

# Interview Prep Packet



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.

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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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## Introduction

Do NOT wait until the last second to prepare for an interview. You will need time to plan what to wear, research the company, do several mock interviews, think about questions they may ask you and how you will respond, take care of logistics, and get plenty of rest.

Career Services is happy to help with the interview preparation process. Make an appointment through Handshake to learn more about the interview process or to schedule a mock interview. When doing this, be sure to include what position you have applied for and where you are interviewing. Include links to the organization and the position if you have them. If you need any assistance in this process, please email [career@uwsuper.edu](mailto:career@uwsuper.edu) or call 715-394-8024.

## 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 you are educated about the position
4. Research the organization
  - a. Set aside plenty of time for your research process
    - i. Visit the company website
    - ii. Browse the organization's social media pages
    - iii. Use LinkedIn
    - iv. Contact your connections
    - v. Get to know the industry and the competitors
5. Plan your attire ahead of time
  - a. Try on your outfit beforehand to make sure that everything fits
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. Review your resume and the job description
2. Be mindful of 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
  - b. Reference the research you did
    - i. Ask questions about information you found, such as the company's mission and culture

**After the Interview:**

1. Follow up with the employer/interviewers
  - 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 constraints. Don't keep the interview team too long, especially if you get the sense they have back-to-back interviews.

**Example questions to 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?

**Illegal Interview Questions:**

If an interviewer asks you questions about the following information, they may be liable in a discrimination lawsuit. If you are asked questions regarding:

- Age
- Citizenship
- Criminal Record
- Disability
- Education
- Family and Parental Status
- Height and Weight
- Residence
- Race, ethnicity, or color
- Gender or sex
- National Origin
- Religion
- Military
- Marital Status

### Sample Illegal Job Interview Questions by Category

\*Please note there are some appropriate ways for committees and hiring managers to ask questions related to the following categories

- Age
  1. How old are you?
  2. What year were you born?
  3. When did you graduate from high school?
- Citizenship
  1. Are you a U.S. citizen?
  2. Are your parents or spouse citizens of the US?
  3. On what dates did you, your parents, or your spouse require US citizenship?
  4. Are you, your parents, or your spouse naturalized or native-born US citizens?
- Criminal Record
  1. Have you ever been arrested?
  2. Have you ever spent a night in jail?
- Disability
  1. Do you have any physical or mental disabilities?
  2. What's your medical history?
  3. Have you ever had any serious illness?
  4. How does your condition affect your abilities?
  5. What caused your handicap?
  6. What is the progress of your handicap?
- Education
  1. What is the religious affiliation of the University you attended?
  2. Was there a predominate race at the school you attended?
  3. What was the nationality of the school administrators, students, and/or faculty?
- Family and Parental Status
  1. Any questions concerning spouse or spouse's employment, salary, arrangements, or dependents
  2. What kind of child care arrangements have you made?
  3. How will your spouse feel about the amount of time you will be traveling if you get this job?
  4. This is a demanding job – how will your spouse handle the long hours?
  5. How have you managed such an impressive career as a single mom?
  6. How many kids do you have?

7. Do you plan to have children?
  8. How old are your children?
  9. Are you pregnant?
- Height and Weight
    1. Any inquiries not based on actual job requirements
  - Residence
    1. Do you own or rent your home?
    2. Do you live in town?
    3. With whom do you live?
  - Race, ethnicity, or color
    1. What race are you?
    2. Are you a member of a minority group?
  - Gender or Sex
    1. Do you wish to be addressed as Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms.?
    2. What are your plans to have children in the future?
  - National Origin
    1. What is your nationality?
    2. Where were you born?
    3. Where are your parents from?
    4. What is your heritage?
    5. What is your mother tongue?
    6. How did you acquire the ability to speak, read, or write a foreign language?
    7. How did you acquire familiarity with a foreign language?
    8. What language is spoken in your home?
  - Religion or creed
    1. What is your religious affiliation?
    2. Which religious holidays will you be taking off from work?
    3. Do you attend church regularly?
  - Military
    1. What type or condition is your military discharge?
    2. Can you supply your discharge papers?
  - Marital Status
    1. Are you married, divorced, separated, engaged, widowed, etc.?
    2. Is this your maiden or married name?
    3. What is the name of your relative/spouse/children?
    4. Do you live with your parents?

### **How to handle illegal questions:**

Strategy – Example: Do you have any children?

1. Determine why the interviewer is asking the question. Does s/he have a legitimate concern?  
Think: Maybe the employer wants to know if you are available for travel outside of the 8-5 day.
2. Tailor your answer to speak to that concern, but gracefully avoid the illegal part of the question.  
Answer: If your concern is about my availability, I am available and willing to travel overnight and on weekends with at least a week's notice.

3. Turn the conversation back to your job-related strengths.  
Continue with your answer: I pride myself on being flexible in order to meet the demands and requirements of the job. I can be flexible with both schedule and tasks, and expect that to happen from time to time.

Keep in mind – essentially you are answering to the intent of the question, but it takes practice to quickly determine what that intent is.

## Understanding Business Dress and Putting Together the Outfit



Career Services

## Dress to Impress

Business Professional versus Business Casual:  
How are they different?

### IMPORTANCE OF PROPER ATTIRE

#### First impressions make all the difference.

Proper attire all depends on the organization you are working for. Researching the company allows you to find out attire expectations in advance. This helps you to gauge how formal or informal the dress code may be. More often than not, it makes sense to wear traditional business professional or business casual attire.

### BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL ATTIRE

#### What is it?

Business professional attire is normally worn for formal business events, such as a job interview. Business professional attire almost always means suits or nice slacks and a blazer. These are to be worn in natural colors with conservative, closed-toe shoes. Attention to detail is crucial because in business professional attire, one should always be dressed their best.

### PUTTING TOGETHER THE OUTFIT

#### The outfit, accessories, and shoes

- Outfits should consist of a matching, two-piece, dark-colored suit or a tailored shirt/bottom combination.
- Accessories should be minimal. Wear a conservative tie or bow-tie.
- Align body piercing and tattoo coverage with company standards.
- Always carry a portfolio or professional bag with your resume.
- Shoes should be polished and should match the belt color. Avoid sneakers and open-toed shoes.

### BUSINESS CASUAL ATTIRE

#### What is it?

Business casual attire is the normal dress code for most professional workplaces within the United States. Business casual almost always consists of slacks or khaki bottoms, open collar or polo shirts, and a seasonal sport coat or blazer along with dress shoes that cover a majority of the foot.

### PUTTING TOGETHER THE OUTFIT

#### The outfit, accessories, and shoes

- Outfits should consist of tailored and pressed items with conservative necklines. The top and bottom do not need to match.
- Accessories allow more color and design. Bow-ties or ties are not necessary. Again, align body piercings and tattoos with the company.
- Shoes should be closed-toe but open-toed shoes are often acceptable depending on the employer.

SOURCE: [WWW.STETSON.COM/ADMINISTRATION/CAREER](http://WWW.STETSON.COM/ADMINISTRATION/CAREER)

## Dress for Success and Make a Good First Impression



# Dress for success!

A GUIDE ON HOW TO DRESS FOR YOUR NEXT JOB INTERVIEW



### BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL JOB ATTIRE

#### Clothing Considerations:

- Wear solid, dark, or neutral colors
- Layer light colors underneath
- Avoid stripes, flashy prints, or bright colors

**Suit jacket and pants should always be matching colors**

#### Your shoes should be:

- Closed-toe heel or dress shoes

#### Personal items:

- Limit what you bring
- Keep cellphones turned off and out of sight
- Carry a portfolio or professional bag



### BUSINESS CASUAL JOB ATTIRE

#### Daily Attire

- Wear nice, wrinkle-free pants/slacks
- Wear knee-length dresses or skirts
- Avoid jeans, shorts, sundresses, or athletic attire
- Wear comfortable, closed-toe shoes
- Consider wearing a blazer or cardigan



### MAKE A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION

#### General Recommendations

- Maintain a well groomed hairstyle
- Keep nails and makeup natural
- Wear moderate jewelry and mild fragrance
- Align piercing and tattoos to the company standard
- Select a belt that matches your attire
- Wear neat, clean dress shoes
- Make sure your clothing is in good condition
  - Tailored
  - Free of wrinkles and lint
  - In good condition



SOURCE: [WWW.STETSON.COM/ADMINISTRATION/CAREER](http://WWW.STETSON.COM/ADMINISTRATION/CAREER)

If you are visiting or interviewing at a job fair, take a look at these tips

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN  
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**JOB FAIR  
PREPARATION**

**RESUMES**

**Always be prepared.**

 You should be prepared with resumes in hand, but employers will often ask for them to be sent in with the application.

Carry some business cards with you - employers are more likely to take them due to their size. Make sure they include your contact information.

**ELEVATOR PITCH**

**Sell yourself.**

 Prepare an elevator pitch for yourself. This is a short introduction on who you are, what you have to offer, and why you're interested in the company.

Practice ahead of time because practice always makes perfect.

**BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL**

**Confidence is key.**

 Job fairs can be very loud, therefore you need to speak up and speak slowly. Shake hands with employers, maintain eye contact, and pay attention to personal space.

Dress in business professional attire. Look your best when meeting potential employers.

**MANAGING YOUR APPLICATIONS**

**Stay true to your word.**

 Follow any instructions given to you by the employer. If you are no longer interested in the position or the company, it is courtesy to let the company know. If you say you are going to do something, do it. Employers will notice if you do not stick to your word.

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