



## Interviewing

### Interview Checklist

You know that it is essential to make an excellent impression during an interview, but do you understand everything that will be required of you to achieve that outcome? Use this checklist to determine if you are ready for professional interviews, as well as to track essential “to do’s” before each of your scheduled interviews. Consider meeting with a Career Coach to talk through how to respond to typical interview questions, or to get help with any questions you have about interviewing. To schedule an appointment with a Career Coach, log into Handshake. Additional tip sheets on the topic of interviewing are found on the [Career Success website](#).

Applicable Career Communities:



### Before Interviews: General Preparation

- Do you have appropriate interview attire? Consider having at least two interview outfits. If you do well during a screening interview, you may be called back for a second interview. Or, you may have the opportunity to interview in the same week with multiple employers. For each interview, your clothing will need to be clean, pressed, and properly hemmed/altered to fit well. More information about professional attire can be found here: [https://fisher.osu.edu/sites/default/files/dress\\_for\\_success\\_2\\_posters.pdf](https://fisher.osu.edu/sites/default/files/dress_for_success_2_posters.pdf)
- The best way to know for sure if you are prepared is to conduct a mock interview. The Career Success *Interview with a Buckeye* program provides students with an opportunity to practice interviewing with an OSU alum. Event details can be found on Handshake for the upcoming event. Check out the previous event here: <https://artsandsciences.osu.edu/news-events/events/interview-buckeye-2> Career Counseling and Support Services (located in the Younkin Success Center) provides mock interview services. Visit their website for more information about scheduling a mock interview: <https://ccss.osu.edu/make-appointment/>
- Depending upon the types of positions you are applying for, you may want to assemble a portfolio. A portfolio is a collection of items organized in hard copy or digital form. For jobs where creativity is a necessary skill (e.g., graphic design, advertising), employers often expect candidates to provide them with access to their digital portfolios. You can direct employers to your portfolio by including a link to it on your resume. Other fields where portfolios are commonplace include journalism, editing, broadcasting, dance, and photography. Tips on preparing a portfolio are found at <http://www.iseek.org/jobs/online-portfolios.html>

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- Know how to respond to typical interview questions such as:
  - “Tell me about yourself”
  - “What are your greatest weaknesses?”
  - “Where do you see yourself in 5 years?”

## Preparation for Scheduled Interviews

- Conduct employer research. A Career Coach can assist you with conducting research about an organization. The company’s website is a good starting point, but your research should extend beyond materials published by the company to include objective resources like those listed below. Gathering information about company culture, key players in the organization, recent news items about the company, and industry trends will prepare you to respond to questions like, “What do you know about our competitors?” Each of the following resources should be accessed from library.osu.edu for the subscription versions.
  - **IBIS World** – a comprehensive collection of industry market research and industry risk ratings
  - **Hoover’s Online** – provides in-depth company profiles and industry information
  - **LexisNexis** – select Business from the top menu and then search on the company name
- Research the organization so that you know, at minimum, the following information:
  - What are the mission and vision of the organization?
  - What is the organization’s history? How old is the organization?
  - What has been their annual growth over the past 5 years?
  - Where is the corporate/national headquarters located?
  - What are their goals for improving upon the products or services they provide?
  - What trends are affecting their industry?
  - What recent news items have been published about the organization?
- Understand the position description and how your skills and experience qualify you for the job
- Use the *Behavioral Based Interviews* tip sheet to prepare for a form of questions that are commonly asked during all types of interviews (e.g., screening interviews, panel interviews, final interviews)
- Have a solid response to the question “Why do you want to work here?”
- Prepare 3-4 questions to ask the interviewer. The following are general questions for interviewees to consider asking. You will make a stronger impression if you also ask a question that is specific to the position or organization
  - What are your expectations for this role in the first 30 days, 60 days, year?
  - Describe the culture of the company.
  - What are the biggest opportunities facing the company now?
  - What are the biggest challenges facing the company now?
  - What do you like best about working for this company?
  - What is the typical career path for someone in this role?

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- What are the next steps in the interview process?
- Know the location of the interview, how to get there, and where to park. Consider driving to the site the day before to establish how long the commute will take (you don't want traffic or construction detours to make you late!)
- Make copies of your resume and reference list in case you meet with more than one interviewer
- Assemble your job search documents into a padfolio that also includes paper, pen, and any documents the employer provided (e.g., visitor parking pass)
- Get a good night's sleep!

## Day of/ During the Interview

- Eat a nutritious breakfast
- Conduct usual grooming rituals—shower, shave, brush your teeth, use minimal makeup, wear your hair in an appropriately conservative style, forego the cologne or perfume, trim nails and refrain from bold nail color, consider removing any extra piercings and cover tattoos if necessary. Disregard the aforementioned regarding tattoos and piercings if you are seeking a more progressive employer.
- Allow more than enough time to arrive to the interview 10 minutes early; have the company phone number available in case something unavoidable happens to cause you to be late
- Run through your questions and answers; remind yourself of the qualifications you are bringing to the table (they wouldn't have selected you for an interview if they thought the position was beyond your capabilities)
- Greet the receptionist and anyone you meet with a smile and respect
- Take several deep breaths to relax while waiting for the interviewer; visualize yourself as being poised and confident
- Greet the interviewer(s) with a firm handshake, steady eye contact, a smile, and address them as Mr., Ms., Dr., etc.
- Do not act casually—sit only when invited to sit, don't use casual language (“like,” “you know,” etc.)

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- Sit up straight to project confidence and enthusiasm (one of the key things the interviewer will be looking for is your overall motivation: make sure you demonstrate that you are positive and achievement-oriented)
- Pause before answering a question to give some thought to what's being asked; ask for clarification if needed
- In a panel interview, make good eye contact with each person in the room throughout the interview
- Refrain from speaking negatively about your former job, supervisor, coworkers, or company
- Answer questions as concisely as possible and avoid making self-deprecating comments (e.g., "I'm not very good at...")
- Be a good listener—don't ask questions that have already been addressed, and don't interrupt others
- At the end of the interview, make sure you know the next steps—are they bringing candidates back for additional interviews? How soon do they expect to have a decision?
- Don't ask questions about salary and benefits until an offer has been made or a second interview has been scheduled
- Shake hands with the interviewer(s), thank them for their time, tell them you look forward to hearing from them

## After the Interview

- Within 24 hours, send an e-mail to thank the employer for the interview and to reiterate your interest in the position
- Evaluate your performance, making notes for things to do differently at future interviews; commend yourself for things done well
- Contact the interviewer if you don't hear back from them within the stated selection timeline

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## Employment Testing

Pre-employment testing is used by some companies for two primary reasons. First, employers are attempting to increase the objectivity with which hiring decisions are made, and are attempting to hire “the right person” in a timely manner to decrease the chance of a “bad hire.” Second, use of the tests allows companies to efficiently process applicants, thus reducing the costs associated with the hiring process.

Tests take various forms including multiple choice, short-answer questions, or problem-solving tasks. There is no way to study and, for some assessments, there is no correct answer. There are quite literally hundreds of assessments available to employers, so it’s difficult to say which are the most popular for any given industry.

## Preparing For an Employment Test

While you can’t “study” for various employment test, there are some ways that you can prepare yourself for such a test:


- Take the test seriously!
- Brush up on skills that may be tested; focus on what will be needed for the job
- Exercise your brain using puzzles or brain teasers to prepare for logic tests
- Get plenty of sleep the night before
- If the test is to be administered in person, dress professionally, as you would for the job interview itself
- Avoid trying to prepare for a personality test; be yourself!


## Taking the Test

The following are some tips to keep in mind when taking the test:

- Tests can be administered via paper-and-pencil or online formats. When administered in person you may interact with the hiring manager, a human resources representative, or a third-party staffing service...be prepared for all scenarios
- Don’t try to “game” a personality test, some tests are designed to identify inconsistencies
- In tests designed to gain insight into your work style or personality, keep in mind there are no right or wrong answers
- Take your time (unless the test is specifically timed)
- Don’t be afraid to ask for clarification

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