
PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS

Preparing for interviews is similar to studying for an exam. You must review and prepare! Assess your current knowledge, study the employer and anticipate difficult questions. Following are things you should do to prepare for a successful interview.

STEP 1: Analyze the Position

- Review the Job Description
 - Highlight the duties and qualifications of the position
 - For short or vague job descriptions, review occupational information and/or conduct informational interviews on the position. (Visit the Career Center website and look at O*Net, WetFeet, or OOH for occupational information and utilize the Career Advisor Network for informational interviews)
 - Do not get discouraged if you do not meet all qualifications, employers with lengthy qualifications statements rarely find applicants strong in all areas.
 - Use the space below to list 2 or 3 points about the position in the interview.
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STEP 2: Know the Employer

- Learn about the employer's mission, services and/or products, organizational structure, training program, and future prospects.
- Know the employer's competitors
- Obtain research from the following sources:
 - Employers website
 - Article searches (check out Google news)
 - Annual Reports (visit Gleeson library for databases)
 - Attend company presentations (InterviewTrak has a list of companies presenting at USF)
 - Network with USF alumni working at the firm

Use the space below to list 2 or 3 reasons why you want to work for this employer.

STEP 3: Review your Qualifications

Know your experience: (Work, Internships, Volunteer, Class projects, Coursework, Student Activities, Interests & Hobbies). Identify the skills and areas of knowledge developed in these areas and be prepared to say how this experience prepared you to contribute to an organization.

What 2 or 3 functional skills do you have to offer (e.g. organization, leadership, communication)

What specific content skills do you have to offer (e.g. bookkeeping, financial planning, computer hardware and software).

PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS CONT'D

What 2 or 3 adaptive skills do you have which will increase your value as an employee? (e.g., dependability, flexibility, creativity, sense of humor).

STEP 4: Prepare Questions

Ask employers questions to demonstrate your interest in working for the employer's organization and help you become more informed about whether or not to accept an offer. Typically the employer will ask you if you have questions at the end of the interview. **As a general rule, questions about salary and benefits are best left until a job offer has been extended. Be sure your questions are not answered in job description or company literature.** Possible questions to ask:

- When and how are employees evaluated?
- What are the best and worst aspects of working in this group/organization?
- What's the biggest challenge facing this group/organization right now?
- How would you compare your organization right now?
- How would you compare your organization with your major competitors? What are your plans in terms of product lines, services, new branches, etc.?
- How would you describe this organization's management style? How are decisions made?
- What are some typical first year assignments? What is the career path for my position? How does this position fit into the overall organizational structure?
- Exactly what kind of background are you looking for?
- What kind of training is given to new employees?
- Do you have any concerns about my background that I can answer now?

List four questions you would ask in an interview:

STEP 5: Practice, Practice, Practice

Practice your responses to interview questions to make you feel more at ease and confident. Following is a list of Career Center resources to assist you:

- See the following page for practice questions
- Sign up for a Mock Interview with employers. Call 415-422-6216 for an appointment
- Sign up to practice interview with a Career counselor. Call the same number above and request to have it videotaped.
- Utilize InterviewStream a virtual interview tool accessible on the Career Services website
- Attend a Career Services workshop on interview skills
- Ask a friend or family member to help you practice and give you feedback