

The key to successful interviewing is **effective preparation**. It is critical for you to be prepared to talk about yourself and your interest in the job to convince a hiring committee of your ability to do the job well.

The two major areas you need to prepare for are:

YOURSELF	PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills</li> <li>• Interests</li> <li>• Experience</li> <li>• Accomplishments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• History of the institution</li> <li>• Structure of the department</li> <li>• Knowledge of products, services or research areas</li> <li>• Understanding of the position</li> </ul>

**In order to prepare for questions about yourself, use the following model:**

1. Read through the job description several times, highlighting skills and experiences required for the job. Next, go through your resume or CV and highlight experiences you have had that provide evidence that your abilities and/or experiences meet the criteria for the job.
2. Next, come up with an example of how and when you used each skill.

#### EXAMPLES

- "I have developed strong research skills through my work at the National Institute for Environmental and Health Sciences exploring. ."
  - "This year, I submitted two articles that were accepted for publication, demonstrating my effective writing skills . . ."
3. Finally, use these anecdotes to practice answering some of the interview questions below with a friend, supervisor, colleague, or partner.

**To prepare for questions about the employer, visit:**

- Employer's homepage
- Informational websites about different industries (www.chronicle.com, www.glassdoor.com, www.vault.com, etc.)
- Informational interviews with current employees
- or
- Professionals in the field

## Sample Questions

Questions often asked by employers:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Walk me through your resume/CV.
3. Why are you interested in this organization?
4. What excites you most about this position?
5. What might be the steepest learning curve for you coming into this role?
6. What are your greatest strengths?
7. What are three weaknesses you are working on?
8. Why should we hire you rather than another candidate?
9. What do you know about our organization (products, services, research, departments, etc.)?
10. What did you enjoy most about your last employment experience? Least?
11. How do you think your advisor/supervisor would describe you?
12. Why do you want a job that you are overqualified for? (if applicable)
13. What skills have you developed through your graduate studies and/or postdoc that relate to this job?
14. What are your salary expectations? (HINT: Answer with a question: "What does the typical range look like for someone with my experience?")
15. Why are you applying for positions outside of academic settings? (if applicable)

Behavior-based questions:

15. Describe a time when you had difficulty working with a professor/advisor/supervisor/co-worker in the past. How did you handle it?
16. Give me a specific example of a time when someone criticized your work. How did you respond?
17. Give me a specific example of a time when you sold your supervisor on an idea or concept. How did you proceed? What was the result?
18. Describe the system you use for keeping track of multiple projects. How do you track your progress so that you can meet deadlines? How do you stay focused?
19. Tell me about a time when you came up with an innovative solution to a challenge your lab/group was facing. What was the challenge? What role did you play?
20. Describe a specific problem you solved for your employer or professor. How did you approach the problem? What role did others play? What was the outcome?
21. Tell me about a time when you took initiative and went above and beyond?
22. Tell me about a time when you failed to meet a deadline. What things did you fail to do? What were the repercussions? What did you learn?
23. Describe a time when you put your needs aside to help a co-worker understand a task. How did you assist them? What was the result?
24. Describe two specific goals you set for yourself and how successful you were in meeting them. What factors led to your success in meeting your goals?

## Questions often asked during academic interviews:

1. Describe your current research.
2. Why did you choose to focus on this area?
3. What will your next research project be? Are you planning to make any future changes to your current project?
4. Describe your philosophy of teaching.
5. How do you motivate students?
6. Describe a course you have taught in the past and how you evaluated the students' learning.
7. How would you teach this (introductory level, intermediate, advanced level) course? What primary and secondary texts would you choose?
8. How have you used technology in the classroom?
9. How would you increase enrollment in this major?
10. Describe your ideal course. What does the syllabus look like? What texts would you envision using?
11. Why are you interested in this college/university?
12. Tell me where you see yourself in 5 years.....10 years.....20 years.....

## Diversity Questions

1. How do you define diversity?
2. Do you have experience with diversity in this field?
3. How will you contribute to the mission of diversity and inclusion in our organization?
4. How will you enhance the inclusion and diversity of your colleagues/peers?
5. Have you had to address a diversity issue while at work?
6. How will you bring diversity to the classroom at our university?

## Questions you might ask employers:

1. What would my main priorities and objectives be in this role?
2. Can you explain the breakdown for time commitments in this role? How much time is allocated to \_\_\_ (teaching/committee work/independent projects)?
3. What is the largest single problem facing your staff (department) right now?
4. May I talk with the last person who held this position?
5. What opportunities are there for professional development and growth?
6. What do you like best about your job/this organization?
7. How would you describe the culture of this team/organization?
8. How will my performance be evaluated within the first 6 months/first year?
9. What qualities are you looking for in the candidate who fills this position?
10. What is the management style of the person who will serve as my supervisor?
11. What does collaborative team work/projects look like?
12. What are the next steps? When should I expect to hear from you?

INTERVIEW DO'S	INTERVIEW DON'TS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research the department before the interview</li> <li>• Review sample questions and practice your answers</li> <li>• Schedule a mock interview with OITE</li> <li>• Bring extra CVs/resumes to an in-person interview</li> <li>• Dress professionally (err on overdressing)</li> <li>• Bring a list of questions you have for the interviewers</li> <li>• Send follow-up thank-you letter</li> <li>• When discussing offers and salary, talk in terms of a range, not a single figure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrive late!</li> <li>• Ask about salary/promotion potential during initial interviews</li> <li>• Ask about a position for your partner</li> <li>• Argue with the interviewer</li> <li>• Volunteer negative information</li> <li>• Continue to interview after you accepted a position</li> </ul>

## Interviewing Skills Blitz - Tell Me About Yourself (2022)

### Online Workshops:

Interviewing Skills Blitz - Tell Me About Yourself (2022)

Interviewing Skills Blitz - Tell Me About Yourself (2022)

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### Career Blogs:

Key Questions to Ask a Potential Manager

Behavioral Interviews for Scientists

Answering the Weakness Interview Question

Illegal Interview Questions - What They Are and How to Handle Them