

Interviewing



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
Academic Success and Career Center

Before the Interview

Research

- Understand current organizational initiatives, projects and changes.
- Visit the organization's career and/or human resource webpages to familiarize yourself with their mission and values.
- Learn about your interviewees on LinkedIn.

Review

- Read through the job description to familiarize yourself with the qualifications and responsibilities.
- Review your resume as you will be asked about specific examples you provided.
- Choose interview questions from this guide or sources like [the muse](#) to prepare.

Practice

- Ask friends, roommates, family members or support people to help you practice your answers.
- Schedule a mock interview appointment with an ASCC career coach. It is helpful if you provide a link to the job description when doing so.
- Platforms designed for recorded interviews may have practice options. Take advantage of this resource. Zoom also provides an option to record a practice interview.

Logistics

- If your interview will be in person, make sure you gauge travel time and parking options.
- If it is a virtual interview, test your location's lighting and background to ensure a professional setting.
- Have copies of your resume and cover letter to refer to and share during the interview.
- It is appropriate to ask the interviewer about the format of your interview.

During the Interview

Interview Types

- Screening interviews are designed to determine if you meet the qualifications for the position. Often conducted virtually.
- 1:1 interviews may be conducted by a human resources representative or the hiring manager.
- Group interviews may include potential co-workers from across the organization.

Describing Your Experience

- Use specific examples to discuss your experiences and remember to focus on outcomes.
- Use positive and active language when describing your interest.
- Articulate your interest in the position and the organization based on your research.
- Avoid negative comments about previous employers or experiences.
- Bring questions to ask your interviewers.

Establish Rapport

- Consider conversation topics to establish rapport with your interviewer.
- Review tips on managing conversations during the interview process.
- Remember to maintain good eye contact.
- If a group interview, address your answer to the person asking the question and then establish eye contact with other interviewers.

Determine Next Steps

- Often your interviewer will provide a time frame for their hiring decision. If not, ask when you can expect to hear from them.
- Refrain from asking about employment benefits and salary until an offer is extended.
- Request business cards/contact information if needed for follow up and thank you notes.

After the Interview

Send a Thank you

- Within 24-48 hours, send a thank you to everyone with whom you interviewed.
- Your message may be sent via email or snail mail.
- Consider something that stood out during your conversation and note this immediately after your interview. This will allow you to personalize your thank you(s).
- In your note, reaffirm your interest in the position.

Follow Up

- Be patient. It is alright to follow up but follow the time line indicated during your interview.
- When following up, be polite and ask about the employer's timeline for their decision-making process.
- You may want to include a comment about your strong interest in the position.

Accepting an Offer

- You may ask for time to consider the job offer. Generally a week or less is appropriate.
- Provide the hiring manager a time frame for your decision.
- If you are considering multiple offers, consider the entire offer, including salary, benefits, flexible work schedules and any signing bonuses.

Negotiating an Offer

- Do your research in order to understand what you should expect.
- Know your worth in the the current market.
- Consider all items that may be negotiable. These include salary, education benefits, time off, start date and signing bonuses.

Interview Questions

1. Tell me a little about yourself.
2. What interested you about this position?
3. How did you hear about this position?
4. What are your greatest professional strengths?
5. What do you consider to be your weaknesses?
6. What is your greatest professional achievement?
7. What is your work style?
8. Tell me about a challenge or conflict you've faced at work, and how you dealt with it.
9. How would your current/most-recent supervisor and co-workers describe you?
10. Tell me about a time you have had a conflict with your team member.
11. How would you describe your leadership style?
12. How do you stay organized and manage multiple responsibilities?
13. What motivates you?
14. How do you like to be managed?
15. Tell me about a time you were working with a program or project and things did not go as expected. How did you respond?
16. Tell me about one of your favorite experiences working with a team and your contribution.
17. Is there anything else you would like us to know about you that we have not discussed?
18. Do you have any questions for us?

The Society for Human Resource Professionals (SHRM) is a good source for acceptable and unacceptable interview questions an employer may ask Guidelines on Interview and Employment Application Questions (shrm.org)

Answering Interview Questions

The **STAR Method** provides a nice formula for answering behavioral-based interview questions ("Tell me about a time when . . . ")

Situation

Discuss a **specific** situation you dealt with. You may use examples from internships, campus involvement, athletics coursework,, and/or volunteer and paid work experience.

Task

Explain the task you have to complete and the **specific** challenges involved.

Result

Explain the **specific** results of your actions. Explain the impact your actions had on outcomes, others involved. Quantify your results if applicable.

Action

Describe the **specific** action(s) you took to address an issue or solve a problem.

The **Elevator Pitch Method** provides a framework for answering general questions including one of the most popular, "Tell me about yourself"

Tell a story - Connect the skills and experience required for a position with your own background, skills, values and experiences. Is there something that stood out to you when you read the job description?

Highlight a skill - Did a specific skill stand out to you as you read about minimum or preferred qualifications for the position? Are you able to provide an example of a time when you were recognized for demonstrating this skill? If so, this will help you stand out and be remembered.

Share your goal - Relate your professional goals to the organization's values and initiatives. Are they working to solve problems you are interested in addressing? Do their values align with your own professional goals.

The elevator pitch approach with take some research on your part but if well executed can help you stand out as a candidate

References & Resources

Your 2022 Guide to the Most Common Interview Questions and Answers

<https://www.themuse.com/advice/interview-questions-and-answers>

The 3 Formulas to Answer any Interview Question

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/ashleystahl/2021/03/16/the-3-key-formulas-to-answer-any-interview-question/?sh=2887e32670bc>

ASCC Resume and Cover Letter Guide

<https://cdn-ascc.wsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/157/2022/05/2022-ASCC-Resume-Guide.pdf>