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# INTERVIEW GUIDE

## PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

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This guide is an overview and supplement to the Post University Career Services online interview builder, Optimal Résumé. In this guide you will learn:

1. What to expect and how to **research** the yourself and the company
2. How to **analyze** yourself and the position so you can present yourself as the best candidate
3. **Interview** styles and techniques
4. **What to wear and bring** to your interview
5. How to **execute and follow-up** after the interview

With a little strategy and understanding, you will be having successful interviews, like a pro, in no time.

Before you begin using the online career tools, you will need to create an account with an access code. You will only be asked to create an account once.

1. To locate the access code, log onto Blackboard and go to the Student Services tab. The code will be located at the bottom of the Career Services message, on the right.
2. Once you have your access code, create an account in the Post University Career Services' online career tools, Optimal Resume, at [post.optimalresume.com](http://post.optimalresume.com). Select **Create New Account**, and complete all information.
3. This will open the **Document Center**. Select **Create New Interview**, name it, and click **Start Interview**.
4. Watch the 20 minute video tutorial to get a preview of how to use the online interview.
5. Select the **Interview Type, Length/Format, and Interviewer**. When you are done, click **Continue Interview**.

If you have not had experience interviewing, it is helpful to practice a variety of mock interviews using the Mock Interview tool. You can practice as many interviews as you like in order to feel confident. Save the interviews so you can refer back to them to see mistakes and to improve.

There are many interview formats to choose from. We encourage you to experiment with the various types, lengths, watch tutorials, and practice with an array of questions.

Once you are finished creating an interview, you can submit it to the Review Center in Career Services. We will review it and send it back to you with comments.

GOOD LUCK!



## RESEARCH

Obtaining information about a company and understanding yourself are keys to help you answer interview questions effectively. Being prepared also alleviates stress and nervousness. Here are the main things that you will need to understand before you walk into the interview:

### ▲ Research the company

- ✓ Visit the company's website to learn what they are about and their mission statement.
- ✓ Know what type of service they provide and who their competitors are.
- ✓ Read press releases, look at their business information on LinkedIn, talk with your professors and do Google searches.

### ▲ Research the position

- ✓ Familiarize yourself with the position you applied for.
- ✓ Research what type of salary this position is paying.

Feeling in control is one way to keep your cool in stressful interviewing situations. If you can anticipate uncomfortable situations ahead of time, you can easily manage the stress they cause. With a little research and preparation you can avoid this stress and will be less likely to sabotage yourself in the interview.

## ANALYZE

Analyze yourself by comparing your skills with what the employer wants. You must determine how your skills relate to the needs of the company and the requirements of the job.

- ▲ Analyze the job description for a list of knowledge, skills, and abilities desired by the employer.
- ▲ Create a side-by-side visual of your knowledge, skills, and abilities and show how they relate to those the employer seeks.

### EMPLOYER REQUIRES

### YOU HAVE

1. Ex. Strong communication skills – Verbal, Writing	1. Ex. Internship – Researched competition and wrote weekly reports. Presented findings at weekly staff meetings.
2.	2.
3.	3.

**\*\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*\*** Prepare by thinking of stories or accomplishments that prove your qualifications and ability to get the job done. Become aware of the skills that you don't possess and be able to explain how you are prepared to acquire them.

- ▲ Select your best three to four references and create a document with their: name, address, phone, position, and how you know them. Always confirm that it is ok to use your references and that they would say good things about you. Be prepared to present this list if asked.
- ▲ References should be one page and printed on résumé paper. Your contact information should be the same format and style as your résumé.

## INTERVIEW

There are several types of interviews which are designed to assess your skills, motivation, ability, and fit. To be successful at interviewing you must anticipate what to expect and practice. Most interviewers will use a combination of interview techniques and types. Understanding the various styles of interviews and their purpose will give you a head start.

### COMMON TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

<b>Traditional...</b>	<b>Behavioral...</b>	<b>Phone...</b>	<b>Email...</b>
<i>Designed to see how well you can elaborate on and provide support for the information provided on your résumé. Questions usually involve:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Determining your level of interest and knowledge in the job or the company</i></li><li>• <i>Ascertaining your abilities and developmental areas</i></li><li>• <i>Explore how you might handle hypothetical situations in the work place</i></li></ul>	<i>Stems from the belief that past performance predicts future performance.</i>  <i>Employers will ask you to describe real situations you have encountered and how you handled them.</i>  <i>This gives them an understanding of how you might handle things in the future</i>  <i>For example:</i>  <i>Tell me about a time...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– <i>when you dealt with a difficult person...</i></li><li>– <i>achieved an important goal...</i></li></ul>	<i>Just as important as a face-to-face interview and should not be discredited.</i>  <i>Things to remember while interviewing via phone/Skype are:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Dress as if it is a face-to-face interview</i></li><li>• <i>Have your résumé and a notepad handy</i></li><li>• <i>Prepare for no interruptions and know who will make the call and when</i></li><li>• <i>Answer the phone professionally</i></li></ul>	<i>It is paramount that you check your spelling and use proper grammar.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>READ the e-mail sent by the employer and follow instructions carefully</i></li><li>• <i>Be very careful about noting TO WHOM and HOW you should respond</i></li><li>• <i>When you reply to an e-mail, stick to the same subject and place your response at the top</i></li><li>• <i>Always respond in less than 24 hours</i></li></ul>

### TOP TEN INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Listening is an integral part of the interview process. When answering, it is ok to take a second or two to articulate a response. This shows confidence and maturity.

Here are 10 interview questions to get you started:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why should I hire you?
3. What is your greatest strength/weakness?
4. Why do you want to work for this company?
5. If I were to talk to your teachers/former employers, what would they say about you?
6. Tell me about a time when you showed initiative.
7. Describe a situation where the client was not happy and how did you handle it?
8. Tell me about a time when you went the extra mile.
9. Give me an example when you failed at something and what did you learn from the experience?

10. Describe a time when you had a difficult decision to make and how did you arrive to your conclusion?

## QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER

It is preferred to have a list of five to seven prepared questions to ask at the end of an interview. Asking questions is an opportunity to additionally demonstrate your intelligence and concern for the company. Some examples are:

1. What is the culture like in this department/company?
2. What would the training entail in this position?
3. What would be the challenges of this job?
4. Can you tell me about your ideal candidate?
5. What are the next steps in your hiring process?

\*\*\* Visit [www.post.optimalresume.com](http://www.post.optimalresume.com) to record mock interviews, gather additional advice and practice sample questions.

## WHAT TO WEAR AND BRING

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First impressions are so important. Be prepared and look professional and you have a better chance of making a good first impression and acing the interview.

### ▲ Be On Time

- ✓ Being late, even just a couple of minutes, is starting off on the wrong foot and you're making the interviewer wonder if that's the way you'll treat clients, prospects, and fellow employees.
- ✓ Make sure you have the right address and a reliable route to the interview.
- ✓ Linger in your car or a coffee shop if you arrive more than 10 minutes early. By arriving too early, you risk creating an awkward moment.

### ▲ What to Bring

- ✓ Extra copies of your résumé
- ✓ A notepad or professional binder, and a pen
- ✓ A list of three to four references and information you will need to complete an application if asked

### ▲ Dress for Success

- ✓ For both men and women, wear a two-piece suit in a conservative color (black, navy, gray or brown) with a dress shirt/blouse/tie that is a neutral shade and not too tight.
- ✓ Do not wear anything you would wear to a club.
- ✓ Wear clothes that are clean and pressed; without rips, stains, missing buttons, animal hair, or tags.
- ✓ Several days prior to the interview, assure yourself that your suit and shoes are clean and ready.

### ▲ How to Greet the Interviewer

- ✓ Address the interviewer by name whenever possible. If they have a name such as Robert, for example, don't assume it is ok to call them Bob.
- ✓ Your handshake should be firm and never limp.

### ▲ Interview Etiquette

- ✓ Turn off and put away cell phones.
- ✓ Maintain positive eye contact and smile when it is appropriate.

## **EXECUTE and FOLLOW-UP**

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**D**uring the interview you should always be aware of your nonverbal body language. This speaks volumes and can help you project a positive, confident persona, and sincere interest in the job.

### ▲ **The Interview**

- ✓ Pay attention to nonverbal communication. Watch for cues that the interviewer is connecting with you.
- ✓ Do not ask personal questions. The interviewer is not your buddy. Do not become chummy with them during the interview.
- ✓ Do not let your guard down and provide unnecessary personal information.
- ✓ Respect the interviewer's space. Do not place anything on their desk or take anything from their desk without permission.
- ✓ Be aware of any nervous gestures such as tapping your foot or moving in a swivel chair.
- ✓ Never be the first to talk about salary or benefits.

### ▲ **After the Interview**

- ✓ Understand what their hiring process is and what will happen next.
- ✓ Ask if it is ok to call within a certain timeframe. Do follow-up when you say you will.
- ✓ If you are offered the position on the spot it is acceptable to ask for a day to think about it.
- ✓ Make sure you get business cards of the people you spoke with so you can send a thank you email or a written letter within 24 hours.
- ✓ In the thank you letter, reaffirm your interest in the position and retouch upon the reasons why you are the best candidate for the position.
- ✓ **ASK FOR THE JOB!!!**

