

Preparing for Professional Interviews

Hello. Welcome to video #13 of the Career Development Series. I'm Rusul and in this video I am going to talk to you about preparing for professional interviews.

Does the thought of having a professional interview make you nervous? Going into a professional interview can be quite stressful. A good interview can help you land the job of your dreams while a bad interview can prevent you from getting almost any job.

Here's five steps you can take to prepare for an interview ahead of time to be confident going into it.

Step 1: Research the company before the interview.

Your career center is an excellent place to start. Make an appointment and ask them what they know about the company you will be interviewing with. Take notes and listen carefully. You should also review the company website and learn as much as possible about them and the type of position you are applying for.

As you look at their website, try to answer the following questions:

- What is the mission of the company?
- What are some of the major projects they are working on?
- What qualities do they look for in their employees?
- What academic majors and professional skill sets are they seeking?

Step 2: Understand the position you are interviewing for.

- What is the title of the position you will be interviewing for?
- Do you know what the qualifications and responsibilities are?
- Can you relate your own experience directly to the qualifications and responsibilities listed?
- Have you reached out to your network to talk to someone in a similar position?

Step 3: Prepare questions to ask the employer in the interview

You will usually have the opportunity to ask questions in your interview, so it is good to come prepared with some. The questions you ask should show that you have researched the company and are familiar with their work. For example, you might say, "I read your company's mission statement and am impressed that providing services across the Middle East is an important aspect of your work. What were some of the challenges you faced when opening an office in a new country?"

It is also smart to ask specific questions about the position. Think about whether there is a job responsibility that you would like to hear more about. Before you go into the interview, make a list of these questions and practice with a staff member at your career center.

Step 4: Familiarize yourself with sample interview questions

Not every interviewer is the same, but you will hear a lot of the same questions in different interviews. Some common questions are:

- What do you know about this company and position?
- Why are you interested in this company and this position?
- Why do you think you would be a good fit for this position and this company?
- What can you tell me about past positions you have held? If you don't have prior experience, what were some of your favorite classes in school and why did you enjoy them?

Again, practice answering these questions before your interview.

Be sure to watch the next video in this series, which covers "Tips on Answering Interview Questions," and gives instruction on how to answer these questions.

Step 5: Dress appropriately for the interview

As they say, you never get a second chance to make a first impression! Some of the first things an employer will notice about you are how you are dressed, the way you are groomed, and the way you conduct yourself.

Remember, from your company research you should have an idea of the company culture. Always dress professionally but do not overdress. Wear conservative business attire and avoid tight, casual or flashy clothes, as well as unnecessary accessories.

Women

Women should wear a business suit with jacket, dress pants or long skirt and a conservative blouse, or an appropriate alternative. Wear low-heeled dress shoes and avoid excessive jewelry and make-up.

Men

Men should wear a professional looking business suit with a long-sleeved button down dress shirt, a tie, and dress shoes. As with the ladies, do not overdress with fancy designer wear or unnecessary accessories.

Homework:

Now it's time to practice. **Pick a company you would like to work for. Research that company and think about questions they might ask you in a formal interview and questions you would ask them in return. Now practice!** Practice alone in front of a mirror. Practice with friends and family members. Take on formal roles and act as though you're really in the company's office on a formal interview. Once you gain more confidence, ask your career center staff to do a formal practice interview. Arrive to the practice interview in your formal interview dress. Ask the career center staff for feedback and advice and practice again!

This video was designed to help you prepare for a professional interview. In other videos, we discuss important topics, such as how to prepare a resume and how to write a cover letter.

What are you waiting for? Your future starts now!