not asked of every candidate. They become illegal questions when the information from these questions is used in the hiring decision. Most recruiters know what is inappropriate to ask due to Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity legislation. However, if you are asked a question that you believe is inappropriate, it is best to focus on why it was asked, rather than becoming defensive.

Inappropriate Questions	Alternate Appropriate Ways to Ask
Do you have any children?	What hours are you available to work?
How old are you?	Are you over age requirement of 18?
Have you ever been arrested?	Have you ever been convicted of (crime reasonably related to the performance of the job)?
Do you have a disability?	Are you able to do all the essential tasks of the job with or without accommodation?
Do you have a car?	Will transportation be an issue for you if the job requires some travel?

Questions to Ask the Employer

1. What are the most important job duties in this position?
2. What is the training/orientation process like?
3. Do you offer professional development to keep up with advancements in the position or field?
4. What do you like best about working for this company?
5. What do others enjoy about this position? What is one of the major challenges?
6. Are there opportunities for advancement?
7. What makes this company unique?
8. What is a typical day like?
9. What is the next step in the hiring process?
10. When can I expect to hear from you?

Don't Ask...

- Salary, benefit or vacation questions until after the offer is made or possibly in the second interview.
- Obvious questions you could have found answers to elsewhere.
- Questions the interviewer has already answered.



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Informational Interviewing

An informational interview is a less formal situation when you contact people who have knowledge you are looking for in a field or a particular company. This is also a great way to network with possible employers for job leads. It is different from a job interview in that you will often steer the questions rather than the employer. You are also able to ask questions you wouldn't be able to in a job interview; for example: salary, advancement, etc.

Steps to getting an informational interview.

1. Identify the company and contact person.
2. Research the company and your field of interest to prepare questions. Have your questions written out in advance.
3. Prepare your résumé in case they ask for it.
4. Determine if a phone or in-person interview would be more appropriate. The contact may also determine this for you. When you call or email to schedule a time, be flexible.
5. Dress professionally and appropriate for the field.
6. If you schedule the interview in advance, it is a good idea to confirm the day before.
7. Make sure you know where you are going and arrive 10-15 minutes early.

Where to locate possible informational interviews.

- Instructors
- People you know and referrals
- Classroom guest speakers
- Career Services
- Conferences or workshops
- Alumni
- Newspaper or other publications
- Professional organizations
- Yellow pages

Good questions to ask

1. How did you get started in this career? And what was your preparation?
2. What is a typical work day like here?
3. What are the major qualifications you look for in applicants?
4. Would you advise someone like me to go into this field?
5. What is the industry like? Has it gone through recent changes?
6. As a student, do you have recommendations on what other classes I can take to prepare me?
7. What are the biggest rewards for you in your job? Challenges?
8. What is the typical salary range?
9. How has your job affected your lifestyle?
10. Can you recommend anyone else I should speak with?