



# Different Types of Interviews

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Job interviews vary in their format, delivery, and length; this handout provides tips for different types of interviews. Always prepare for interviews in advance to achieve the greatest success!

## SCREENING / FIRST-ROUND INTERVIEWS

The most common interview you will have is the “screening” or “first-round” interview, which is your first opportunity to speak with an employer or recruiter in a structured format. A typical length of a screening interview is 30 minutes, as the recruiter is usually trying to learn more about you and your background in order to determine if they should dedicate more time to your candidacy. Screening interviews can range from a brief 20 minutes, to 30- or 45-minute sessions; some employers might even have you meet with two people back-to-back.

- Oftentimes, a professional recruiter or human resources (HR) representative conducts a first-round interview. This is not always the case, however, so don’t assume.
- Corporations that conduct a lot of hiring might bring young alumni back as “greeters” to chat with you in the waiting area; consider this part of the interview!
- The most common questions in a first interview will relate to your career goal or employment objective, your greatest strengths, an overview of your background relevant to the job requirements (i.e., your resume!), and getting to know you and your personality.
- The skill many employers most value is verbal communication, and as such this is a key competency evaluated.
- Be prepared to articulate a clear and enthusiastic response to why this position and organization are of interest to you.
- Share your top strengths and examples of accomplishments that demonstrate your skills.

## SECOND-ROUND /SITE VISIT INTERVIEWS

After a successful screening interview, you are invited to participate in a second or even final round of interviews; some industries have multiple rounds, each of which gets longer because you end up visiting the organization and meeting the people you will be working with. All the same interview preparation tips still apply. As you progress further into the process, you will want to increase the amount of research and preparation you are doing.

- Second-round, final-round, and site visit interviews usually are with the manager or director of a department, search committees, potential work colleagues, and so forth.
- Site visits can be as brief as one hour but more commonly are several hours to all day in length, to enable you to see the operation and meet all the relevant people in the process.
- A professional recruiter or HR representative may still be involved, however the hiring manager or a search committee is in most cases the primary decision-maker.
- Expect more job-specific and detailed questions in later rounds of interviews.
- Be prepared with more questions YOU wish to ask throughout the process, as you have much more time to gather information to help you make an informed decision.
- Always ask in advance for an agenda for the day, to know who you will be meeting with and for how long, so you can prepare accordingly.
- As the day goes on you may have to answer the same question many times; keep your enthusiasm high and your answers consistent, even if it feel repetitive to you!

## SKYPE INTERVIEWS

Skype and other video interviews are commonly used for screening; they can be used nationally and internationally to avoid the expenses of traveling. Local organizations may also use them during the first-round of an interview process.

- Check the online connection in advance; have your phone and the number of the employer available as a back-up. Confirm the start time and the time zone!
- Pay attention to your posture and how you dress. Do not just wear the top of a suit and then wear jeans...what if you have to stand up during the interview?
- Be in a quiet place, preferably at desk or table with a copy of your resume available.
- The wall behind you should not have any distracting or inappropriate pictures, posters, etc.
- Avoid sitting in front of a window or mirror.
- Turn off any potential noise-makers—TV, radio, alarm clocks.
- Do not have any family, friends, pets, etc. around; be the only person in the room.
- Inform roommates that you will be interviewing so they do not interrupt.
- Speak slowly and clearly. Smile and let your personality show!
- If you need a quiet room or don't have a computer with a web-cam, check with the Career Development Center or Sykes Union!

## TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

Similarly, telephone interviews are commonly used among employers who don't want to dedicate resources to travel, especially during the first-round of an interview process.

- Make sure your phone is charged and you are in a location with good service (if using a cell).
- Be in a quiet place, preferably at desk or table with a copy of your resume available.
- Since the employer(s) cannot see you, you can also have a 'cheat sheet' of notes available.
- Convey more enthusiasm and energy through your voice—interviewer(s) cannot see your body language.
- It is okay to be quiet after your answer. If the interviewer does not respond, you can say "Does that answer your question?"
- Pay attention to your posture and how you dress—these can add to the overall effect of how you sound over the phone (you might feel and sound more confident dressed a certain way).

## PANEL INTERVIEWS

Panel interviews are when a group of people interview you. These can occur during video, phone, or in-person interviews.

- When answering questions, be sure to make eye contact with each participant and not just the person who asks the question or the person with the "highest title" in the room.

## LUNCH/DINNER INTERVIEWS

It is common for interviews to have a food and/or drink portion. This is a chance for the employer to get a better feel for your personality, oftentimes in a more relaxed setting. Remember that this is still an interview, though, so maintain your professionalism throughout the meal.

- Do not order messy or hard to eat items; order what will be easiest to eat while talking.
- Avoid ordering an expensive dish, as your interviewer will pick up the tab.
- Do not drink alcohol, even if everyone orders it but you.
- Be polite to your server and treat him or her with respect.
- Let the interviewer guide the conversation and start the interview.
- If a spill or food accident happens, don't dwell on it and have a sense of humor. It's an opportunity to show the interviewer how you handle stressful situations!