The interview is an opportunity to match your talents and interests with the needs of the employer. The goal in any interview is not only to convince the employer you are the right person for the job, but also to evaluate whether this is the right position for you.

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS
While there are many types of interviews, these are the primary styles candidates experience during a job search.

A preliminary or screening interview is used to determine whether or not you meet the basic qualifications for the position. This interview might be conducted face-to-face, by phone, or through video technology.

A panel interview is a situation where there are two or more interviewers interviewing a candidate. Make sure to make eye contact and address everyone on the panel – not just the hiring manager or person who asked the last question.

A group interview is when a group of candidates are interviewed at the same time. This approach may be used as a technique to uncover leadership qualities, so be certain to make yourself known by taking an active part in the discussion. Candidates should be assertive but do not interrupt the other candidates or try to discredit them.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW: PREPARATION
Preparing for the interview is almost as important as the interview itself. The key to successful interviewing is knowing yourself and knowing the organization. To prepare for any interview, you should:

1. Review your skills, interests, and values as they relate to this position.
2. Research the organization.
3. Anticipate questions you might be asked.
4. Prepare questions you may ask the interviewer.
5. Practice interviewing to familiarize yourself with the interview process.
6. Plan your interview attire so that you are dressed appropriately.

Self-Assessment
To discuss your qualifications for a position effectively, have a clear understanding of what you have to offer an employer and what you are seeking in a position. To begin, assess your skills, interests, and values.

1. What work experiences have you enjoyed?
2. What knowledge have you gained in the classroom that can be applied in a work situation?
3. Where have you been successful in the classroom or in positions you have held?
4. With what types of people do you enjoy working?
5. What work environment do you prefer?
6. What concerns or issues are most important to you in a work environment?
Research the Organization
It is important to research the organization, industry, and/or institution with whom you will be interviewing prior to the interview. Acquire as much information as possible. This information will help you understand the organization and the position for which you are applying. Thorough research will enable you to ask better questions during the interview and determine which of your assets to highlight.

Anticipate: Questions Employers Are Likely to Ask
There are a number of questions employers commonly ask during an interview. By being aware of some of these questions and thinking about responses, you will be better prepared to offer well thought-out and concise replies. Be sure to use the job description when anticipating interview questions.

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why did you choose to attend Ohio University?
3. How would others describe you?
4. How has your college experience prepared you for this position and our organization?
5. What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
6. What led you to choose your major field of study?
7. What are your short- and long-term career goals?
8. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
9. Describe a major problem you have encountered and how you dealt with it.
10. What do you know about our organization?
11. What interests you about this position?
12. Why should I hire you for this position?

Behavioral Questions
Many employers will ask behavioral questions as they are good indicators of how you would handle different situations in the workplace. Behavioral questions demonstrate your previous experience and transferable skills. The interviewer asks you to describe a problem or situation in which a particular skill was used. Relate the action(s) you took and the result of these actions. It is important to know yourself and your past experiences. Understand and be comfortable with articulating your qualifications, transferable skills and specific examples of times you demonstrated these abilities and skills.

Typically, behavioral questions lead with “tell me about a time”, “give me an example of”, “describe a situation in which”, etc.

How to Answer Behavioral Questions
The best way to answer a behavioral interview question is to follow the STAR Method. The STAR method helps you provide the interviewer with specific examples of your experiences in a clear and concise manner.

**Situation:** Describe the specific situation or event.
**Task:** What did you need to accomplish?
**Action:** What specific steps did you take and what was your particular contribution?
**Result:** Describe the outcomes of your actions.

Be brief when discussing the background information such as the situation and task. Do not overwhelm them with details. Give just enough information for the interviewer to understand. Stay away from generalized descriptions of what you have done in the past. Pick a specific event or situation. Describe the actions you took to address the situation with an appropriate amount of detail and keep the focus on YOU. What specific steps did you take and what was your particular contribution? Be careful that you do not focus on what the team or
group did when talking about a project, but what you actually did. Use the word “I,” not “we” when describing actions. Do not be shy about taking credit for your behavior. What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn? Make sure your answer contains multiple positive results.

Here is a good outline of how to organize an experience within the STAR method:

**Situation:** Student organization concert

**Task:** Find new location as the original location was double booked

**Action:** Led group meeting to brainstorm list of alternate venues. Consulted with advisor for ideas. Visited alternate venues to decide whether they would be appropriate. Chose alternate venue and communicated the change with ticket holders via social media.

**Result:** Venue was suitable and students were aware of the change

**Prepare: Questions for the Interviewer**

At some point during the interview, the interviewer may ask if you have any questions. Have several questions in mind to ask, but also listen during the interview for points about which you may need more information. Take the initiative to ask questions that will help you understand the employer’s needs and expectations for the position.

Prepare a list of questions in your own language based upon what you are seeking in a position. You can refer to your list of questions in the interview. Focus on listening to the answers and provide appropriate feedback.

1. What characteristics do the individuals possess who are successful in this position?
2. How would my performance be evaluated? How often? By whom?
3. Does your organization encourage its members to pursue additional education? What area of study is most encouraged?
4. What is it like to work here? What do you like best/least about working here?
5. How is the organization adapting to current __________ industry trend?
6. What would I be expected to accomplish in the first six months on the job? In the first year?
7. What are some of the department’s ongoing and anticipated special projects?
8. What professional development opportunities exist?

*Avoid asking questions about: salary, benefits, technical questions, and whether or not you are hired.*

**Practice**

You must prepare for your interview as thoroughly as possible. It takes practice to feel comfortable with interviewing. You need to hear what your answers sound like and see how you look as you speak. Participating in a Mock Interview through the Career & Leadership Development Center is an excellent way to help you present yourself more effectively and be more confident in an interview setting.

**Professional Dress**

Your appearance at a job interview may work for or against you. Few people are hired simply because they are well-dressed, but wearing the wrong outfit has ruined the chances of many a job hunter. Select clothes that project the image appropriate to the position you want.

**Additional Pointers**

- Know where your interview is to be held.
- Be on time—arrive 10-15 minutes early so you have time to collect your thoughts.
- Know the correct spelling and pronunciation of the organization’s and interviewers’ names.
- Be courteous and attentive to everyone you meet.
• Plan your strategy for impression management—hiring decisions are often made within the first 3-5 minutes.
• Project enthusiasm about the organization and position.
• Have a firm handshake, make direct eye contact, and use proper posture.
• Avoid slang terms, pronounce words completely, and avoid fillers such as “like, “you know, “stuff like that,” and ”um.”
• Make sure your answering machine/voice mail message sounds professional.
• Provide clear, concise answers avoiding “yes” and “no” responses.
• Maintain a positive attitude even when answering difficult questions.
• Each participant in an interview should not talk for more than two minutes at a time.

What to Take to the Interview
Part of being prepared for an interview is taking the correct documents and other items. These may include: a nice notepad in a leather folder or padfolio, good pen, extra copies of your résumé and reference sheet, completed application materials, portfolio, or performance pieces (audio, video, live performance). A padfolio will allow you to write down questions before the interview, write down answers to questions you ask, and jot down observations made during the day. Some interviewees create their own business cards to distribute at the interview. Do not take a backpack or other bulky tote—this does not contribute to a professional, organized first impression.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW
Following the interview, send a thank-you letter to each person with whom you interviewed within 24-48 hours. Thank-you letters may be handwritten or typed and sent through regular mail. However, if you know the recruiter will not be in their office soon, it is appropriate to e-mail a thank-you letter and then send a hard copy. Follow up with an e-mail or phone call 10-14 days after your interview.

PREPARING FOR THE SECOND INTERVIEW AND/OR ON-SITE INTERVIEW
During a second interview, emphasis is placed on whether you will be able to do the job and will be a good fit with existing team members. On-site interviews may require the candidate to give a presentation.

Prior to a second interview, complete additional research on the organization and reflect on what you learned in your first interview. Interviewees may expect a long day, or multiple days, when participating in an on-site interview. It is recommended that you review proper dining etiquette, as a meal is often part of the interview.

Second interviews are typically held on-site, therefore, you may have to make travel arrangements for the interview. Most organizations will pay for your expenses but anticipate that you may need to organize the trip. Candidates must understand how a prospective employer will handle travel expenses; some organizations may expect you to pay for everything in advance and submit a reimbursement form during or after the interview.

You can access more information on interviewing and schedule a Mock Interview by visiting the Career & Leadership Development Center web site. Click on the Job Search tab and then Interviewing. Click on the Handout Library tab for handouts on Professional Dress, Salary Negotiation, and Phone & Video Interviewing.

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