

Interview Timeline and Questions



UW-Superior Career Services, in partnership with faculty, staff, and employers, provides students and alumni with opportunities and resources to identify career goals and develop life-long career management skills.

UW-Superior Career Services strives to be a recognized and valued service to the students, alumni, university, and community as the premier provider of career development expertise and programming.

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Before the Interview:

1. Practice the commonly asked interview questions below
2. Be aware of your nervous habits and what your body language conveys
3. Study the job description
 - a. Familiarize yourself with what the company is looking for
 - b. Make sure that you are educated about the position
4. Research the organization
5. Plan your attire ahead of time
 - a. It is suggested to try on the outfit beforehand to make sure that everything fits and that you do not need to find something else to wear
6. Account for your travel time
 - a. Figure out where the interview location is, how long it takes to get there, where to park, etc.

During the Interview:

1. Arrive AT LEAST 10 minutes early
 - a. Avoid using your phone in the waiting area
 - i. Now is the time to study your resume and the job description
2. Be mindful of your nervous habits
3. Establish and maintain good eye contact with every interviewer
4. Smile and be yourself
5. Avoid rambling, keep your answers concise
 - a. Pause when necessary
6. Avoid speaking negatively about an individual or an organization
7. Use the **STAR TECHNIQUE**
 - a. **S:** Situation (the context, what was happening)
 - b. **T:** Task (over-arching goals and objectives)
 - c. **A:** Actions (how did you achieve XYZ)
 - d. **R:** Result (if it's not positive say what you would change)
8. Ask the interviewer several questions
 - a. Prepare them ahead of time
 - i. Reference the questions below

After the Interview:

1. Follow up with the employer/interviewer
 - a. Send some type of formal thank you
 - i. Email, thank you card, etc.
2. Evaluate your performance
 - a. Self-reflection is important
3. Make notes from the interview to prepare for the future

Commonly asked interview questions:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why are you interested in working for this company?
3. Tell me about your education.
4. Why have you chosen this particular field?
5. Describe your best/worst boss.
6. In a job, what interests you most/least?
7. What is your major weakness?
8. Give an example of how you solved a problem in the past.
9. What are your strengths?
10. How do others describe you?
11. What do you consider your best accomplishment in your last job?
12. Where do you see yourself in three years?
13. Think about something you consider a failure in your life, and tell me why you think it happened.
14. How do you think you will fit into this operation?
15. If you were hired, what ideas/talents could you contribute to the position or our company?
16. Give an example where you showed leadership and initiative.
17. Give an example of when you were able to contribute to a team project.
18. What have you done to develop or change in the last few years?
19. Do you have any questions for me?

Questions to ask the Interviewer/Employer:

Pro tips:

- Never give up the chance to ask questions of the interviewer or interview team during your interview. This is your chance to further assess fit for yourself and determine if you can see yourself working there.
- Pick 5 or 6 questions and have them written down when you go into your interview. Keep in mind that some may be answered as you go through the interview process. You may only have time to ask 2 or 3 questions due to time. Don't keep the interview team too long, especially if you get the sense they have back-to-back interviews.

Here are some questions you can ask at the end of an interview (not an exhaustive list):

1. What are the next steps in your process of hiring for this position? (What is your timeline?)
2. Will you contact all applicants whether they are successful or not?
3. Can you tell me more about the day-to-day responsibilities of this job?
4. What do you think are the most important skills or qualities for someone to excel in this role?
5. What does a typical work day look like?
6. What are your expectations for this role during the first 30 days, 60 days, 1 year?
7. Describe the culture of the company.
8. What are some of the ways employees communicate in order to facilitate the completion of their goals and duties?
9. Where do you think this organization is headed in the next 5 years?

10. What are the biggest opportunities facing the company/department right now?
11. What are the biggest challenges facing the company/department right now? In the next 5 or so years?
12. What are the greatest challenges I will face in this role if I am hired?
13. What do you like best about working for this company?
14. Are there chances for growth or advancement within this company?
15. What is the company's stance on professional development? Will seminars, workshops, conferences, or trainings be part of my work here if I get hired?
16. What is the typical work week/expected hours of business? Is overtime expected & if so, how often?
17. How would you describe this company's values?
18. If you are interviewing with a team of people, but your direct supervisor is not on the team, ask if you will be allowed to meet that person before accepting an offer. Same thing with asking to meet team members.
19. Tell me about your onboarding process. Should I expect paperwork or training that needs to be completed prior to my first day?
20. How are employees evaluated here? Is there a performance review process?
21. What is expected of this new hire in terms of accomplishments in the first (month, 6 months, year)?
22. Is there anything else I can provide you with that would be helpful or other questions I can answer for you?
23. How does this company define and measure success?
24. Will I have any sort of mentor if chosen for this position?
25. To whom should I reach out if I have any further questions?

How to answer Interview Questions About Yourself

1. Tell me about yourself.
For this question, you will want to prepare an elevator pitch. An elevator pitch is a 10 to 30 second summation of your life and accomplishments. Interviewers ask this question because they want to know what makes you who you are. Show them that you are a well-rounded individual who can create a beneficial work-life balance.
2. What are your strengths?
Make sure you utilize the **STAR technique** here (review page 3). You want to be sure to explain the situation, the task, the action you took, and the result. This answer should be as truthful as possible. Try your best to stay away from cliché answers. Think outside of the box and use experiences where you used your unique abilities.
3. What are your weaknesses?
Again, avoid clichés. The interviewer wants to know that you're human and wants an accurate picture of you. Be honest about your weakness, but come to the interview prepared to talk about how you are improving said weakness. Interviewers want to see that you are taking steps to improve what you believe you need to work on.

4. How would your boss/friends/co-workers describe you?
This question can be difficult, but do not give up in your answer. Consider the feedback you have recently received. Think about your personality and how others interact with you. Do people ask you for advice? Do you make others laugh? Are you actively involved? Most importantly, make sure to be honest. If you are hired, your new employer will want to see the traits you mentioned.
5. Where do you see yourself in five years?
Always be realistic about where you see yourself. Be sure that it shows you are ambitious, but always realistic. If the position you are interviewing for aligns with your future career goals, mention it!

How to Answer Interview Questions About Your Previous Experience

1. Why are you leaving your current position?
The key to success with answering this question is to stay positive about your previous employers. Your interviewer does not want to hire someone that will speak ill of them in the future. Always explain that you are excited for new opportunities. If you are new to the professional world, mention that and talk about how prepared you are to take on these new challenges.
2. What accomplishments are you most proud of?
Make sure to utilize the **STAR Technique** when answering this question to explain the situation, the task, your action, and the result.
3. Tell me about a difficult experience you have had while at work and how you dealt with it.
Again, utilize the STAR Technique. If you haven't had any difficult experiences at work, respond that way but related to other areas of your life. Interviewers ask this question to learn about how you react to difficult circumstances.

How to Answer Interview Questions About the Company

1. What do you know about our company?
This question is asked because the interviewer wants to see that you care about your potential future employer. Research the company so you understand what they are made up of. Add personal touches when answering this question to make yourself memorable. Draw from what is important to the company.
2. Why did you decide to apply for a position with us?
Never tell the person interviewing you that you are just looking for something to pay the bills. Focus on other factors that inspired you to choose that job in particular. Select specific attributes about the company that you like and highlight them. Mention that you applied for this position to gain experience in the field.

3. Why do you consider this to be a good opportunity?
Potential employers want to know what you see in them and what you are looking for. Be sure to answer honestly and prepare to smooth out the details you are unsure of. Highlight how the company can help you grow and vice versa.
4. Why should we consider you?
Be sure to draw on your strengths and respond with attributes and experiences that make you unique. Use knowledge about the company to tailor your answer.

How to Answer Interview Questions About Others

1. What kinds of people do you find most difficult to work with?
Be honest, as you should with every question, but do not make yourself seem negative. Don't say that you never get along with a certain type of person. The company wants to know that you can interact professionally with all clients and coworkers. Show them that you are a problem solver. Tell them different instances where you have disagreed with someone and how you resolved it.
2. Who was the work coworker/classmate you have ever worked with?
The company is focusing on the fact that you do not hold a grudge. Demonstrate how you learned from the interactions with these individuals.
3. What is one of the most difficult conflicts you have been able to resolve?
Try to stay clear of personal stories, as you may release too many person details that work against you. Focus on the experience where you showcased your leadership skills in a professional setting.
4. How well do you work with other people?
More likely than not, you will be required to work with others. Described past experiences you have had while working on a team and how you handled them. Make sure you show that you are dedicated to a project or situation regardless of your social hierarchy position.

How to Answer Interview Question About Your Work Style

1. Do you work better under pressure or with time to plan and organize?
Be as honest as possible. Both parties need to have realistic expectations of each other.
2. Describe how you allocate your time and set your priorities on a typical day.
A response to schoolwork is completely relevant in response to this question. Draw from your experiences or managing multiple tasks and allocating your time to each of them. Show how you were successful.

3. What are you looking for in your ideal position?
Tailor your answer to the position you are interviewing for. Respond with something that follows the lines of the job description, but don't quote word for word.
4. What is more important – completing the job on time or doing it right?
This question can vary based on the industry you are in. Be sure to mention that you do your best to ensure all your tasks are completed promptly and correctly.
5. What kinds of decisions are most difficult for you?
It is acceptable to explain that you are cautious in making difficult decisions, but you want to make sure that the employer understands that you are will to make difficult decisions in a logical manner. The interviews are looking for someone they can trust in tough situations.

Behavioral Interview Questions

1. What is a Behavioral Job Interview?
Behavioral job interviews are based on the technique that past behavior is likely to predict future behavior. Behavioral interviews follow a more structured format and are more predictive of on-the-job performance. To do well, you need to prepare.
2. How to Identify a Behavior-Based Interview Question
Most behavioral questions begin with things like:
 - a. Tell me about a time when...
 - b. Describe a situation when you faced a problem related to...
 - c. Tell me how you approached a situation where...
 - d. Think of a circumstance in which you...

Situational Interview Questions and Techniques

1. What is a Situational Interview Technique?
Situational interviews evaluate your ability to respond to hypothetically challenges and situations. They proved an opportunity for employers to assess your knowledge, skills, and values which allows them to determine if you have the skills necessary for the position.
2. Describe a situation where you had to collaborate with a difficult colleague.
A good candidate will demonstrate professionalism in attitude and communication style when dealing with others. Problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills are key. Candidates need to be capable of working with everyone. It is important to demonstrate that you achieved a workable outcome in relation to coworker-related difficulties.

3. Describe a situation where you had to work with a difficult manager or important client/customer.
This answer will reveal your behavior towards authority, communication, and problem solving. Employers want to hire a person who will not allow personal feelings or disagreements get in the way of working relationships. Professionalism falls above everything else.
4. Describe a situation where you needed to persuade someone to accept your point of view or convince them to change something.
This question explores soft skills like communication and relationship building. You should demonstrate empathy and listening skills that allow you to understand all sides of a situation.
5. Describe a difficult problem you faced and how you approached it.
Use the **STAR Technique**. Don't just provide what you did. Provide the thoughts behind your approach.
6. Describe a mistake you have made professionally.
This question is about finding out how you learn, reflect upon mistakes, and take lessons learned into the future. You must be willing to admit a past mistake otherwise an employer will think you are unwilling to learning from difficult situations.
7. Describe a situation where you worked under a tight deadline.
Here you are being asked to tell a success story that demonstrates how you organize your work, deal with pressure, and determined priorities. Share your planning processes, how you communicate with others, and how you collaborate.
8. Describe a time when you received criticism.
Like the question about making a mistake, this demonstrates how you learn. This shows when you have been open to feedback and how you took said feedback to make changes.
9. Describe a situation when you needed to take initiative.
A good answer will show off your awareness and proactivity. This shows a willingness to go above and beyond and how you will solve problems in the workplace.
10. Describe a situation when you have come onto a new team or a new working environment.
This questions is analyzing how candidates adapt to change and to working with new people. Top candidates will express their adaptability and their openness to change.
11. Describe a situation when you needed to work with a client or customer who was very different from you.
This question shows how you adapt when interacting with various personalities and how you alter you communication styles and utilize your people skills.