



UNM

Office of Career Services

## Interviewing Guide

Before stepping into an interview, be sure to practice. A candidate going to an interview without preparing is like an actor performing on opening night without rehearsing.

### Keep Your Answers Brief and Concise

Unless asked to give more detail, limit your answers to two to three minutes per question. Tape yourself and see how long it takes you to fully answer a question.

### Include Concrete, Quantifiable Data

Interviewees tend to talk in generalities failing to convince interviewers of their assets. Include measurable information and details about specific accomplishments.

### Identify Your Key Strengths

It is essential for you to comfortably and confidently articulate your strengths. Explain how your strengths relate to the organization's goals and how they might benefit them. If you support your strengths with quantifiable accomplishments they will be more likely to make an impression.

### Recall Your Job Related Success Stories

In preparing for interviews, make a list of your key skills and assets. Then, reflect on past jobs and experiences and pick out one or two instances when you used those skills successfully.

### Put Yourself on Their Team

Ally yourself with the prospective organization by using their employer's name and products or services. Show them you are thinking like a member of the team and will fit in with the existing environment. Be careful though not to say anything which might be considered offensive.

### Image is Often as Important as Content

What you look like and how you say something are just as important as what you say. Studies have shown 65 percent of conveyed messages are nonverbal.

### Ask Intelligent Questions

The types of questions you ask can make a tremendous impression on the interviewer. Good questions require advance preparation.

### Maintain a Conversational Flow

By consciously maintaining a conversational flow you will be perceived more positively. Use feedback questions at the end of your answers and use body language and voice intonation to create a conversational interchange.

### Research the Organization

Research will provide information to help you decide whether you're interested in the organization and important data to refer to during the interview.

### In Summary

In evaluating candidates, interviewers consider the following factors:

- Ability
- Loyalty
- Personality
- Acceptance
- Recommendations
- Initiative
- Communication skills
- Work record
- Honesty
- Sincerity
- Genuineness

## Behavioral Interview Questions

### Company and Position

1. What do you know about our company?
2. Why do you want to work for our company?
3. What type of position are you most interested in?
4. What job in our company do you want to work toward?
5. What interests you about our product or service?
6. What qualifications do you have that will make you successful with this company?

### Education and Campus Activities

7. Why did you select your college or university?
8. What subject did you like least and best? Why?
9. If you were starting college all over again, what courses would you take?
10. Do you have plans for continued study?
11. Do you think your grades are a good indication of your academic achievement?
12. How has your college experience prepared you for your career?
13. What extracurricular offices have you held?
14. What have you learned from participation in extracurricular activities?

### Personal

15. What are your long-range and short-range goals and objectives?
16. What do you really want to do in life?
17. What are your major strengths and weaknesses?
18. What kind of work interests you?
19. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
20. How would you describe yourself?
21. What qualifications do you have that make you successful in your chosen field?
22. How do you determine or evaluate success?
23. What qualities should a successful manager possess?
24. Do you have any specific geographic location? Why?
25. Are you willing to relocate? Does relocation bother you?
26. How do you spend your spare time? What are your hobbies?
27. What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?

### Work Experiences

28. What jobs have you held? How were they obtained and why did you leave?
29. What did you learn about yourself from some of the jobs you have held?
30. What jobs did you enjoy most and the least? Why?
31. Do you prefer working with others or by yourself?

## What Happens During the Interview?

The interviewing process can be scary if you don't know what to expect. All interviews fit a general pattern. While each interview will be different, all share common characteristics. There is not a lot of time to tell the employer about yourself. When you do respond to questions or ask your own, your statements should be concise and organized. A typical interview lasts 30 minutes and is structured as follows:

- Five minutes: small talk
- Fifteen minutes: discussion of your background as it relates to the needs of the employer
- Five minutes: asks you for questions
- Five minutes: conclusion of interview

## It Starts Before You Even Say Hello

The typical interview starts before you even get into the interview room. The recruiter begins to evaluate you the minute you are identified. You are expected to shake the recruiter's hand upon being introduced. It's a good idea to arrive 15 minutes early. This will give you a chance to mentally practice your introduction. You can also use the time to relax.

## Small Talk Vocabulary Expected

Many recruiters will begin the interview with some small talk. Topics may range from the weather to sports and will rarely focus on anything that brings out your skills. Nonetheless, you are still being evaluated. First impressions often are the most important so this phase of the interview can be very critical. Even though the small talk seems informal and relaxed, it has a definite purpose. Recruiters are trained to evaluate candidates on many different points. Stay away from controversial topics, such as politics and religion.

## The Recruiter Has the Floor

The main part of the interview starts when the recruiter begins discussing the organization. He/she may spend a great deal of time talking about the position and the organization, while discussing your background. When the recruiter begins talking about your resume or asking for clarification, it is time to emphasize your positive traits. Many times recruiters will ask you why you chose the major you did or about your career goals. These questions are designed to determine your goal direction. Employers seek people who have direction and motivation. This can be demonstrated by your answers to these questions.

## It is Your Turn to Ask Questions

Questions should elicit positive responses from the employer. The questions should bring out your interest in and knowledge of the organization. By asking intelligent, well-thought-out questions you show the employer you are serious about the organization and need more information. It also indicates to the recruiter you have done your homework.

## The Closing Counts

The interview is not over until you walk out the door. The conclusion of the interview usually lasts five minutes and is very important. During this time the recruiter may be assessing your overall performance as well as how you handle yourself during the last few minutes. It is important to remain enthusiastic and courteous. Shake the recruiter's hand and thank him or her for considering you.

## Expect the Unexpected

During the interview, you may be asked some unusual questions. Do not be too surprised. Many times questions are asked simply to see how you react. For example, surprise questions could range from, "Tell me a joke" to "What time period would you like to have lived in." While these questions are not always used, they are intended to force you to react under some stress and pressure. The best advice is to think and give a natural response.