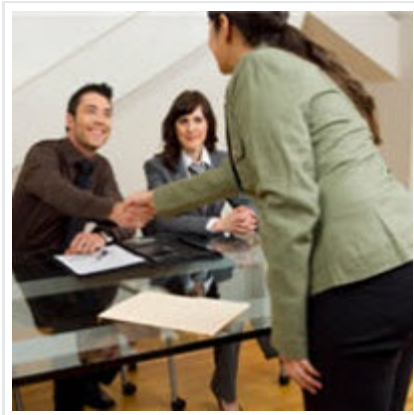


# Interviewing Skills

## Types of Interviews



## Introduction



Once your resume has gotten an employer's interest, you may be contacted for an interview. If you are feeling overwhelmed, don't worry! Everyone is nervous about job interviews. Understanding **what interviews are all about**, how the **various interview formats** differ, and how a **typical interview may proceed** should put your mind at ease.

## Interviews

In today's job market, you will likely need to go through some type of interview in order to secure a job. An **interview** is a meeting between an employer and a job applicant. This meeting can take place in person, over the telephone, or via video conferencing. The atmosphere may be formal or fairly casual. It may involve just you and the employer, or you and a group of people or panel. Regardless, your interview serves a distinct purpose for both you and your potential employer.

**The hiring manager uses the interview to assess your qualifications and determine if you are the best candidate for the job.**

The employer asks questions to see how well you understand the industry and the position, as well as to determine if you are able to perform the job duties. In addition, the employer is trying to decide whether you will fit well within the culture of the organization. If you don't meet every job qualification but you present yourself well in an interview, there is a good possibility that you could be chosen over candidates with similar or better qualifications who don't communicate as well.

**The job interview is your chance to find out if the company—and the job—are a good match for you.**

Ask questions of your own to learn more about the company and the position itself. Use this time to decide whether the job, the direction of the company, and the developments within the industry will maintain your interest and use your unique skills and abilities. Your questions should help you determine if the work atmosphere is one in which you work well and one you will enjoy.

## Types of interviews

When we think about interviews, we often imagine going to a place of business to speak with one person—usually a potential boss or hiring manager. However, job interviews can take a wide range of forms and can be held in person, over the phone, or via video conference. Here are seven types of interviews you may encounter in addition to a face-to-face, one-on-one interview:

- An employer may use a **screening interview** to determine which of the top candidates to bring in for the actual face-to-face interview. A screening interview can be done in person but more often will be over the telephone. It may sometimes be conducted by the hiring manager's assistant or someone from HR, but is more typically done by the person doing the hiring.
- For a **group interview**, you'll usually meet with several people at once, possibly including the hiring manager and your potential peers or supervisors. Group interviews also sometimes include people from other parts of the company that you would have to work with in the position you're applying for. Interviewing potential employees



in a group allows employers to see how well you communicate within a team environment. This type of interview is most common for government or education jobs.

- During **behavioral interviews**, the employer asks you questions about your previous employment behavior to try to gauge what your future performance would look like. Questions focus on how the skills, abilities, and accomplishments of your past can benefit their organization. These questions usually begin with **Tell me about a time you...** and ask you to give examples of times when you've worked in teams or resolved an issue. Most interviews will involve some behavioral questions, so you should always come prepared with examples.
- The **audition interview** allows potential employers to see you in action before they make hiring decisions. Computer programmers may be asked to write code, software testers may have to locate and fix a problem, chefs are often asked to prepare a dish, and a corporate trainer may be asked to present new material. These are examples of the audition interview, with the hiring manager—or the hiring team—serving as your audience. In some fields, such as computer programming, an audition is a standard part of an interview, and you may not be told about it ahead of time. For other types of jobs, you'll usually be told before the interview if an audition is expected.
- **Interviews over lunch and dinner** can be nice, but they often cause anxiety for job candidates. Use basic meal-time etiquette in this case. Order something mid-priced and nonmessy, avoid alcoholic beverages, and pay more attention to the interview than the meal. Even if conversation is casual during the meal, the employer is assessing the appropriateness of your responses and manners. Avoid talking too much about yourself on a personal level, and stay away from comments about politics, religion, gender, and ethnicity.
- During a **full-day interview**, several members of an organization interview you individually, each with their own departmental interests in mind. For example, the head of the marketing department may ask about your communications background, while the project management team may want to know if you're able to manage large-scale team projects. Sometimes a full-day interview will include behavioral interview questions and an audition interview. The full-day interview will likely include a lunch interview, so be prepared for that as well.
- Sometimes a company may invite the top candidates for a **follow-up interview** if they are having a difficult time deciding or have neglected to ask an important question. Before going, ask what you can expect and what the company is hoping to get out of the follow up so you'll be prepared.



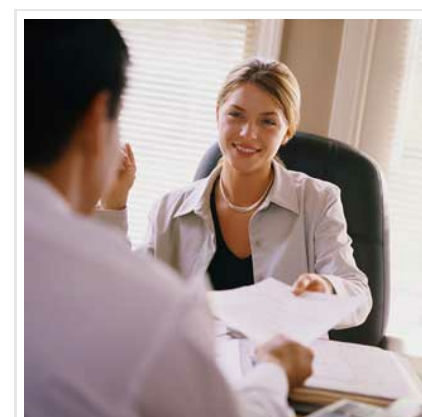
Every interview is unique; your interview may be a combination of the interview types discussed above, or it may be completely different.

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## The interview process

Regardless of which type of interview you will have, all should follow the same process. We suggest keeping the following **GOA<sup>2</sup>L Process** in mind during an interview:

1. **Greet** the interviewer with a firm handshake, introduce yourself, and thank the interviewer for taking the time to meet with you.
2. **Offer** additional copies of your resume. Have several copies with you in case you'll meet with multiple interviewers. If you have previous work samples, a list of references, or other materials to share, you can bring them out now or hold onto them until you are asked about them.
3. **Answer** the questions that are asked of you, making sure to be honest, clear, professional, and concise. If you don't understand a particular question, it is always acceptable to ask for clarification.
4. **Ask** whatever questions you may have about the job or the company. Remember, this is your chance to find out if you really want **this** job for **this** company. Not sure what to ask? [Read more about asking your own questions.](#)
5. **Leave** on a good note. When the interview is over, shake the interviewer's hand again. Thank the interviewer for taking time to talk with you, communicate your interest in being hired, and ask when you can expect to hear an answer about the job.



Don't forget to send a **thank-you note**! Less than half of job candidates send them, but all hiring managers are impressed by candidates who send thank-you notes. Either by phone, email, or letter, follow up. This is just one more way to put yourself ahead of other candidates. Use the note as a chance to:

- Thank the hiring manager again for his or her time
- Restate why you think you are the best fit for the job
- Inquire about the status of the position
- Ask anything that has come to mind since the interview



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[Next: What to Prepare Before an Interview ▶](#)

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