



Interviewing Guide

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Before the Interview

To maximize your success in an interview, it is important to spend time preparing. Here are some things to think about as you prepare for an interview:

Know Yourself

The best preparation is to know yourself: your skills and abilities, your talents and your values. Begin by taking the time to assess yourself.

- Think of 5-7 skills or qualities that you possess that you would use to describe yourself. More importantly, begin to identify examples of how you have used those skills.
- Take some time to think about your past. How did you develop the skills you have. What did you do in high school or in college that made you who you are today? Did you learn leadership or teamwork from participating in sports or extracurricular activities? Did you learn communication or initiative from a student organization? Did you learn problem solving or initiative through an internship or part-time job you held?
- Look at the job description and the requirements of the job. What skills do you have that directly match the position? If they are looking for someone with teamwork or leadership skills and you have developed those skills, then you will want to emphasize that in the interview.
- Finally, look over your resume and see if it adequately includes words and descriptions that will convey your skills to an employer. Write outlines for your answers to anticipated questions, then rehearse them out loud for practice. This can increase your confidence.

Know the Company (Company Research)

Before each interview, take time to research the company.

- Know the company well. You can gather information from the company's website, Google news, business publications, or conversations you have had with employees of that company.
- Take time to look how the company has performed financially.
- Know what service or product the company provides.
- Know the values of the company, their mission statement, and their guiding principles.
- Research the company and be prepared to explain how the company fits your criteria for your ideal employer. If you are extremely interested in the company, take time to also do research on the industry.
- What are the key issues in the industry? For example, if you are interviewing with a pharmaceutical company, know what is happening in the health care industry.
- How are current events impacting the industry?
- How is the industry addressing environmental issues? Is this company embracing the changes taking place? How?

See our handout on [Company Research](#): Preparing for the Interview for more detailed information about a strategic approach to researching companies.

Preparation Tips

Spend some time getting yourself ready and organized before your interview.

- Dress in conservative business attire. For most companies, you will want to wear a suit. Make sure your interview outfit is clean and pressed the night before your interview.
- Take a pad and pen along with you for any notes you wish to make **after** the interview [do not take notes during the interview]. You should also bring multiple copies of your resume.
- Think of 3-5 questions to ask the interviewer and write them down on a pad. You may reference these during the interview so that you remember them, however do not take notes on the response of the interviewer. Instead, listen carefully and respond to their answer with how you feel you can fit with the company based on their response or ask a continuation question.
- Know the precise time and place of the interview and how long it will take you to get to the interview so you will be early and have a few minutes to compose yourself before the interview. You should arrive between 10-15 minutes early.

Even experienced interviewees can benefit from practice before a big interview.

- Practice answering typical questions with a friend or other "mock interviewer."
- Review frequently asked [behavioral based interview questions](#) – be able to use the [STAR approach](#) to answering questions.
- To practice other interview questions, see [Common Interview Questions](#).
- Schedule your QUIC mock interview for access to Fisher on campus interviews and for constructive feedback regarding your interviewing strengths/weaknesses.
- Once you are QUIC, you can still schedule an appointment with the Office of Career Management to practice interview questions. Bring a copy of the job description with you so we can highly personalize your appointment.

During the Interview

Now that you are prepared for your interview, it's time to execute. The following tips will help you effectively communicate your qualifications and experiences in your interview.

Professionalism

Beyond your physical appearance, verbal and nonverbal communication can contribute to a professional image.

- Sixty percent of communication is nonverbal:
 - Be sensitive to your nonverbal behaviors: handshake, eye contact, posture, tone, nervous habits.
 - Be sensitive to the interviewer's nonverbal behavior and respond to it.
- Be aware of the tone of the interview (the interviewer may be trying to see how you react to stress).
- Convey enthusiasm about the position. Keep a positive attitude and show your interviewer you are interested in the company and position.
- Avoid speaking negatively about yourself or others, including organizations you have engaged with in the past
- Politely ask for clarification of a question which you do not fully understand.
- Know and use the interviewer's name. It's always safest to use Ms. or Mr., unless they advise you to call them by their first name.
- Spend some time thinking and preparing about questions **you** would like to ask based on the research you did. This is a great way to show enthusiasm for the opportunity. Write them down in your pad folio beforehand.

Interview Basics

If you have done your research on yourself, the company, the industry, and how to interview, now you need to focus on the delivery of the information during the interview.

- Stress the positive points about yourself in a confident, factual and honest manner. Be concise and specific when representing yourself.
- Have a strong introduction that begins to highlight your skills and how you developed them. Be able to "walk the interviewer through your resume".
- Convert opinion into fact by preparing specific examples of your accomplishments as illustrations of your skills/abilities/traits.
- Take time to reflect in a quiet manner, if necessary, before answering (process your thoughts).

Behavioral Interviews

Since research has indicated that the interview is not always the most effective means of selecting employees, almost all companies now use behavioral interviews to get students to provide examples of how they have used various skills or shown various qualities. Interviewers assume that past performance is a predictor of future behavior. Therefore, questions are targeted to measure your potential in several critical areas, such as leadership, problem solving and decision-making, by asking you to cite specific examples of your past performance in each

of the designated areas. A successful framework to use in answering these kinds of questions is referred to as STAR:

Situation: describe a problem, decision, project, etc. and provide background information

Task: provide the end goal for the major tasks involved

Action: what did you do – be sure to emphasize your individual contributions

Result: what were the outcomes of your actions?

Choosing Good Examples

Responses to these types of questions must be prepared ahead of time.

- Think about various situations from work, activities, or classes. Examples from work and activities tend to be more unique than examples from class.
- If you are a first-year or second-year student, you can use examples from both your high school and college years. By the time you reach your third year, try to use examples from college. It is still acceptable to talk about jobs you held in high school, but try to focus on your more recent experiences when possible.
- *Be extremely careful about using examples from your personal life (i.e. roommates, girlfriends, drinking buddies, etc.)* These types of examples should typically be avoided.

It is possible to anticipate many of the questions the recruiter will ask so that you go into the interview prepared with good examples of your skills and competencies. Here are 5 steps to help you anticipate and prepare:

1. The first step is to put yourself in the shoes of your future employer. What skills are they looking for? Why should they hire you? The clue to those questions lies in the JOB DESCRIPTION.
2. Take the job description and identify the SKILLS and QUALIFICATIONS they are looking for. Make a list of those skills, competencies, and qualifications. It will most likely be skills like problem solving, taking initiative, customer orientation, and communication skills, but each job is different with different skills.
3. Find a good comprehensive list of interview questions by competency or skill. An excellent resource is to Google “behavioral based interview questions by competency” or “complete list of interview questions.” [Glass Door](#) is another great resource. The best lists have the questions categorized by skill similar to the samples in this guide.
4. Locate the questions that match the list of skills you identified from the job description.
5. Finally, for each question, think of one or two situations or examples you would use to convince the interviewer that you have that skill. Take time to remember the detail in those examples.

Now practice answering the questions. Aim for two to three minutes per question. You are the storyteller— be vivid and specific and cover S (Situation), T (Task), A (Action), R (Result). *Let your example convince them you have the skills they are looking for. Make them remember you!*

Sample of Strong Behavioral Based Response

Q: Tell me about a time when you took initiative

A: I had a summer job after high school at Burger Queen. [Situation] I was in the kitchen preparing the burgers and my supervisor always emphasized how important it was to keep up with the orders so that customers were getting their food fast. [Task] One day during a lunch rush, I thought about how we were putting the cheese slices, which were wrapped in clear plastic, onto the hamburgers and I thought that if they were not fully wrapped, but just separated with one layer of plastic or waxed paper, we could get them on the burgers much faster. So I experimented with this and started timing myself and found that I was saving a couple of seconds per burger. [Action] I talked to my supervisor about this and she not only implemented the idea at our store, but she submitted it as a suggestion to corporate headquarters and they started getting their cheese packaged and shipped to all restaurants this new way. [Result]

Common Interview Questions

Tell me about yourself.

Have a strong introduction (Ex: Tell me about yourself, Walk me through your résumé).

- Give background (where are you from?) and timeline (chronological order).
- Choose key skills and characteristics, illustrate by utilizing personal experiences.
- Highlight significant experiences before OSU, walk through OSU, and why you are here today.
 - If you are a first or second year student, you can talk about your high school experiences.
 - Once you are in your second year, only highlight key experiences from high school, and put more emphasis on your more recent college experiences. For example, you may choose to mention a job or leadership position you held in high school, but focus more on the organizations you belong to at OSU.
- Your answer should be more than the 30-second introduction you would use at a networking event. Be concise, but use this opportunity to set the stage for the rest of your interview.

Why are you interested in your major?

- Show evidence of what you LIKE about your major.
- Show enthusiasm for the professional field you are about to enter.
- Provide reasons why your major is a good fit for you. For example, you could talk about enjoying your classes, getting involved in student organizations, or past work experience.
- Make it unique! The answer should be specific and personal to you.

Why are you a good fit with our company?

Most companies are not looking for a list of facts; they want to know why you are interested in working for their company. You should be able to demonstrate at least 3 strong connections between you and the company. There are many ways you can connect with a company:

- Know the company mission, vision, or values and be able to demonstrate how you align with their vision or values.
- Mention current news [always positive!] and tell your interviewer why you were impressed or how it resonated with you.
- Consider the history, products, or business strategy, and show why it is important to you.
- If you have met employees through career fairs or other networking events, talk about your interactions and what knowledge you gained that made you think this company would be a good fit for you.

When answering this question, it is helpful to be specific. For example, if the company gives back to the community, how do they do it? Then, show how you are a good fit by talking about your passion for giving back to the community.

Why did you choose to interview for this specific job?

- Read and know the job description before your interview.
- Be able to talk about the **duties and responsibilities**. These are more specific to the position than the qualifications.
- Companies won't expect that you have performed all of the duties and responsibilities before, but be able to talk about why you are interested in this job and how you think you could add value through this role.

Why should I hire you?

Know your best qualities:

- Select your three best qualities that are relevant to the job/internship, by referencing the qualifications listed on the job description.
- As you discuss each quality, provide a brief, but specific example of how you have demonstrated that trait.
- Think about things that make you unique. Your interviewer can already see your GPA on your resume. Think about how you can stand out.
- Be memorable. For example, if you think you have strong leadership qualities, what makes you a good leader? Are you good at motivating others? Are you good at managing conflict? Being specific can help you stand out.
- Avoid comparing yourself to others. Instead, focus on what makes you a great candidate.

Video Resources

For sample answers of common interview questions and behavioral based questions, as well as feedback from Career Management and actual recruiters, check out our [video resources](#).

Sample Behavioral Questions

Here is just a sample of skills and the related questions that a recruiter might use to evaluate if you really have those skills. Remember this is just a sample and you want to find questions that relate to competencies and skills in the job for which you are interviewing.

Taking Initiative

- Give me an example of a time when you initiated and completed a project.
- Tell me about a time when you motivated yourself to complete an assignment or task that you did not want to do.
- Tell me about the one time when you were motivated to put forth your greatest effort individually or within a group.
- When have you set a long range goal and achieved that goal?
- Give an example of when your persistence had the biggest payoff.
- Tell me about the riskiest decision you have ever made.
- Describe a new idea or suggestion you generated while at school or work and explain how you implemented it.
- What accomplishment has given you the most satisfaction and why?

Conflict Resolution/Strategizing/Analysis

- Please describe a situation when you faced conflict with another individual and how you resolved it.
- Give me an example of a time when you helped solve a problem in a group. What precipitated this problem?
- Tell me about a time when you failed and what you learned from it.
- Describe the most difficult problem you ever faced at work or in school.
- When have you had a particularly difficult decision to make and what was the outcome?
- Tell me about a situation in which you had to learn something new in a short time. How did you proceed?
- How have you most constructively dealt with disappointment and turned it into a learning experience?
- Describe a situation in which you effectively developed a solution to a problem by combining different perspectives or approaches.
- Can you tell me about a complex problem you solved? Describe the process that you utilized.
- Walk me through a situation where you had to do research and analyze the results for one of your classes or at work.

Time Management/Multitasking

- Describe a circumstance in which you had several things to do in a limited amount of time. What led up to the situation? What was the outcome?
- Describe a situation where class assignments and work or personal activities conflicted. How did you prioritize? How did you manage your time? What was the outcome?
- Describe a work situation in which you had multiple demands from various people [for example, customers, co-workers, or supervisor] and tell me how you managed that.

Communication/Persuasion/Criticism

- Tell me about a time when you had to persuade another person or group of people with an idea you had.
- Tell me about a situation when something you said or wrote was misunderstood.
- Describe a situation in which you misunderstood something a professor or supervisor wrote or said. Why did the misunderstanding occur?
- Tell me about a time when your work or ideas were criticized.

Teamwork/Collaboration/Leadership

- Tell me about a time when you took a leadership role.
- Tell me about a time when you motivated others to complete a task.
- Describe the most collaborative project you have worked on. What was your role?
- Describe a time when you were extremely flexible in adapting to the needs of others.
- Tell me how you assisted another person in reaching his/her goal.
- Describe a situation in which you had to manage conflict with your supervisor, professor, or other person.

Additional Frequently Asked Questions

- How would others describe you?
 - Focus on positive attributes that speak to your abilities in working with others and support your response with an example.
 - *Example:* My colleagues and peers would describe me as open-minded, as I notice my co-workers tend to come to me with new ideas for brainstorming sessions before taking their ideas to larger meetings.
- What are your long term goals?
 - Don't cite a specific job title, rather focus on accomplishments you would like to have achieved or an increase in responsibilities.
 - Keep consistent with the company and position for which you are interviewing.
 - Be careful not to talk about goals that would take you away from the company in a short time.
 - *Example:* In 5-10 years, I see myself in a management role in which I will have the opportunity to lead a team of marketing professionals, having proven myself on many major projects within the company. I want to be known as a "go to" person for my colleagues in various departments based on the impact I have made and the marketing expertise I have demonstrated. It is possible that I will pursue an MBA if I determine that it will help me achieve my goals. I also want to be involved in my community by coaching a little league soccer team.
- What are your weaknesses?
 - Identify areas in your work where you can *improve* and figure out how they can be assets to a future employer. Mention steps you are taking to work on these areas.
 - OR name a skill that is unnecessary or inapplicable to the success of the job you're seeking.
 - *Example:* In my last position, I wasn't able to develop my public-speaking skills. I'd really like to be able to work in a place that will help me get better at giving presentations and talking in front of others.

- What is something we should know about you that is not on your resume?
 - This is your chance to demonstrate your unique qualities. Consider sharing a strength not evident on your resume or mentioning a hobby or interest that positively reflects upon your character.
 - *Example:* I'm currently training for a half-marathon with a friend. Every morning we meet at 6 am to stay on track with our training schedule and we are looking forward to completing the race together next month.
- Describe your ideal supervisor.
 - This question aims to learn more about the type of work environment you thrive in and determine whether you'd fit within the company's culture.
 - A great answer incorporates an example of a positive experience you've previously had with a manager.
 - *Example:* My previous supervisor spent time understanding each employee's strengths and needs and delegated work assignments based on those areas. Additionally, she encouraged open communication with all employees, which I find extremely important in the workplace setting.

Asking Questions

How to Ask Good Questions

Are recruiters just being polite when they ask if you have any questions for them? NO.

Employers are interested in candidates who ask well-prepared and intelligent questions that reflect the candidate's knowledge of the company. If you ask a good question during an interview, this signals that you will ask good questions on the job too.

1. ***Know yourself, the company, and the industry.*** By doing an assessment of yourself – what you want in a job in terms of title, responsibilities, career development, company culture, and so on – you will understand what your deal breaker issues are when choosing a job. Areas in which you might want to dig deeper, as the interviews progress, include: company culture; positive current events taking place within the company; and how others in your position have developed in their careers – broadly or more vertically, etc. As you ask questions, try to get at what you cannot find in the company's published recruiting materials or elsewhere in your company and industry research.
2. ***Know your audience.*** When you interview for a job or internship, the person interviewing you may hold one of several different positions within the company. A large company may have HR recruiters conduct first round interviews with students, whereas a smaller company may have department employees or managers conduct interviews. It is important to know who is interviewing you so that you can tailor your questions accordingly. For example, you would not want to ask a specific accounting-related question (that only an accountant would know) to your interviewer if they are an HR recruiter.
3. ***Consider what stage you are at in the process.*** Earlier in the process, you will want to ask more general questions about the company's strategy and priorities and how you can fit into them, company culture, career development opportunities, and so on. Later, you will want to drill down to more specific details in these areas.
4. ***Develop a core list of questions.*** You will want to create at least three general questions you can use with all the companies with which you are interviewing. Beyond those, you should tailor questions to each company based on what you know about the company or have experienced with the company to date. Of course, based on the natural conversational flow of your interviews and what, specifically, you have been discussing with the recruiter, there will be some unscripted questions that will come to mind. Where possible, ask questions that shine a light on your knowledge, insights, and thoughtfulness about the industry, the company, its people, its culture, and/or specific ways you will be able to add value in the job.
5. ***Stay positive and know what not to ask.*** You want to be sure your interview maintains a positive tone. Avoid asking questions that highlight failures of the company or any negative aspects or news. You never want to put the interviewer on the defensive about their company. Additionally, avoid putting the interviewer on the spot by asking for immediate feedback, such as "do you see any concerns in regards to my qualifications for this position? This makes some recruiters feel uncomfortable.

Other Important Tips

- Do not ask about compensation in your interview. Only ask about pay once you have received an offer.
- Feel free to bring a list of questions with you to the interview and to reference those when it is time for you to ask questions. They should be typed or neatly written in your pad folio, and this is the only time you should open your pad folio during the interview. This shows that you have planned ahead and you are prepared to ask questions. Though you can reference your prepared questions, you should not take notes while your interviewer is speaking.
- Be sure to ask questions that you actually *want* to know the answer to and actively listen to the answers! Employers can tell if you are just asking them questions for the sake of asking questions.
- Always inquire about the next steps in the process (i.e. is there a second round interview? When can you expect to hear back from the employer? Can you get a business card?).

Examples of Questions (Different Stages in Process)

During Information Sessions/First Round Interviews

- I heard about _____, can you tell me more about that? (This would pertain to an industry or company event – something that has been in the news or that you discovered in your networking and research). I get the sense that your culture is very *x, y, and z* (for example, team oriented, quick, and open/flexible). Is this an accurate assessment? What more can you tell me about the culture and its values, and how your culture impacts how people work together?
- I noticed that your company has a “_____” program for its customers. Could you tell me more about the benefits of this program?
- What do you think are some common qualities of interns/employees who really stand out? (If you ask this, be sure to respond with how you fit the qualities they identified)
- When you look back on your experience with your company, what would you be proudest about? (this may be best suited for the hiring manager or someone who once held the position you are applying for)
- How do you measure an individual’s success in your organization?
- What are the next steps in general? (If the interviewer has not already outlined these) Timing? May I please have a business card?

During on Onsite Interview

- (For Your Hiring Manager or Someone Senior) What is your management style? How do you make decisions? Like to communicate? Lead people?
- What do you see as the group’s top priorities?
- What’s important to know if I come aboard — what will contribute to my success and help me be effective and acclimate well?
- What’s your view on developing people? Any examples you are particularly proud of?
- What do you see as the top three goals/objectives for my job? What metrics do you use to evaluate performance?
- What are your ideas for how this role could evolve?
- Can you describe the performance review process?

After You Have Received an Offer

- What's the timeframe for getting back to you?
- What is your ideal timeline for start date — earliest/latest?
- When will you be sending the formal offer letter?
- If I have follow-up question or requests, are you the best person to contact?
- Where can I get information on the benefits that would be included in the offer?
- Review our [Evaluating and Negotiating Job Offers Handout](#) for more tips and advice.

After You Have Accepted the Job or Are Close

- I would still like more information on x, y, and z – are there alumni from my university or other people within the company with whom you could put me in touch?
- Are there any upcoming company events that I could participate in to get a deeper understanding of the company? (For example, a company happy hour or social gathering with CEO)
- Among those who have joined you and done well, what was their entry strategy? What did they particularly pay attention to that helped them transition into the organization well and be effective quickly? Are there things I could be doing before I start to be better prepared?

After the Interview

Your interview is not complete after the final handshake. Thanking your interviewer and following up when appropriate can show your professionalism and enthusiasm for the position.

Thank you and Follow Up

- Write thank you letters to interviewers within 24 hours of the interview. It is usually best to send the thank you note via email so that your interviewer receives it quickly.
- Review our [Thank You Note Guide](#) for help with creating your thank you note.
- If you have not heard from the company in the time indicated, contact the appropriate person to check their progress in the decision making process and let them know you are still very excited about the opportunity.

Reflection

- Reflect on and write down points of the interview that you felt good about/need to improve. Use these to help you prepare for future interviews.
- Assess outcomes realistically, and consider the next steps in your job search.

Managing the Next Steps

- If you receive an offer, you do not need to accept the offer on the spot. Rather, show appreciation for the offer and ask about the timeline to give them a response. If you have questions about an offer, you can make an appointment with the Office of Career Management to discuss your options.
- If you do not receive an offer, be respectful and professional. Send a note showing appreciation for being considered and indicate that you are interested in keeping in touch about future opportunities.

Phone, Skype, and Video Interviews

These types of interviews are often used by companies to connect with students who are not located in the same geographic area. Though the questions may be similar, there are some differences in execution that you should consider.

Preparation

As always, the key is preparation!

- You should be as prepared as you would be for an in-person interview. It can be difficult to carefully listen to questions, read your notes, and deliver a clear response, so you should not rely on notes.
- Clarify what time zone you are planning to connect on ex., PST vs. EST. Use this link to double check time zones: <http://www.worldclock.com/>
- **Select a quiet location:** no roommates or background noise.
TIP: Make a room request in Mason Hall or in the Office of Career Management for a private room [during fall semester OCM rooms are almost always booked].
- Fully charge your phone or computer before the interview.
- Find a place that is free of distraction and has 100% cell reception.
- Have the right materials ready:
 - Pen
 - Paper/Pad folio to take notes
 - A printed copy of the job description
 - Your resume
 - Answers/Notes to common interview questions (Note: you don't want to sound like you're reading a script, so just prepare outlines or bullet points)
 - Questions you have for the company
 - Wear your suit to get in "interview mode"
 - Small glass of water

TIP: You can have these materials out in front of you only for a phone interview and never at a face-to-face or Skype interview.

Execution (Phone, Skype, Video)

Phone Interviews

- Answer with enthusiasm and state your name.
- Jot down the name(s) of the recruiter(s).
- *TIP: Stand during the interview – your voice will project better.*
- Speak clearly and slowly.
- Don't: chew gum, interrupt the recruiter or take another call.

Skype Interviews

- Choose a spot that makes you look professional - consider having a blank wall behind you, nothing too busy or distracting.
- Wear your full suit.
- Don't shoot into a window. The "backlight" can make you look like a silhouette.
- Have bright lighting in the room.
- Find a fast internet connection and connect your computer directly to your router or internet source.
- Try to not place yourself exactly in the middle of the screen; you should be slightly seated to the right or to the left.
- Laptop on a flat surface, prepare for audio delays, keep your hands in front of you and still.
- Sit in a chair that does not rock or swivel.

**Test the audio and video before the interview is to take place:*

- Have a friend call you on Skype or on the type of web medium the recruiter has requested.
- Check to make sure the volume isn't too loud or too low.

Video Interviews

Some companies have started using third party vendors that conduct and manage video interviews that prescreen candidates

Examples of top video interview companies include:

- [Active Interview](#)
- [CareerCam](#)
- [HireVue](#)
- [InterviewStream](#)
- [OVIA](#)
- [TalentRooster](#)
- [Google Hangouts](#)

Practice recording yourself answering the interview question(s) many times before recording it online:

- A cell phone or a friend can be great for immediate feedback.
- Companies will sometimes send you these questions beforehand.
- Take advantage of any replay options that may be available to you.
- Clearly communicate your answer with energy.
- Often you have 2 tries (sometimes more) to re-record, but don't rely on that.

Second Round Interviews

If you are selected for a second round interview, congratulations! There are several important differences from your first round interview.

Purpose

Most companies recruiting on campus will have second round interviews, generally a full day of interviewing and related activities at the company site. The on-site interview is when you'll get to meet your potential supervisor and co-workers. There is no way to describe every aspect of what can be expected from a company visit because the structure and content varies for each company.

The company visit:

- Allows the company to get a more in-depth assessment of the candidate prior to making a job offer.
- Provides the candidate with the opportunity to see the company and meet some of its people firsthand in order to better determine fit if an offer is made.

Arranging the Trip

- The invitation to visit will usually come from a contact person at the company. This person is the candidate's source of information regarding all aspects of the trip.
- Ask for a trip itinerary and get the names and titles of all individuals who will be interviewing you.
- Ask for the names of alumni that you may contact to get an informal assessment of the company.
- Any questions or clarifications should be addressed to the contact person prior to the trip.
- Be clear on who will set up your travel arrangements, how expenses will be handled, and when to expect your travel information. Determine in advance if you will be renting a car, using a hotel shuttle or cabs.
- Clarify dress requirements for various events that may occur in addition to the interview, for example dinner the evening before, or a plant tour in a manufacturing setting.
- Keep in mind your future employer is paying your travel expenses so be professional at all times and pay for personal expenses.
- If you are not interested in working for the employer or the job, do not accept their invitation to travel for an on-site interview. Do not consider this a chance to travel or visit a friend – your time will be very structured with little free time outside the interview and scheduled activities. Doing so reflects poorly on the individual as well as Fisher and The Ohio State University and is a waste of everyone's time.

Preparing for the On-Site Interview

Because of the importance and purpose of the company visit, it is imperative to prepare carefully:

- Be sure your suit is cleaned and pressed.
- Have a pad folio with pen and paper in it to take with you.
- Be prepared to take cash (singles for tipping) and a credit card.
- Get directions from the airport to the hotel (this is helpful even if you are taking a cab) and to the interview site.

Candidates should attempt to learn as much about the company as possible. In order to prepare adequately, the candidate may:

- Review the company mission, long-range goals, company business philosophy and managerial style.
- Review notes taken after the initial campus interview.
- Read the annual report.
- Extensively review the company website.
- Read industry and business publications regarding the company.
- Investigate the community in which the company is located.
- Talk with alumni who are now employed with the company. LinkedIn is a useful tool for this.

This information should be used to ask insightful questions designed to show interest in the company and the position. Refer to [How to Ask Good Questions](#) for examples.

Travel

It is important to be considerate and respectful during travel, especially when the company is covering expenses. Be polite to all individuals you interact with throughout the travel process. These interactions are part of your professional brand.

Getting There

- An overnight stay is often required as most visits are one full day in length.
- Trips over 200 miles justify flying; under 200 driving may be preferred. The company will let you know if they have a preference.
- If you are making your own travel arrangements, try to avoid scheduling very late flights or the last flight into a city. Once travel plans and accommodations are confirmed, call or e-mail the contact person to acknowledge.

Hotel/Lodging

- If taking a taxi or renting a car, keep all receipts.
- Go to the hotel and check in. When you get to your room check the phone to see if you have messages.
- Verify the prepayment agreement; many hotels will ask to imprint a credit card for personal charges.
- Schedule a wake-up call that will allow plenty of time to shower, dress, eat and commute to the visit site.

- Do not bill long distance phone calls to the room; use a credit card or your personal cell phone.
- Review your bill for accuracy upon checkout.
- Check out of the hotel before you leave for the interview site; take all belongings with you, or if you'll be returning to the hotel, you may check your luggage at the hotel desk.

Dining

- Many companies will arrange for dinner with an employee (your contact person, a recent hire or an alum).
- Always reflect maturity and professionalism, even if in a casual setting.
- Eat moderately, avoid alcohol, and ask good questions.
- Try to determine the primary qualities they are looking for, so that you can then emphasize these in your subsequent interviews the following day.

Execution

- A typical schedule includes three to five one hour interviews with various levels of management.
- You will usually find a mixture of group and one-on-one interviews. As introductions are made, jot down the interviewers' names in your pad folio. Ask for business cards after each interview session.
- You may have an interview scheduled with a senior staff member, such as a vice president of human resources or a partner in the firm.
- Be prepared to greet each new person enthusiastically and maintain a positive attitude. Even if you have been asked introduce yourself several times, it is the first time that person is meeting you.
- Try to include diverse examples, because your interviewers will often meet to discuss your interviews. It is okay, however, to create a brand for yourself by consistently highlighting your strengths.

Follow Up

- Clarify when the company will follow up with you. Confirm who you should follow up with, if necessary.
- Send a thank you note to everyone with whom you interviewed.
- Send a thank you note to your contact person.
- In your letter(s) you should reaffirm your interest in the position and reiterate key points that were made during the interview.
- If you are certain that this is not the right opportunity for you, you should respectfully indicate that you have no further interest, but appreciated the opportunity.
- If you have not heard from the company in the time indicated, contact the appropriate person to check their progress in the decision making process and let them know you are still very excited about the opportunity.
- Some companies will make an offer on the spot; others may wait up to one month. You never need to accept an offer on the spot. Rather, show appreciation for the offer and ask about the timeline to give them a response. If you have questions about an offer, you can make an appointment with the Office of Career Management to discuss your options.

Special Topics

Case Interviews

Consulting firms have raised the ante for those who want to work in their industry by utilizing case studies as part of the interview process, and several other companies are using case interviews for a variety of positions. By presenting an actual business problem and expecting a well-formulated and concise response to possible solutions, recruiters are testing candidates' abilities to listen, analyze and solve problems on their feet. There are many web sites and books devoted to preparing for case interviews. One book that students find very helpful is *Case in Point* by Marc Cosentino. To learn more about case interviewing, see the handout: [An Introduction to Case Interviews](#) and schedule an appointment with a career consultant.

Stress Interviews

Stress interviews test how well you react to pressure.

Most commonly used in investment banking, stress interviewing is the deliberate creation of an uncomfortable situation in order to test how the candidate reacts to pressure. The ethics of this kind of interviewing are questionable, and it is far from certain that the stress created is similar to what would occur on the job.

However, it's also true that one person's stressful situation is another person's fair, if tough, question.

How to Stay Graceful in a Stress Interview*

Some of common examples of stress-creating techniques are:

- The interviewer doesn't say anything for the first five or ten minutes of the interview.
- The interviewer is reading the paper when the candidate comes into the room.
- The interviewer asks a tough question right off the bat, without even introducing himself.
- The interviewer challenges your answer by disagreeing with you.
- The interviewer pauses for a long time after listening to your response.
- The interviewer ridicules your background.
- The interviewer takes you into a department meeting with no introduction.
- The interviewer is deliberately very late, then keeps looking at his or her watch.
- The interviewer pretends to fall asleep.

How might you handle such a situation, if you still want the job?

If the interviewer ignores you when you walk in the room, just dive in with something like, "I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and tell you why I think I'm the right person for this job." After a long pause, you might say, "Perhaps I didn't make myself clear." Then explain your previous response. If the manager ridicules your background, you could say, "Perhaps you expected different qualifications, but these have served me well so far and I intend to continue to build on them." If the manager thrusts you into a department meeting without an introduction, just introduce yourself and ask the other people for their names, then explain that you are happy to meet them and learn more about the department. If the interviewer pretends to fall asleep, write a note saying, "I enjoyed meeting you," put it in front of the interviewer, and rise to leave. Chances are, you'll get the interviewer's full attention.

The important thing, if you're unfortunate enough to encounter this form of interviewing, is to keep your cool, maintain your dignity, and find a way to use the situation to your advantage.

Group and Panel Interviews

You walk into an interview and realize that not only are there several interviewers in the room, but also other job candidates. You've just walked into a group or panel interview, which some employers use to interview several candidates vying for the same position at once. In this setting, your objective is to show what a great employee you could be while also beating out the competition face-to-face. The challenge is finding the right balance between getting your point across while not dominating the conversation.

Like a traditional job interview, you should still be prepared to answer questions that indicate you are the type of employee the company would like to hire. Emphasize the *skills and traits* the position would require of you. In addition to these questions, you could also participate in a problem solving or work-simulation exercise. The purpose of this style of interview is to determine how you interact with others, demonstrate your skills, and solve problems on the spot. Be sure to *make friends* with the other job candidates – this shows the interviewers you don't shy away from networking and will make you appear confident. You also want to involve the other candidates when answering your questions, by following up on their questions or adding your own thoughts. Always remember to speak with a purpose; don't talk constantly to be noticed, but make sure what you're saying is unique and *making a contribution* to the conversation. Lastly, be sure to *listen*. To be able to *speak with a purpose*, you must listen to the other people in the room and stay engaged by paying attention and using your body language. To follow-up, send a thank-you note to every single person who interviewed you and reference a point you made in the interview to remind the interviewer of your contributions.

Managing Touchy Questions

There you are in an interview and the interviewer asks you a question about your age, marital status, plans for a family or any of a number of potentially discriminatory questions. You know these questions are illegal; an interviewer would have to show a consistent policy of asking the same questions of all applicants, and further, would have to show that the questions related to qualifications for the job. What are your options when faced with such questions?

You could:

- answer the question
- challenge the employer as to why he/she is asking the question
- suggest you would be happy to answer the question, but ask the employer to explain how this question relates to your qualifications for the position

You could also acknowledge that you realize that there are many sides to every individual including a personal side that often includes family, children, marriage, religion just to name a few. However, you then can emphasize how important your career is to you and that you are sure that you will be able to give your full commitment to your career and find a balance between your professional life and your personal life.

If you should get such a question especially during an interview conducted through the Office of Career Management, please contact a career consultant to talk about the situation in detail.