

# Interview Guide



UNIVERSITY OF  
**BALTIMORE**

Career and Internship  
Center

# FOUNDATIONS OF INTERVIEWING

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Preparing for an interview is equally as important as fine tuning your resume and cover letter. The resume is what will get you in the door however, the interview is what will land you the job! Future employers can see on paper that you are capable of completing the duties assigned, but through interviewing, they are able to attain a deeper understanding of your proficiency levels, personality traits, and desire to work for their organization.

The key to a successful interview is to be able to verbalize reflections of past experiences, connect what you have learned to the organization, and remain confident and professional. None of those items are an easy feat, so practice most likely will be necessary. This guide can be used to get you prepared to for your next big interview!

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## PROFESSIONAL PITCH

The professional pitch is essentially the answer to the question, "Tell me about yourself?" Employers want to know who you are, where you have been, and where are you going. The rule of thumb is to keep it professional, concise, and make it relevant to your audience

- Who am I?
- What can I offer?
- What problems can I solve?
- What do I want the listener to do as a result of this exchange?

Each pitch should last no more than 30 seconds. Practice makes perfect!

### SAMPLE PITCH

I am currently a senior at the University of Baltimore majoring in Psychology. I am a full time student, and just finished my internship with the American Red Cross as a Armed Forces Caseworker. During my time with the American Red Cross, I supported over 100 military members and their families through assessing their needs with regard to housing, food, and medical. If we were not able to satisfy certain needs, I then would be the liaison for them to other community resources. It made me feel really proud to have such a positive impact on my client's lives. I realized during my internship that client facing service is what I am passionate about, which is why I applied to the position with your organization.

# TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

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Organizations will use a variety of methods to assess whether a candidate is not only capable of performing duties and responsibilities, but also to see if the candidate fits in to the company culture. Companies may use different types of screenings or interviews to learn more about the candidate.

## 1 Telephone interview

Typically the first step before inviting a candidate for a face to face meeting.

Organizations want to ask questions to see if they meet the basic qualifications and sound professional and personable on the phone. First impressions matter!

### Tips

- Make sure you are free from distractions and in a quiet room.
- Speak clearly and confidently. If you don't understand a question, ask them to repeat it.
- Keep your resume and a page to take notes on in front of you.

## 3 Panel Interview

Interview that is led by a chairperson and a few other members of the organization. The candidate is asked questions by all members of the panel in one setting.

### Tips

- Bring multiple copies of your resume for each panel member.
- Ask for business cards from each panel member to write a personal thank you email after the interview.

## 5 Lunch/Dinner Interview

The hiring manager and candidate meet over lunch or dinner, where conversation may be both personal and professional. Keep in mind, this is still an interview format. The hiring manager is assessing your communication style, as well as your table manners.

### Tips

- Order food that can be eaten with a fork. This will allow you to pause when a question is asked, as well as keeps your face cleaner from any potential mess from a sandwich.
- Avoid selecting the most expensive menu item, aim for middle range price.
- Never consume alcohol during an interview, even if everyone else at the table is partaking.

## 2 Face-to-Face Interview

Interview between the hiring manager and candidate.

### Tips

- Come prepared with questions to ask the hiring manager about the role and the organization. It shows the employer that you are interested in the organization and opportunity. It also allows you to gain insight in to topics that might not have been discussed in the interview prior.
- Never ask about salary, benefits, or sponsorship until an offer is made.

## 4 Group Interview

Interview where several candidates for the same position are being asked a series of questions by the hiring manager or a panel.

### Tips

- Although this interview may feel like a competition, the panel will be watching how you interact with the other candidates. It is important to show that you are qualified, while remaining personable and professional.

# INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

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## SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Below are some practice questions that a potential employer may ask. It is important to practice answering the questions aloud. When you are ready, schedule a mock interview session with your career coach in UBworks.

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why are you interested in working here?
3. What are your greatest strengths?
4. What are some areas of opportunity?
5. Tell me about a time where you faced conflict in the workplace. How did you deal with it?
6. Where do you see yourself in five years?
7. Why are you leaving your current workplace?
8. What type of work environment do you prefer?
9. What is your management style?
10. What management style do you prefer?
11. How would your colleagues describe you?
12. Talk about a time where you had multiple competing deadlines. How did you prioritize to meet the due dates?
13. What do you do for fun?
14. Talk about a time where you went above expectations for a customer or on a project.
15. Do you have questions for us?

### Tip

Always come prepared with at least three relevant questions for the interviewer.

## ILLEGAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Below are some interview question topics that organizations are not permitted to ask during an interview. These question topics violate EEO guidelines, and are described as pre-employment discrimination. If you feel that one of these topics arise during an interview, you have the right to state you don't feel comfortable answering the question.

- Race, Color, or National Origin
- Religion
- Sex, Gender Identity, or Sexual Orientation
- Pregnancy status
- Disability
- Age or Genetic Information
- Citizenship
- Marital Status or Number of Children

# INTERVIEW ATTIRE FOR WOMEN



Image from fullerton.edu

## STAPLES

- Suit jacket
- Skirts or pants
- Blouse or shirt
- Hosiery
- Shoes
- Professional purse or brief case
- Jewelry

## PROPER ATTIRE

1. Choose a matching solid color dark suit (black, navy or dark grey are suitable). Suits should be fitted but not snug.
2. Blouses should be coordinated with your suit and not see through or showing any cleavage.
3. Limit jewelry and accessories, lean to the conservative side. Avoid dangling earrings and noisy bracelets.
4. Skirts should be long enough that you can sit down comfortably—generally a little below the knee and never shorter than above the knee. Should completely cover thighs when seated.
5. Hosiery should be worn with a skirt suit and must be flawless without runs or tears. Choose a sheer neutral color to compliment your suit.
6. Shoes should be conservative, matching or darker than your suit and polished. A medium heel height is acceptable.

## WHAT NOT TO WEAR

- Mini skirts
- Deep-V shirts
- Large jewelry
- Platforms or stiletto pumps
- Tote bags
- Clothing that is too form fitting
- Bright patterns or colors that distract

## WHAT NOT TO BRING

- Gum
- Cell phone
- Coffee or soda
- Consider leaving piercings at home
- Cover tattoos

## Tips

- When in doubt, lean on the side of more formal wear.
- Once hired, take cues for wardrobe from co-workers and supervisors.
- Choose quality pieces.
- Avoid trendy clothes and accessories.
- Set a budget and build a professional wardrobe.
- Hair should be styled professionally.
- Make-up and perfume should be light. Avoid wearing a smokey eye or red lipstick.
- Ensure that nails are neatly manicured.
- Clean nails are a must.
- Check yourself in the mirror before leaving the house.

# INTERVIEW ATTIRE FOR MEN



Image from fullerton.edu

## STAPLES

- Suit
- Shirt
- Tie
- Belt
- Shoes
- Socks

## PROPER ATTIRE

1. Choose a matching two-piece solid color dark suit (black, navy or dark grey are suitable). Shirts should be white, or coordinated with suit, and long sleeve.
2. Ties should be medium width and coordinate with your suit.
3. Suit jacket sleeves should hit around the bend of your wrist and expose a half-inch of your shirt cuff.
4. Pants should sit at your waist and reach down to cover the top quarter of your shoes.
5. Match your belt to your shoes and consider adding a classic wristwatch.
6. Shoes should be darker than your suit and polished. Socks should completely cover your calf, be dark and/or blend with your pants.

## WHAT NOT TO WEAR

- Character ties
- Formal shorts
- Trendy dress shirts
- Powder blue suits

## WHAT NOT TO BRING

- Gum
- Cell phone
- Coffee or soda
- Consider leaving piercings at home
- Cover tattoos

## Tips

- When in doubt, lean on the side of more formal wear.
- Once hired, take cues for wardrobe from co-workers and supervisors.
- Choose quality pieces.
- Avoid trendy clothes and accessories.
- Set a budget and build a professional wardrobe.
- Ensure that nails are neatly cleaned and manicured.
- Get your clothes ready the night before.
- Bring a breath mint and use before you enter the building.
- The best fabric choices are wool and gabardines.
- Silk or silk blend ties are best.
- Grooming should be clean-shaven with appropriate facial hair.
- Check yourself in the mirror before leaving the house.

# ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR SUCCESS

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**1**

## **Look the part.**

- Make sure you are well groomed, neutral body odor, and clean.
- Each industry has different interview attire standards. Research the industry. If you cannot find the standard, it is better to air on the conservative side, and wear a suit.
- If you need assistance with interview attire, the Career and Internship Center has a career closet, where you are able to access interview clothing for free. Sizes are subject to a first come, first serve basis. Schedule your visit to the Career Closet through UBworks.

**2**

## **Know your assets.**

- What value do you bring to the table?
- Review the job description and highlight the areas they are looking for and conduct a GAP analysis. Where are you able to fill in the gaps?
- What are your top five strengths? How have you used them? Don't know your strengths? Take StrengthsQuest assessment to find out your talent themes.

**3**

## **Be aware of the industry trends.**

- Review online journals, professional associations, and LinkedIn to find out what is happening in your field. Make note and keep up.

**4**

## **Research the organization.**

- Find out about their values and goals. Do they align with yours?

**5**

## **Thank you note.**

- Always send a thank you email or letter to each interviewer, thanking them for their time.
- Make sure the note is professional, and address each person formally by their title (Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms.).



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