

A Guide to Your Mock Interview



UTSA
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**To help prepare for your Mock Interview,
schedule an appointment with your Career Counselor.**

Coordinator: Morris Ellington, Professional Development Program Manager, morris.ellington@utsa.edu

If you are a person with a disability and desire assistance or accommodation,
please notify our office at 210.458.4589.

YOUR MOCK INTERVIEW EXPERIENCE AT UTSA

What is a mock interview?

- A mock interview is a simulation interview. Interviews will be conducted by University Career Center staff members and employers.
- Although your mock interviewer is well experienced in conducting the interview, he/she may be unable to answer specific questions about your field.
- The role of the mock interviewer during this portion of the interview is to advise you on appropriate questions to ask and guide you to resources that may provide you with tips on appropriate questions to ask.

Purpose:

- To simulate actual interview conditions in order to provide a more comfortable interview experience.
- To provide feedback that will aid you in assessing current strengths and weaknesses in regard to your interviewing skills.
- To help you with the interview process: developing confidence and enhancing skills.

Registration/Preparation:

- Complete the Mock Interview Registration Form online and submit. You will receive a confirmation email stating the date and time of your interview along with the name of your interviewer.
- Obtain a copy of the Career Services Planning Guide and read the section on Interviewing.
- Review the tips and suggestions highlighted throughout this guide book.
- Business/Professional dress is required.
- On the day of your interview, **arrive 10-15 minutes** prior to your scheduled interview and check in at the front desk.

"It's not necessarily the amount of time you spend at practice that counts; it's what you put into the practice."

No-Show Policy:

The University Career Center staff members feel strongly about missed mock interviews. Cancellations must be made **24 business hours** in advance of the interview appointment. **If you fail to cancel one day prior to the interview, or simply do not show up, you forfeit your privilege to reschedule another mock interview.** Situations regarding the no-show policy should be directed to Morris Ellington, 210.458.4589.



What to Expect: From Start to Finish

- Your mock interview experience begins the moment that your interviewer greets you. You should start with a firm handshake and appropriate greeting of the interviewer, using his or her name.
- You and your interviewer will go into an interview room. The mock interview itself will last approximately 30 minutes, and the interview will be discussed and critiqued for approximately 15-30 minutes.
- At the end of your mock interview, you will have the opportunity to talk with the interviewer about any particular questions or concerns you have about the interviewing process. Furthermore, you will receive honest and helpful feedback from your interviewer.

You will be evaluated on the following...

- ✍ **Appearance:** Dress appropriately for the interview (see Interview & Business Casual Attire Tips booklets for both men and women).
- ✍ **Greeting/Introduction:** We recommend that you stand to greet your interviewer with a handshake, using his/her name. Also, make good eye contact with the interviewer, smile, and be professional.
- ✍ **Body Language:** During the interview, be aware of your eye contact, subtle use of hands while speaking, good posture, etc.
- ✍ **Attitude:** Your attitude toward work and working with others is crucial in the hiring process. Be sure to convey an attitude that is enthusiastic, sincere, and genuine.
- ✍ **Responses to the Interview Questions:** Do your research and practice, practice, practice! Know your goals and be able to express them to the interviewer.
- ✍ **Oral Communication:** Speak clearly and concisely. Try to think out your response before answering a question.
- ✍ **Preparation:** Prepare questions for your interviewer and research the position and/or company/organization/agency for which you are interviewing. If applying to graduate school, it is important to have knowledge on the particular program and be able to articulate why you want to further your education in that field.



Know the Facts! Be sure you are fully prepared for interviews by completing the worksheets on **pages 4 and 5!** They will help you understand yourself and the employer!

Prepare Yourself

- Interviews can be a very intimidating task if you are unprepared.
- Preparation and practice are key ingredients to a successful interview!
- You must be able to talk about yourself with confidence.
- Exploring and understanding yourself allows you to answer interview questions as effectively as possible.
- It is vital to understand your attributes and personality so that you can convey those positive qualities to the interviewer.
- **A worksheet is provided in order to help identify different aspects of your character (see page 4).** When answering the questions, be sure to also analyze the information on your resume and ask others who know you well.

Know the Employer

- Do your homework! Be prepared for an interviewer to ask questions about his/her organization.
- Researching the company/organization/agency shows genuine interest in the career opportunity and it allows you to gain valuable information as well.
- By learning about the company/organization/agency you are able to see if it is a place where you would like to find employment.
- Also, this time spent will help generate questions to ask the employer during the interview process.
- The Internet will have a lot of information to offer and is a good place to start your research.
- **A worksheet is provided with questions to begin your company research (see page 5).**
- The questions will prepare you for possible questions that employers may ask.
- A survey revealed that the following factors were most important when interviewing a candidate:
 - ✓ **Skills & experience 10%**
 - ✓ **Education 10%**
 - ✓ **First impression 40%**
 - ✓ **Personal characteristics 40%**

From F.I.C.C. Job Club <http://www.f-i-c-c.com/jobclub.htm>

Prepare yourself

1. Personality traits or skills I have that are job related:

2. Examples of experiences I have had that demonstrate the above traits/skills:

3. List 3-5 accomplishments that would be of interest to the person interviewing me:

4. What are the 3 most important things I want the interviewer to know about me?

5. What concerns might an employer have about me and what will alleviate those concerns?



Know the Employer

1. How long has the organization been in operation?

2. Where is the organization located? Are there other locations?

3. Is it a public or private organization? _____

4. Has the organization been in the news lately? For what reason(s)?

5. What are the services/products/programs this organization provides?

6. Who are its competitors?

7. How is it doing relative to its competitors?

8. What are the organization's short-term goals? Long-term goals?

9. What else is the organization known for (e.g., community involvement, supportive of families, relaxed atmosphere, etc.)?

10. What challenges/difficulties does this organization face? How can I help solve them?

Behavior Based Interviewing

What exactly is behavior based interviewing?

Behavioral based interviewing is a style of interviewing that many companies and organizations use in the hiring process. The basic premise behind behavioral interviewing is this: ***The most accurate predictor of future performance is past behavior in a similar situation.*** It provides a more objective set of facts to make employment decisions than other interviewing methods. Traditional interviewing may ask you to respond to general statements like, “tell me about yourself.” The process of behavioral interviewing is much more probing and works very differently.

The “CAR” Technique: a good approach to responding to Behavior Based Questions.



C = Circumstance (Describe the specific circumstances of your example)

A = Action (What action did you take relative to the circumstance described?)

R = Result (What was the result of your action?)

Important Points: Behavior Based Interviewing

- In the interview, your response needs to be specific and detailed. Tell about a particular circumstance or situation that relates to the question, not a general one. Tell briefly about the circumstance, what specific action you took, and the positive result or outcome.
- The interviewee tells a story for a few minutes; typically the interviewer will pick apart the story to try to get at the specific behavior(s). The interviewer can probe further for more depth or detail such as “What were you thinking at the point?” or “Tell me more about your meeting with that person,” or “Lead me through your decision process.”
- Always listen carefully to the question, ask for clarification if necessary, and make sure you answer the question completely.
- Your interview preparation should include identifying examples of situations where you have demonstrated the behaviors desired by a given company/organization/agency.
- Prepare success stories. The stories should represent your skills, qualities, and characteristics. Always give examples of your strengths and successes.
- Your resume will serve as a good guide when answering these questions. Refresh your memory regarding your achievements in the past couple of years. Demonstration of the desired behaviors may be given in many ways. Use examples from past internships, classes, activities, team involvement, community service, and work experience. In addition, you may use examples of which you may be especially proud of, such as: winning a marathon race, exhibiting paintings in an art show, running for student government, etc.

Sample Behavior Based Interview statements for response:

1. Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
2. Tell me about a time when you provided a solution to a problem.
3. Give me a specific example of a time you used good judgment or logic in solving a problem.
4. Give me an example which shows that you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations or environments.
5. Tell me about a time in which you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision.
6. Tell me about a specific occasion in which you conformed to a policy with which you did not agree.
7. Give me an example of an important goal which you set in the past and about your success in reaching it.
8. Tell me about a time when you had to go “above and beyond” the call of duty in order to get a job done.
9. Describe a situation when you had to work with a difficult individual (supervisor, customer, co-worker, etc.)
10. Tell me about a time you had to deal with an angry or irate customer.
11. Give me an example of a time in which you had to put your organizational skills to use.
12. Tell me about a time when teamwork was important in order to accomplish a task.
13. What is the biggest strength you will bring to this job?
14. What is a weakness you need to work on?
15. What makes you the best candidate for this position?



Other possible interview questions & statements for response

Education

- Why did you choose your major?
- Why did you choose to attend your college or university?
- Do you think you received a good education? In what ways?
- In which campus activities did you participate?
- In what ways do your college education and work experience relate to this job?
- Do you plan to return to school for further education?

Experience

- What job related skills have you developed?
- What did you enjoy the most/least about your last employment?
- Have you ever done any volunteer work? What kind?
- How do you define leadership? In what capacity have you served as a leader?
- How do you think a former supervisor would describe your work?

Personal

- What do you consider to be your greatest strength?
- Can you name some weaknesses? How are you working to improve them?
- Define success.
- Have you had a time that you failed at something? What did you learn from that failure?
- Of which three accomplishments are you most proud?
- Who are your role models? Why?
- What motivates you most in a job?
- Tell me about yourself.
- Describe your ideal job.
- Where do you want to be in five years?

In the Workplace

- Do you prefer to work under supervision or on your own?
- What do you look for in a supervisor?
- Would you be successful working with a team?
- Are you able to work on multiple assignments at a time?
- What can your supervisor expect from you?

Prepare: Questions for the Interviewer

At some point during the interview, the interviewer may ask if you have any questions. Based on your research, you will most likely have areas about which you would like more information. You should have several questions in mind to ask, but also listen during the interview for points about which you may need more information. Asking pertinent questions shows that you have prepared for the interview and are knowledgeable, interested and evaluating the employer.

The following list will help you generate ideas to prepare your own list of questions. It is also appropriate to have the questions written down in a padfolio and at your fingertips during the actual interview:

1. What are some of the qualifications you expect the ideal candidate for this position to have?
2. What characteristics do the individuals who are successful in this position possess?
3. Could you describe the normal daily routine for this position?
4. Is there a training period? What does it involve? Are there opportunities for professional development?
5. How would my performance be evaluated? How often? By whom?

Interview Tips and Suggestions

- Have a positive attitude. Keep all of your answers as positive as possible.
- Pay attention to your non-verbals (i.e. eye contact, voice projection, posture, nervous habits).
- Express your qualifications. Come up with a list of six to eight adjectives that you use to describe yourself. Think of examples that demonstrate these adjectives. When you are asked to tell the employer about yourself, use these adjectives and examples to do just that.
- The first few minutes of the interview are the most important. It is at this time that you really want to sell yourself and get the interviewer interested in you. That is why it is important to package yourself and your qualifications. Having a set agenda of what you want to get across during the interview will help (i.e. education, background, experience, strengths, goals, accomplishments, challenges).
- Always try to relate what you are saying and how it can benefit the company/organization/agency with which you are interviewing. It is important to be familiar with the employer prior to the interview so you can know what type of person they seek, as well as what the position requires.
- If you get stuck on a question, it is okay to pause. Often, you can simply say, "That's a very good question; let me take a minute to think about that." Although a short pause is okay, try to avoid a lengthy one. Employers can tell if you are just buying time to make something up.
- It is important to end the interview on a positive note, either reiterating your interest in the position or telling the recruiter you look forward to hearing from him/her soon. Don't forget to thank the employer for his/her time and interest.
- In addition to knowing information about the company/organization/agency, always have questions prepared to ask the interviewer.
- Grades may be a topic. If your grades are low, be prepared to have an explanation.

Don't Leave Home Without Reading This Advice!

Dos and Don'ts

- DO answer questions honestly, thoroughly, and sincerely. If you don't know the answer, indicate that.
- DO NOT try to tell the interviewer what you think he/she wants to hear.
- DO be careful about saying negative things about past experiences (i.e. insult a company that you interned with).
- DO NOT display a negative or arrogant attitude.
- DO be polite, tactful, and sincere - eye contact is also important.
- DO dress neatly and appropriately (conservative, not trendy).
- DO NOT be late unless there is an emergency.
- DO practice the questions suggested in this guide.
- DO have a small portfolio to keep pens, extra copies of resumes, and a reference sheet.

Checklist

- Confirm the date, time, and location for your interview.
- Review the company's or graduate school's website and any other literature you've obtained.
- Generate quality questions to ask based on what you've read and heard; don't just ask questions for the sake of asking them (make them count!)
- Review your resume again to make sure everything is accurate and that you're prepared to answer any questions pertaining to it.
- If for any reason you must cancel your interview, contact the employer promptly. Don't be a "no-show."
- Make sure your clothes are ironed, your hair is neat, and your shoes are polished!

