



Interviewing

Contact Career Services at:

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612-381-8227

Career Center Hours:

Appointments preferred

What Employers Seek in a Candidate

Most employers must complete a report or evaluation form on each candidate interviewed. Some of the factors evaluated during the interview and recorded on the form include: Knowledge of the company and industry

- Relevant education and work experience
- Focus (knows what wants to do)
- Communication skills
- Personal characteristics (tact, appearance, poise, etc.)
- Initiative
- Motivation
- Flexibility/adaptability
- Teamwork skills
- Interest in position and company
- Job related characteristics
- Skills related to position
- Willingness to do the job
- Enthusiasm

Interview Attire

Research shows that within the first 4-9 minutes of an interview the recruiter decides whether or not to seriously consider you for a position so dress is **EXTREMELY** important.

One of the best ways to make a good impression is to present a professional appearance. During the interview, unless specifically told otherwise, it is best to wear a business suit.

The following are some guidelines to help you project a professional image:

For Women

- A suit or slacks and a jacket is acceptable.
- Select a suit that projects a professional image. Avoid trendy styles.
- Wear closed toe and heel pumps with one to two inch heels
- Makeup should be appropriate for daytime
- Wear minimal, understated jewelry
- Fingernail polish should be understated, preferably clear, and never chipped.

For Men

- Select a suit that projects a professional image. Or dress pants, shirt and tie that is appropriate.
- Avoid trendy styles.
- Wear a solid white or light blue shirt
- Neckties change with fashion trends; when in doubt, choose conservative
- Socks should be a dark color, match the suit and cover the calf
- Wear a dark leather dress shoe that blends with the suit. Polished shoes are mandatory.

For Men and Women

- Select the best quality clothing you can afford. One good suit with several blouses or shirts and ties is typically sufficient.
- Clothing should be neatly pressed/dry cleaned
- Attend to personal hygiene

- Avoid aftershave, cologne and perfume. Some recruiters have allergic reactions to fragrances.
- Do not carry extra items into the interview. A portfolio containing extra resumes, transcript and notepaper is preferred.

Before the Interview

Things to keep in mind before the interview:

- Know yourself including your interests, abilities, skills, values, education, experience, strengths, weaknesses, and goals. Be sure that you can verbalize your qualifications to a potential employer.
- Research the company, organization, or agency. Know its products/services, competitors, philosophy, mission, etc.
- If the interview is local, get directions and parking information. Drive there a day or two prior to your interview so you are familiar with the route and the amount of time it will take you.
- If you are traveling out of town for the interview, clarify with the employer before your trip who will be responsible for travel expenses.

During the Interview

Things to keep in mind during the interview:

- Arrive 10 - 15 minutes early
- Offer a firm handshake and greet the interviewer by name
- Be relaxed, enthusiastic, and smile
- Maintain eye contact approximately 80% of the time
- Listen carefully and answer questions completely
- Be specific, concise, and positive
- Highlight your strengths and accomplishments
- Do not smoke or chew gum

After the Interview

Things to keep in mind after the interview:

- Evaluate the interview and make notes from your conversation with the interviewer
- **Send a thank you letter within 24 hours**
- Follow up if asked to send further information or if you haven't heard from employer within time discussed
- Continue your job search regardless of your impressions of the success of the interview
- Once you have accepted an offer, stop interviewing and taking plant trips

Common Interview Questions YOU Ask Employers

- What qualities are you looking for in the candidate who fills this position?
- What are the company's major short and long-range goals?
- What type of training does a new employee receive?
- Please describe the duties of the job for me.
- What types of assignments might I expect the first 6 months on the job?
- What is the typical career path of someone in this position?
- Does your company encourage further education?
- How would you describe the management philosophy?
- **(Always ask this one last)** What are the next steps in your search process? When should I expect to hear from you?

Behavioral Questions Interviewers Ask

All interview questions are really the same question: Why are you the best person for the job? Here is a list of common questions that employers ask – along with an explanation of why employers ask them.

As you go through the list, think about how you'd answer the questions. Write down your thoughts. Practice your responses out loud. Prepare a script, if you need one. Ready? Let's begin.

Tell me about yourself.

This is an open-ended question often asked to help break the ice in the interview. The important thing to remember is to keep the answer job-related.

Why are you interested in working for this company?

This will show the employer that you've done your homework. State the positive things you've learned about the company and how they fit with your career goals. This shows the employer that you cared enough about the interview to prepare for it.

Tell me about your education.

Even though your resume includes this information, some employers like to have you expand on the subject. Mention your grade point average and good attendance record. Include all classes, seminars, workshops and on-the-job training you've attended that support your job goals.

Why have you chosen this particular field?

This is one way to discover your enthusiasm and dedication to your career.

Describe your best and worst boss.

This could be a trap. Don't present a negative picture of any past employers. If given a choice, always talk about your best boss. If pressed to describe the worst boss, pick a work-related characteristic that can be stated in a positive way. For example, "I had a supervisor who was vague when issuing assignments. I learned to ask questions so that I knew what was expected."

In a job, what interests you most/least?

This will give the employer another gauge for measuring how well you will fit the job opening.

What is your major weakness?

Always turn this into a positive.

State a weakness, but turn it into a positive by showing how you overcame the weakness. "In the past, it had been difficult for me to accept criticism from my peers. However, I've learned to value and solicit this input and it's improved my job performance."

Give an example of how you solved a problem in the past.

It's important to be able to show the process you go through when presented with a problem. State the problem and the steps you followed to reach the solution.

What are your strengths?

This is the time to describe the skills you've identified that will most effectively "market" you as an employee.

How do others describe you?

Another way for the employer to ask this would be, "How would you fit into this work group?" If you aren't comfortable with this question before the interview, call some friends and/or ask people you've worked with how they'd describe you.

What do you consider the most important idea you contributed or your most noteworthy accomplishment in your last job?

Give examples of ways in which you saved the employer time, money or developed an office procedure that improved efficiency.

Where do you see yourself in three years?

Telling the interviewer, "In your job!" isn't a good idea. Do indicate that you hope to acquire sufficient skills and knowledge within that time to make a positive contribution to the company.

Think about something you consider a failure in your life, and tell me why you think it happened.

Failure implies error. Answers that point to a negative should conclude with a success. For example, "In my last job, I was given an assignment to coordinate all travel plans for an international conference. About halfway through the process, I realized I had not gathered enough information to help attendees make good travel and lodging decisions. I had to take time out to do the research which put me under a severe time crunch. I learned to do my research sooner. I haven't had the problem since."

"I dropped out of school at age 17 to work for a fast-food employer. I later realized I couldn't make enough money to raise my family. I returned to school in the evenings and acquired clerical skills so I'm now qualified to do this job."

How do you think you will fit into this operation?

This is the time to express your interest in the job and knowledge of the employer. The more you know about the operation the easier this question will be to answer.

If you were hired, what ideas and talents could you contribute to the position or our company?

This is another great opportunity for you to sell your skills. By giving examples of past accomplishments, the employer can visualize your contribution to his/her company.

Give an example where you have shown leadership and initiative.

Even if you haven't had the title of lead worker, supervisor or manager, give examples of when you recognized a job needed to be done and you did it.

Give an example of when you were able to contribute to a team project.

Unless you've lived in a total void, you've been part of a team. Teamwork is used in sales because both parties have to state their needs and expectations then negotiate the sale. Families, community activities and school all require teamwork.

What have you done to develop or change in the last few years?

This shows a willingness to be challenged and to improve. Employers are looking for people who are willing to continue learning. Talk about formal and informal educational opportunities you've pursued. Mention books and periodicals you've read related to your field of interest.

Practicing these questions out loud in front of a mirror will help you to become comfortable with hearing and answering the questions. **After you have practiced the questions 2-3 times, schedule a mock interview with Career Services careerservices@dunwoody.edu.**