



Quick Tips: The Interview

BASIC TIPS:

- Be on time. Dress professionally. Make eye contact. Use a firm handshake. Be positive and enthusiastic. Listen attentively.
- Research the company before the interview. Check out the company website and cover the basics: history, mission statement, location, and company personnel profiles. Know the names of important executives. Read the annual report. This will show the employer you really want the job. If you know who will be interviewing you, research his or her information on the website as well.
- Practice answering common interview questions. All eyes are on you during an interview, and you don't want to stumble on your words. More than likely the interviewer will ask you: Why did you apply for this job? What skills will you bring to this position? What are your strengths and weaknesses? College career centers often have lists of the usual interview questions and can set up mock interviews. Also consider asking for an informational interview at a company that interests you.
- Make the connection. Be able to apply your work and school experiences to the open position. Give specific examples to illustrate your successes. Remember, you are selling yourself as the best candidate for the job.
- Use your research to ask pertinent questions. Don't ask questions that can be easily answered on the company's website. Ask about future projects, the direction of the industry, or specific challenges associated with the position. Use these questions to showcase your business knowledge and interest.
- Bring a portfolio. Employers love to see concrete examples of your work. Prepare a sample of projects to match a specific job description. It's a good idea to make copies of your portfolio so you can leave a copy behind with the interviewer.
- Speak clearly in concise sentences. If you need to, ask the interviewer to clarify a question. Be honest. Try to present yourself in the best light possible, highlighting your winning attributes. If you must discuss a negative incident, share what you learned from the experience. If you are confronted with an illegal question during an interview, consider your options. You can



[The Salary Question Cont.d](#)

answer the question, redirect the conversation, or inform the employer the question is not appropriate. Employers should not ask personal questions that are not related to the job (for example, your marital or family status, age, race, or religion).

- Wait to discuss salary until the employer brings it up, or until the second or third interview.
- Bring copies of your resume and a list of references.
- Thank the interviewer for his or her time. Ask what the next step is in the process.
- Follow-up quickly. Send a thank-you letter within 24 hours of the interview.
- If you get a call for a second interview, approach it with the same enthusiasm and professionalism that you exhibited on the first interview. You will probably meet more people, and have more in-depth discussions about your skills. The company executives will also be gauging whether you fit the company culture.