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## INTERVIEW FORMATS

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Each interviewer you meet with may have a different interviewing style. No matter what the interviewing style, it is important to be prepared, self-confident, and flexible. However, you are likely to encounter three basic types of interviews—structured, unstructured, and behavioral.



**Structured interview** - The recruiter asks each applicant a specific set of questions. In some cases he or she may write down your responses. A very structured interview may feel rather rigid and formal. A typical question in a structured interview might be “What are your career goals and objectives?”

**Unstructured interview** - This style is more conversational. The recruiter has some general questions in mind, but there is more give and take of information. In an extremely unstructured interview the recruiter may ask very few questions and leave it up to you to initiate a discussion of your qualifications. An unstructured interview might open with the statement, “Tell me something about yourself.”

**Behavioral interview** - The recruiter asks very pointed questions regarding how you have handled specific kinds of situations, or how you would anticipate dealing with the kinds of challenges presented on the job. A typical question in a behavioral interview might be, “Tell me how you handled a recent conflict situation.” This style of interview is gaining popularity, therefore we will elaborate more on Behavioral Interviewing.

Behavioral questions are based on the idea that **past behavior predicts future behavior**. Based on the position the employer will assess certain skills and qualities that relate to performing the job successfully. Thus the employer will ask questions to determine if you have demonstrated these qualities and skills in your past behavior.

You should respond to behavioral questions by giving a concrete example where you have already demonstrated the particular skill the interviewer is seeking. It is often helpful to remember the acronym **CAR** in responding to these types of questions.

**Context:** Give some background of event. Think to yourself answer the questions, What? When? Where? and for Who? Include obstacles that you had to overcome.

**Action:** Explain the action you took. This does not mean what the group did, but what you did. Practice “I” instead of “We” statements; assume ownership of your accomplishments.

**Results:** Describe the positive benefits that you achieved. Quantify the results and relate your skills, actions, and results to employer’s need when possible.

### How do you know what skills the employer is looking for so you can generate targeted examples?

- Read the job description
- View prospective employer’s website
- Read occupational information that describes which skills are used in different functional areas.
- Ask the question at on-campus Employer Information Sessions
- Ask alumni working in the same area.