

INTERVIEW TIPS

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY MICHELIN[®] CAREER CENTER

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW:

1. **RESEARCH** the company, organization, or agency with whom you will be interviewing.
 - Learn about the history, mission, organizational structure, philosophy, and position descriptions within the organization.
 - Why? To make sure it is a place you will be happy working and to be well prepared for the interview.
 - Where? Career Resource Library, Cooper Library, the Internet
2. **PREPARE** for Interview Questions.
 - Study possible interview questions and think about how you will answer them. Be comfortable with your responses; try not to sound rehearsed.
3. **THINK** about your qualifications. Be sure you can verbalize them to a potential employer.
4. **PRACTICE** your communication skills.
5. **PLAN** for travel, if necessary.
 - If you are traveling to a *local* interview, make sure you know how to get there. Drive to the building the day before your interview, if possible.
 - If you are traveling *out of town* for an interview, make sure you clarify with the employer *before your trip* who will be responsible for travel costs.

DURING THE INTERVIEW:

1. **ARRIVE** 15 minutes early.
2. **BRING** extra copies of your resume, a pen, and some paper.
3. **MAKE** sure you know how to properly pronounce the interviewer's name.

4. DRESS professionally and conservatively.

- Even if you know that you will dress more casually for the actual job, an interview is still a professional business meeting, and a dark suit for men and women is most appropriate. If you want to add a little color, do so with a tie or a scarf.
- Keep accessories to a minimum. For men: stick with your watch and a class or wedding ring. For women: stick with simple and classic jewelry (no dangling earrings or bracelets).
- Go without cologne or perfume. (You never know if your interviewer might have allergies).

5. MAKE a positive first impression.

- Offer a firm handshake.
- Greet the employer by name.
- Be relaxed and enthusiastic.
- Do not smoke or chew gum.
- Maintain eye contact about 70% of the time.

6. BE FAMILIAR with the typical structure of an interview.

- Rapport establishment = small talk
- Opener = First serious question from the interviewer. “Tell me about yourself.”
- Exploration of facts = questions about your experience, education, and goals.
- Conclusion = summary of the interview and your opportunity to ask questions.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW:

1. MAKE NOTES from your conversation with the interviewer.

2. SEND a thank you letter within 24 hours.

COMMONLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. What goals have you set for yourself? How are you planning to achieve them?
2. Who or what has had the greatest influence on the development of your career interests?
3. What factors did you consider in choosing your major?
4. Why are you interested in our organization?
5. Tell me about yourself.
6. What two or three things are most important to you in a position?
7. What kind of work do you do?
8. What are your expectations of your future employer?
9. What is your GPA? How do you feel about it? Does it reflect your ability?
10. How do you solve conflicts?
11. What are your strengths? Your weaknesses?

12. What work experience has been the most valuable to you and why?
13. What was the most useful criticism you ever received, and who was it from?
14. What has been your greatest challenge?
15. What are your team-player qualities? Give examples.
16. What leadership positions have you held? Describe your leadership style.
17. What interests or concerns you about the position or the company?
18. In a particular leadership role you had, what was the greatest challenge?
19. What idea have you developed and implemented that was particularly creative or innovative?
20. What characteristics do you think are important for this position?
21. How have your educational and work experiences prepared you for this position?
22. How do you think you have changed personally since you started college?
23. Why did you choose the extracurricular activities you did? What did you gain? What did you contribute?
24. Knowing what you know now about your college experience, would you make the same decisions?
25. What can you contribute to this company/organization/agency?
26. What characteristics are most important in a good manager/supervisor? How have you shown one of these characteristics?
27. What challenges are you looking for in a position?
28. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction?
29. What is the most important lesson you have learned in or out of school?

Behavioral-Based Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about a situation when you had to persuade another person to your point of view.
2. How important is it to you to be perceived as a team member and why?
3. Describe a situation where you had a conflict with another individual, and how you dealt with it.
4. Tell me about a project you initiated.
5. What types of situations put you under pressure, and how do you deal with the pressure?
6. Describe the project/situation that best demonstrated your analytical skills.
7. Tell me how you dealt with those who expressed the sentiment of, "Why change when we have always done it this way?"
8. Tell me about a team project of which you are particularly proud of and your contribution.
9. Describe a time when you worked as a team to complete a task/project.
10. How have you motivated yourself to complete an assignment or task that you did not want to do?
11. Tell me about the riskiest decision that you have made.
12. Describe a situation where class assignments, work or personal activities conflicted. How did you prioritize? How did you manage your time? What was the outcome?
13. Can you tell me about a complex problem that you solved? Describe the process you utilized.
14. Tell me about a situation when you had to learn something new in a short time. How did you proceed?
15. How have you most constructively dealt with a disappointment and turned it into a learning experience?
16. Have you generated any new ideas or suggestions while at school or at work?
17. Tell me about a time when you worked with a person who did things very differently from you. How did you get the job done?

18. Give an example of when your persistence had the biggest payoff.
19. Describe a situation in which you effectively developed a solution to a problem by combining different perspectives or approaches.
20. Think about a difficult boss, professor, or other person. What made him or her difficult? How did you successfully interact with this person?
21. Tell me about a challenge that you successfully met.
22. Describe your three greatest accomplishments to date.
23. Describe when you or a group that you were part of was in danger of missing a deadline. What did you do?
24. Take me through a project where you demonstrated leadership skills.
25. Tell me about a difficult decision you have made.
26. Tell me about a challenge that you successfully met.
27. Can you tell me about an occasion where you needed to work with a group to get a job done?
28. Tell me about a complex project or assignment that you have been assigned. What approach did you take to complete it?
29. What were the biggest problems you have encountered in college? How have you handled them? What did you learn from them?

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES/STUDENTS TO ASK:

1. What is your method of training new employees?
2. What type of orientation would I receive?
3. How closely will I be supervised?
4. What characteristics do you think are important for this position?
5. How often are performance reviews done?
6. How soon will I be given responsibility?
7. How much travel is normally expected?
8. What are some of the major short and long-range goals that the company/organization has?
9. What outside influences affect the company's/organization's growth?
10. In what areas does the company/organization excel, or in what area does it have limitations?
11. What are some of the common denominators among the organization's successes?
12. Based on what you have seen of me so far, where do you think I could contribute most? Effectively?
13. Is there anything you perceive as a weakness in my background?
14. What are some of the characteristics that the company/organization considers to be unique?
15. What would add or subtract from the incumbent's performance to increase their effectiveness?
16. Can you give me some idea of the projects that I may be working on?
17. Could you describe any opportunities for advancement within the organization/company?
18. What is the typical time frame for these advancements?
19. What characteristics do you think are important for this position?
20. Has the company had to lay off employees in the past couple of years?
21. How has the company/organization changed over the past 5 or 10 years?