

INTERVIEW PREPARATION

THE INTERVIEW IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO...

- showcase your skills, abilities, and personality
- express your genuineness and interest
- provide examples of the relevancy of your studies and experiences
- see if the position and the company is a good fit for you

INTERVIEW PREPERATION

Before:

OBTAIN KEY INFORMATION:

- Date, time, location, parking, interview format (screening, one-on-one, panel, peer group, luncheon), length of interview, number of interviewers and their names (if possible).

RESEARCHING THE EMPLOYER IS KEY:

- Use the following questions to guide you:
 - What is the mission/vision/philosophy of this company?
 - What are the primary services/functions/products of this company?
 - Who are its customers/clients? Competitors?
 - What are the responsibilities for this position?
 - Where does this position fit in the overall structure of the company?
 - What are the names and job titles of key contacts in the company?
 - How many employees are in the company?
- Review company literature, web sites, and annual reports and talk to people who know about the company.

KNOW YOURSELF:

- Be prepared to identify your career and life goals, accomplishments, skills, abilities, strengths, weaknesses, interests, and activities.

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE:

- Prepare 2 to 3 sentences to introduce yourself: major of study, career related interests, and goals or areas you would like to explore.
- Practice responding to questions (see list of frequently asked and behavioral-based interview questions); schedule a mock interview with a Center's career counselor.

PREPARE MATERIALS:

- Prepare and bring professional materials (extra resumes, list of references, notepad, pen, and career portfolio with samples of your work, if applicable).

DRESS FOR SUCCESS:

- Determine your interview attire in advance to ensure it is clean and pressed. (See Interview Attire Tips)

BE PROMPT:

- Arrive 10-15 minutes prior to the appointment time. Allow time for traffic and parking. Turn off your cell phone.



MĀNOA
career center

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
Queen Lili'uokalani Center for Student Services 212
2600 Campus Road Honolulu, HI 96822

An Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution.

T 808.956.7007 F 808.956.4082
E careers@hawaii.edu
W manoa.hawaii.edu/careercenter

During:

- Upon being introduced, use a firm handshake, smile, and make good eye contact.
- Be aware of your non-verbal communication (posture, eye-contact, facial expressions, gestures).
- Listen carefully and allow yourself time to think before you answer questions. Rephrase a question or ask the interviewer to repeat a question if appropriate.
- Keep your answers brief and concise (approximately 1-2 minutes per question).
- Use specific examples, comparisons and/or descriptions to support your answers.
 - Reflect on your college study, interests, abilities, and experiences and their relatedness to the position
- Maintain a conversational flow to your responses (dialogue versus monologue - do not sound rehearsed).
- Be honest, positive, enthusiastic, and confident.
- Share your time and start date availability.
- Ask questions (see "Questions You May Ask the Employer" section) to gather enough information to make a decision if an offer is made.

After:

- Immediately write down your impression of the interview. What questions were asked? What did you do well or what might you want to change next time?
- Also, promptly write and send a thank-you letter to restate your interest in the company and position while re-stating your strengths and skills. Address your thank you letters specifically to the people who interviewed you.

QUESTIONS ASKED BY EMPLOYERS

Frequently Asked Questions:

- Tell me about yourself?
- Why did you choose your major?
- Why did you choose to attend your college or university?
- Do your grades accurately reflect your ability? Why or why not?
- In which campus activities did you participate?
- What do you know about this company?
- Why are you interested in this position? This company/department?
- What skills or abilities do you possess that will make you successful in this position?
- What kind of experience are you looking for?
- What are your major strengths/weaknesses?
- Define success/failure.
- What motivates you most in a job?
- What are your short and long-term goals?
- Why should we hire you rather than another candidate?
- What has been your greatest accomplishment?
- What did you think of your previous employment?
- Have you ever quit a job? Why?
- What would a former supervisor say about your work? Attendance? Punctuality?
- How do you feel about working overtime? Traveling? Relocating?
- What is your ideal work environment?
- How would you describe your personality?
- Why should we hire you?

BEHAVIOR-BASED QUESTIONS

- Give an example in which you provided a solution for an employer.
- Tell me about a time when you worked effectively under pressure.
- Describe a time when you had to make an unpopular decision.
- Give an example of an important goal that you had and how you achieved it.
- Describe a time when you acted as a leader to complete a team project.
- Tell me about a time you had a problem with a co-worker and how you dealt with it.

- Give an example of when you were creative in solving a problem.
- Describe a time when you disagreed with your boss and how you handled it.
- Describe a time when you were given a challenging goal and saw it to the end.
- Describe a technical skill you acquired and how you converted it into a practical application.
- Describe a creative idea that you had and the significant contribution it made to the success of an activity or project.
- Give an example of how you worked effectively with people to reach a goal.

Behavior-based questions are asked by employers to find out about your past performance which is a good predictor of your future performance.

To prepare for these questions, think about past experiences using **S.T.A.R.**

Situation = describe a situation that occurred during a past experience, activity or classwork

Task = describe the task that was involved

Action = describe the action that you took

Result = describe what resulted from the action you took

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE EMPLOYERS

- How would you describe a typical day on the job?
- What are some of the duties/responsibilities of this position?
- Who will be my direct supervisor?
- What are some recent changes or accomplishments have occurred in the company?
- Where is the company going in the next three to five years?
- What education or training programs does the company provide?
- How, when, and by whom will I be evaluated in this position? What are the performance criteria?
- When will you be making the hiring decision?

Tips to develop questions:

- Show your interest in the position and the work
- Should be well thought out
- Should be about the company, position, or work that cannot be found on the web site or company literature
- Do not ask about the pay/salary and benefits; wait until you receive the job offer.
- What are the short-term and long-term strategic directions for the company?

INTERVIEW ATTIRE TIPS

Wear attire based on the profession and company's regional location. If unsure, choose a conservative outfit.

Men:

Formal

- Two-piece suit in navy or charcoal grey (subtle stripes are acceptable)
 - Dress shirt: white or light colored, long sleeved
 - Tie that complements suit and dress shirt

Business Casual

- Slacks, navy or charcoal grey
- Business or sports jacket (optional)
- Shirt: collared, button down (tucked in)
 - Solid colored or vertical stripes
 - Short or long sleeves
 - Aloha shirt (acceptable in Hawai'i)

Shoes

- Covered: black or dark brown
- Socks: dark colored dress socks



Women:

Formal

- Suit: skirt (at least knee length) or pants in navy blue or black, dark grey
- Jacket, coordinated with skirt or pants
- Blouse, white or complementary solid colored

Business Casual

- Skirt (at least knee length) or pants in navy blue, black or dark grey
- Blouse or sweater
 - White or neutral colored
 - Sleeved
 - No spaghetti straps
- Blazer or vest (optional)
- One piece dress

Shoes

- Low heels with covered toe
- Worn with hosiery (sheer, neutral color)

ACCESSORIES

- Limit jewelry to 3 items and refrain from dangling, large pieces
- Remove all body piercing jewelry (pierced earrings okay for women)
- Cover visible tattoo(s)

