Acing Your Job Interview

An interview is an opportunity to showcase your skills and suitability for the position and the organization.

- Let the employer know ahead of time if you require any accommodations to participate in the interview.
- Check the location of your interview beforehand, and arrive 10-15 minutes early.
- Dress professionally.
- Speak clearly, smile, and make eye contact throughout your interview.

How to Prepare for an Interview

Know Yourself: be knowledgeable and aware of your academic, work, and volunteer background and how it makes you an ideal candidate for the position. Also, become familiar with how your strengths and skills will allow you to be effective in the given position.

Know the Position: familiarize yourself with the job description before your interview. It is important to make reference to the roles/responsibilities of the position in your answers throughout the interview.

Know the Organization: the job market is competitive. To prove your suitability for the position, not only you need to highlight your qualifications, but also show your familiarity with the organization and your interest in becoming part of it. In completing your background research on the organization, consider questions such as: what is the nature of the organization? What are its values? How do you fit its image?

Common Questions

Interviewers typically use similar questions regardless of the format of the interview. You may also be asked questions related to your knowledge of the organization and/or the position.

Questions about Yourself: they may include questions regarding your professional and academic experience, skills, abilities, strengths, and how these are related to the position.

Behavioural Questions: behavioural questions are past-oriented (e.g.: tell me about a time when you experienced conflict in the workplace and how you handled the situation). They allow employers to gain insight on how you responded to specific situations in the past to predict how you may act in the future.

Situational Questions: situational questions are scenario-based and future-oriented (e.g. what would you do if you were required to complete multiple tasks simultaneously?). They are based on hypothetical situations to gauge how you would respond to specific tasks/responsibilities.

Helpful Techniques

For general questions about yourself

PAWS is a useful technique when answering open-ended questions about yourself (e.g. "tell me about yourself" or "why should we hire you?"):
- **Personal** – who you are and why you are interested in the organization/position.
- **Academic** – your academic interests and how your education/training relates to the position.
- **Work** – previous relevant work/volunteer experiences, and what you accomplished or gained from these experiences.
- **Skills** – the skills you developed or demonstrated in previous experiences and how they relate to the job for which you are applying.

For behavioural questions

STAR + L is a useful technique that outlines step-by-step how to answer behavioural questions:
- **Situation** – describe the situation you were in or the event that occurred. Provide enough details so that the interviewer has a good understanding of the event/situation you are using as an example.
- **Task** – describe the goal, challenges, and/or expectations related to the task you needed to complete.
- **Action** – describe the action(s) that you took. What did you do? How? Did you use any tools/resources?
- **Result** – describe the end result. What happened? What did you accomplish?
- **Learning** – what did you learn? How will you apply your learning to future situations?

To book an appointment with a career advisor, visit:
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Career Development (Student Life)
University Centre 4002
(709) 864-2033 or careerdevelopment@mun.ca