

Career Development: Interviewing Skills

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References

**Chronicle of Higher
Education**

<http://hotjobs.yahoo.com>

Science

**Congratulations,
you landed a job
interview**

Now what?!

Types of interviews

Postdoc positions

Academic positions

**Large and small
institutions**

Non-academic positions

What are the purposes of the interview?

You are a top candidate

**Employer is looking for reasons
to hire you**

You are interviewing the employer

**Your opportunity to “flesh out”
your CV and recommendation
letters**

K. Delgizzo and L. Malisheski. Chronicle of Higher Education, Jan. 17, 2003.

**Get rid of that
teacher-mentor
attitude**

Typical academic interview components

Schedule of one-on-one chats with the faculty
Meeting with graduate students
Seminar to faculty and students
Chalk talk with committee members
Possibly a sample teaching lecture
Meeting with Dept. Head and/or Dean
Meet with those you ask to see
Meals

Things to ask before your visit 1

With whom will you be meeting?
What is the schedule for your visit?
What will you be expected to present?
Who will be in your audience?
What social events or meals will you be attending?

Things to ask before your visit 2

Who will make arrangements for your travel and accommodations?
Will the employer cover your expenses?
Who should be contacted in case of an emergency?

Prepare thoughtfully

Acquaint yourself with the institution and its members
Think about what you can contribute to the dept./company
Practice your presentation before a critical audience
If you must present a lesson, adjust it to the audience

Practice presenting yourself

List the critical points you want to present about yourself
Prepare 1-, 3- and 10-minute versions of your research interests
Be prepared to ask questions; prepare a list of them

Seminar and chalk talk

Practice your seminar before a critical audience
Your chalk talk will be like standing before a grant review or thesis committee
Know your very first projects, second projects, etc.
Know which programs at which agencies you will submit grants to
Know your stuff!
Relate your stuff to your hosts' stuff.

One-on-one meetings: Show the kind of colleague you will be

Forge a real connection with your interviewers.

Ask questions about your interviewer and his/her work.

Show enthusiasm and interest in his/her responses.

Questions during the interview

Listen carefully to questions you are asked

Don't be afraid to ask someone to repeat a question or clarify something you don't understand.

D. M. Zimbleman. Chronicle of Higher Education, July 16, 2002

Questions you should NOT be asked...

What does your husband or wife do?

Do you plan to have children?

Are you pregnant?

...and if you ARE asked?

Elicit an employer's concerns, address those rather than the literal question

Respond in a way that conveys empathy with the interviewer's concern

Reframe the question or minimize a negative comment or situation

Stonewall cheerfully when asked for negative information

M. Heiberger and J. M. Vick. Chronicle of Higher Education. Jan. 22, 1999.

Interview the interviewers: academic interviews

Does the faculty seem able to work together?

Is the job description clear, or are there different readings from different committee members?

Did you feel demeaned by committee comments or interview arrangements?

To ask or not to ask, that is the question 1

At a fully teaching institution, don't ask about time off for research.

Ask carefully about the workload.

Do not ask specific questions about salary and benefits at the first interview (academic).

Ask about about research and teaching facilities available on campus.

R. Jenkins. Chronicle of Higher Education. Jan. 15, 2004.

To ask or not to ask, that is the question (part deux)

Ask about staff support for grant writing, financial management, procuring supplies, repairing equipment, and specialized facilities.

Ask which types of courses you would be expected to teach and how those courses are assigned.

Ask questions that highlight your knowledge of the institution.

R. Jenkins. Chronicle of Higher Education. Jan. 15, 2004.

The interview meal

Use good table manners

Don't order the most expensive item on the menu/bottles of wine

Ask your hosts questions so you can eat your food

Go light on the alcohol (loose lips sink ships)

Thank your hosts for the meal

Questions for nonacademic positions

Tell me about your recent work experience(s).

Why are there gaps in your employment history?

What strengths and weaknesses would you bring to this position?

What types of job responsibilities do you find most rewarding/frustrating? Why?

Describe a situation when you had to take directions from several people at the same time.

Describe a time when you had to sacrifice quality for a deadline, or visa versa. How did you react to this?

Describe a tough problem that you have dealt with, tell how you approached it and the outcome.

When you delegate assignments to others, how do you keep track of their progress?

http://www.workforcecentralflorida.com/employers/interviewing_questions.asp

Interview the interviewers nonacademic interviews

How do you measure success on the job?

Can you tell me about the people I'll be working with?

What is your approach to solving problems?

More tips on company interviews

Read industry trade magazines, visit the company web site, and do a company search on the internet.

Demonstrate what you know about the company and the industry.

Present yourself as an active problem solver.

Tell how your experiences will help you meet your prospective role.

S. Bosker <http://hotjobs.yahoo.com/interview/>

Even more tips on company interviews

The interview should feel like a conversation, not an interrogation.

The interviewer should like you more at the end than at the beginning. The interviewer has a stake in seeing the candidate succeed.

The interviewer's attitude going into an interview is one of "hopeful skepticism."

The sooner they hire you, the sooner the search can end.

"Anyone too busy to say 'thank you' will get fewer and fewer chances to say it."

Harvey Mackay, Founder and chairman of the Mackay Envelope Corporation

Don'ts

Undersell yourself
Present yourself unfavorably
Drink too much alcohol
Discuss departmental politics, your perceived inadequacies, gossip about colleagues, etc.
Spend their interview money on extras

A little paranoia can be a good thing

Your interview starts in the parking lot, any onlooker could be one of your interviewers, so act accordingly
Be courteous and professional to everyone you meet (including staff)
Be positive and pleasant in small talk with strangers
TURN OFF YOUR CELL PHONE!

E. Hovanec. <http://hotjobs.yahoo.com/interview/>. 2002.

Interview stoppers

Not knowing your goals
Being too needy
Poor nonverbal communication
Falling into the answers-only rut
Rambling
Being overly familiar
Not asking specific questions

Take home messages

Relax
The interview is a two-way street
Your hosts want you to succeed
Prepare, prepare and then prepare again
Do your homework
Be polite to everyone
Did I mention preparing?
SMILE!