

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
FOUNDATION & ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

THE INTERVIEW CAMPAIGN

TIPS TO APPLY IMMEDIATELY

“INTERVIEWING” IS A HOLISTIC CAMPAIGN – 3 PHASES

Interview Prep

- Understand your skillset
- Learn about the industry
- Get to know the company
- Become familiar with the job
- Practice responses to questions

Interview Participation

- Be ready for any format:
Phone, Zoom, Face to Face
- Influence conversation:
 - reiterate points,
 - promote your skills,
 - try to stay away from a strict Q&A format,
 - show your personality

Post Interview Actions

- Follow-up thank you email specific to what you learned at the interview. Be creative; present new info based on your reflection
- Tap back into your network of those that may know the company, hiring manager
- Plan a follow-up with the Recruiter to inquire about feedback, and hiring decision timing

INTERVIEW PREP – FAST FIVE TIPS

Plan for ample undisturbed prep time: minimum 1 hour

- As you move further into the interview process, continue to prep – don't think "I've already prepped"

Prep with an "investigative mindset": learn about the job, company, industry

- Resources: company website, LinkedIn research, People you know that work at company, etc.

Verbal Practice: write talking point notes; talk out-loud!

- Hear your voice!
- Writing notes plus verbal practice can be the difference in building your confidence and moving forward in the interview process and ultimately receiving an offer.

Ensure you have properly prepared career tools:

- Updated resume to on-site interview
- During a virtual interview, ask if everyone has a copy of your resume – email those that do not
- Make sure your LinkedIn profile is updated and matches your Resume – people will look at your profile!

Leverage learnings from previous interviews

- Think back to previous interviews: what went well, what were the hic-cups
- Previous interviews are a solid foundation for learning and growing
- Try to spend time after each interview reflecting and writing insights for "next time"

INTERVIEW PREP – TAKE TIME IN EACH OF THESE CATEGORIES

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Align the items below
to the job of interest:

- Skills, Knowledge
- Accomplishments
- Career interests
- Workplace Values
- Resume – Know It



“Know Thyself”

Self-knowledge brings:

- Confidence
- Personal perspective
- Strength to share what you are good as well as opportunities
- Blind spot security (ex: undersell)

LOOK AT THE INDUSTRY & COMPANY

- Company Website
- LinkedIn Posts and Social Media
- Find Articles



“Know the Territory”

Demonstrate business savviness:

- Talk a little bit about what you learned researching the company business
- Knowing some facts is impressive!
- Having company and/or industry knowledge also shows you are a curious resource

FUNCTION AND JOB

- Uncover every inch of job
- Research like jobs (Indeed)
- Study needed and desired skills
- Examine salary ranges



“Know what you will be Doing”

Demonstrate some job knowledge:

- “I can do the job” attitude
- Pro-active nature
- Express you can deal w/ambiguity
- You create trust knowing more about the work

INTERVIEW PREP - SITUATIONAL QUESTIONS

A **situational interview** is a job **interview** where a candidate is asked specific **questions** about what may happen on a job. The candidate is asked to assess a situation and to provide solutions on how he or she has or would handle it.

1. Describe a situation where you had to collaborate with a difficult colleague.

A superior candidate will demonstrate professionalism in attitude and communication style when dealing with others. Problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills are key. Good candidates don't need to like everybody, but they must be capable of working with everybody. Solid candidates will show that they achieved a workable outcome in the face of any coworker-related difficulties. Bad candidates will blame others and shirk accountability.

2. Describe a situation where you had to work with a difficult manager or important client/customer.

The answer can reveal a candidate's behavior toward authority, communication, and problem solving. The person you want to hire will not allow personal feelings or disagreements to get in the way of working relationships inside the company. A good candidate should demonstrate emotional maturity and professionalism above all else.

3. Describe a situation where you needed to persuade someone to accept your point of view or convince them to change something.

This is another situational question exploring soft skills such as communication and relationship building. A candidate should demonstrate empathy and listening skills that allow him or her to understand the other side of a situation but also help bring about a change of opinion. Candidates should show how they negotiate and generally develop and strengthen relationships with others.

4. Describe a difficult problem you faced and how you approached it.

Don't just look for what candidates did; ask for the thought process behind their actions and how they like to approach problems in general. Being collaborative is one strength you might look for here. Did the candidate seek out feedback from others in understanding the problem, developing possible solutions, and implementing a workable solution?

5. Describe a mistake you've made professionally.

We're all human, and candidates should be able to admit that they've made mistakes at certain times. This situational question is really more about finding out how a candidate learns, reflects upon mistakes, and takes lessons learned into the future. If a candidate refuses to admit to any past mistakes, then it's a sign that he or she isn't willing or able to learn anything from difficult situations.

6. Describe a situation where you worked under a tight deadline.

Here, you are asking interviewees to tell a success story that demonstrates how they organized their workflow, dealt with pressure, and navigated through competing priorities. It's a good opportunity to hear a candidate's planning process, how they communicate with others, and how they collaborate with colleagues toward a common goal. Did the candidate try to extend the deadline if possible? Did the candidate ask for additional help? Most importantly, did they fully commit their own time to meeting the deadline and ask others to commit, too?

7. Describe a time when you received criticism.

Like the mistake question, this illustrates a candidate's ability to learn. While being open to feedback is never easy, the best candidates will take it in, analyze it, and potentially make changes based upon the criticism. Of course, good candidates never take criticism personally. A good answer will show emotional maturity, adaptability, and leadership potential.

8. Describe a situation when you needed to take initiative.

A good answer should show off the applicant's proactivity. The situation should be a case where the candidate recognized a problem that nobody else was resolving and took initiative to attack the issue. The action should show a willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty when required. Proactivity and problem solving are rare traits that firms should be looking for; this question can go a long way toward revealing these attributes in a candidate.

9. Describe a situation when you've come onto a new team or a new working environment.

You are trying to gauge how a candidate adapts to change, especially when working with new people. This is obviously relevant for all new hires, who need to fit in to a company climate and hit the ground running. Top candidates will show that they are adaptable and open to change, that they'll focus on building relationships inside the company, that they know how to seek help when necessary, and that they don't judge people or processes too fast before knowing all the relevant facts.

10. Describe a situation where you needed to work with a client or customer who was very different from you.

Similar to the last question, this one asks candidates to demonstrate how adaptable they are when interacting with various personalities. Explore whether candidates can change up their style of communication for different people. This question allows you to evaluate emotional intelligence and people skills.

INTERVIEW PREP - ADDITIONAL SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- Tell me about a time you had to make a quick decision.
- Tell me about a difficult experience you had in a clinic or internship and how you overcame it.
- Tell me about a time you had too many things to do and had to prioritize.
- What did you do the last time things didn't go according to plan?
- Tell me about a situation where you failed. Why did you fail and what did you learn from it?
- Tell me about a time you had to work with someone who did things very differently from you.
- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult client or coworker.
- Describe a situation in which a detail you thought to be unimportant turned out to be very important.
- Tell me about a time you had to persuade a colleague to accept your point of view.
- Tell me about a time you went above and beyond the call of duty.
- Describe a situation where your efforts had a direct impact on the outcome.
- Tell me about an ethical work situation you had to deal with. How did it turn out?
- Tell me about a time when you had to act in a leadership capacity.
- What have you done in the workforce that shows initiative and creativity?
- How would you handle a situation where you and your manager disagreed about an issue or course of action?

INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION: ACE THE INTERVIEW!

“Acing” the interview means **we** have done all **we** can to ensure the right conclusion is drawn by both parties

- Interviewers will conclude if you are a fit to move forward to the next interview step for the job
- Equally important, you conclude if a position/organization matches your career motivation

ACE THE INTERVIEW SUCCESS FACTORS (PHONE, ZOOM, FACE TO FACE)

1. **Be ready for a conversation** – try to direct the interaction to more of a conversational experience
2. **Professional and Personable** - companies are looking for a team member – showing personality is important
3. **Allow for curiosity:** build on the information being provided during the interview - ask questions
4. **NOTES!:** Bring your notes! Look at your notes! Take notes! It is ok!
5. **Ensure your self-awareness shows:** talk about your strengths, skills, and ability to learn quickly

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Interviewing

Article

8 Mind Tricks That Will Set You Up for Interview

Often, what determines the outcome of your interviews has little to do with the

INTERVIEW FAQs

I forget everything when I interview, what do I do?

Practice, take it slow, and write things down. Most people are nervous when they interview, no matter the level of experience. Practicing responses to common questions and having a few examples that can be used to put your answers in context, will all help you relax. If there are key things you want to share with the employer, write them down.

What if I am late to an onsite interview?

As part of prepping, get to know the route, common traffic, bus schedule, and give yourself plenty of time. Try to arrive inside 15 minutes early. Always have the Recruiter and/or Interviewer phone number and email. If there is something unforeseen and completely unavoidable, call and email as soon as you know you will be late.

Can I bring a drink?

Yes, you can bring water, in a professional looking container (no stickers or dirty bottles).

Can I write things down?

Yes, feel free to write short notes, in a professional looking notebook or legal pad.

I sweat/stutter/laugh/fidget when I am nervous, what do I do?

Explain you are nervous - most interviewers will be sympathetic. "I feel nervous. I am very excited to be here, thank you for the opportunity."

What is my follow up process?

It is recommended you follow up with a "thank you" email by the next morning. Every interviewer should receive an individual thank you email. A Recruiter can help with email addresses.

What questions should I ask?

Typically, at the end of the interview, you will be asked if you have any other questions. You should have 3-4 questions prepared. These questions should be things that you are honestly wondering about, and that demonstrate knowledge of the company. You may also want to know more about what qualities they see making a strong candidate, the expected challenges of the position, or the workplace culture. If the interviewers answer all your questions without you asking, just reiterate what you had wanted to ask and thank them for their thoroughness. **Please note, this is not the time to ask about salary or benefits, unless the interviewer prompts you. Benefits and salary can be negotiated later when you have a job offer.*

When will I hear back from the Recruiter?

This is a great question to ask during the interview: "I am really excited about this opportunity. What is your timeline is for hiring this position?" If you have not heard back from the company within 3-5 days after they said they would get back to you, feel free to reach back out to your Recruiter.

INTERVIEW – POST GAME

EMAIL THANK YOU:

RECRUITER RELATIONSHIP IS KEY TO HELP WITH EMAIL ADDRESSES, ETC.

- WITHIN 24 HOURS
- TO EACH INTERVIEWER
- SHORT BUT RELEVANT

- YOU ARE STILL “PROMOTING YOURSELF”

- 1-2 alignment statements connecting your skills and knowledge to the role
- 1-2 statements connecting your skills and experiences to something new you learned about in the interview
- 1-2 statement about your ability to accelerate quickly into the role and be productive

UPDATE YOUR LINKEDIN

- Sometimes an interview makes us realize we need to update things on our LinkedIn profile

CONNECT BACK TO YOUR NETWORK

- You are still gathering info!
- Ask for advice, never stop asking questions
- Ask for a recommendation

RECRUITER FOLLOW-UP

- Follow-up with the Recruiter to inquire about feedback, and the hiring decision timing

APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL INTERVIEW PREP QUESTIONS

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Additional Interview Tips

- Make sure your answers are answers to the question. If they ask you for three examples, make sure you give three examples.
- Take your time and think about the questions.
- Make sure you sit up straight, have a strong handshake, and maintain eye contact.
- Shut off your cell phone and do not touch it.
- Smile, relax your shoulders.
- Be positive in all your responses, never speak negatively about another person or company.
- Always be honest.
- Make sure your clothes are clean, wrinkle free, and fresh smelling. Do not smoke or use perfume.

Question: Tell me about yourself.

What it really means: Why should I hire you?

Keep this answer a balance between professional, and personal, and NOT too personal. No need to talk about where you grew up or your favorite things to do. Try to use this question to connect to your **why and motivations** for the job.

The example below is for an engineering job and connects the **yourself** to the **motivation** to be an engineer.:

“From the time I was young I really enjoyed motorcycles. I began rebuilding and building engines. I like seeing results from my work, and this inspired me to pursue engineering. In my schooling I was able to learn about x, x, and x, and lead on projects like x. All this helped me in my first position and motivates me to find new ways of creating results.”

ADDITIONAL INTERVIEW PREP QUESTIONS

Question: "Why do you want to work here?"

What it really means: They are looking to see how much you know about the company, and if there is a reason you want to work there or if it is just another job.

When answering this question, mention specifics. Talk about things you learned during your research of the company: growth, giving back to the community, diversity intention, employee development.

If you know people who are or were associated with the company, and have favorable opinions, you can talk about it being a great place to work.

Your company research activity will pay off!

Question: "What are your strengths?"

What it really means: "How have you used your strengths to add value to your previous roles?"

The interviewer wants to know how your talents will benefit the team and company so put your best skills and qualities in this context.

An example: "I am very detail orientated, flexible and a critical thinker. In my current position I am often asked to perform a quality check of work my colleagues and/or my manager has completed. I am often asked to participate in cross-department or cross-functional projects that requires critical thinking skills and good relationship building."

ADDITIONAL INTERVIEW PREP QUESTIONS

Question: What is your weakness?

What it really means: Everyone has growth opportunities. The interviewer wants to know about an opportunity, how you work with it, and try to grow it.

Never say you do not have weaknesses. Think about an honest development opportunity such as this one:

“I am introverted and often need time to reflect on things. I have learned that by being quiet and reflective, it may seem like I don’t want to contribute, or I do not have an opinion. I try to work with this by understanding meeting objectives and what we are trying to accomplish. I work on connecting one on one to gather information, which helps me feel more equipped to actively contribute. This also helps me build relationships.

Question: What are your career goals?

What it really means: The interviewer wants to know if your goals align somehow to the role, and longevity with the organization.

Focus on how this job is related to your career goals. If you are applying to a customer service job, but really want to become a salesperson, you might say: “My long-term goal is to join the sales team. As a customer service representative, I will work with a variety of our customers and learn about company products and services. This will build my confidence in knowing our customer base and what we sell. It will also teach me what the customer knows about a product based on the sales team explanations. This might give me an opportunity to provide feedback to sales. I think this role could be a great path to eventually move to sales.

ADDITIONAL INTERVIEW PREP QUESTIONS

Question: What have you been doing since your last position ended?

What it really means: If there is a gap in employment, the interviewer wants to know why.

Discuss what you have been doing that is relevant to the job you are applying for, or the development of skills. If you have been volunteering, interning, or caring for family, discuss the experience. For example: “Since my previous job, I have been caring for my physically disabled sibling. This has been a personally rewarding with some transferable skills to the workplace. My patience has evolved and I am more organized than ever. I became more of a creative thinker, trying to provide my sister with different experiences. I managed appointments and finances. I truly felt like a project manager at times, and I built so many relationships in the medical and non-profit community.

Question: Tell me about the accomplishment you are most proud of.

What it really means: What accomplishments do you value?

If you have a work example, **make sure** to use that. If your example is personal, make sure it is relevant to the job.

You might talk about helping a store owner to organize their store in a way that was more efficient and pleasing, and how those changes led to customer compliments and customer referrals.

You could discuss identifying a potential process problem where there was duplication of effort and how you gathered key stakeholders to streamline the process to avoid time-consuming, unnecessary efforts.

ADDITIONAL INTERVIEW PREP QUESTIONS

Question: Tell me about a difficult time and how you handled it.

What it really means: Everyone goes through stressful times in their personal life and work life. How do you cope with stress? How do you react when something goes wrong? The interviewer wants to know how you handle challenges.

Try to use a workplace example. For example: “I was working at the store one day and we had three staff call out, so it was only me and the manager. It was a really busy day at the store and no one else was able to come in. I asked my manager what she needed from me and she told me to work the cash register and just stay there all day. I spent 8 hours on the cash register with a really long line all day. I made sure that I smiled at every customer. I apologized to them for their wait, and thanked them for their patience. It was a tough day, but smiling and talking to my manager, made it a lot easier.”