

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Below are samples of questions which you may be asked as well as questions which you may wish to ask. Remember, relax and breathe during the interview so that you present your best effort.

COMMONLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

It may be helpful to write some of your answers on index cards and practice your responses (aloud) until the answers come smoothly and without relying on the cards.

- What qualifications do you have that make you think that you will be successful in your career?
- How do you determine or evaluate success?
- What do you think it takes to be successful in a company like ours?
- How would you describe the ideal job for you following graduation?
- Why did you decide to seek an internship with this company?
- What do you know about our company?
- What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
- How would you describe yourself?
- How do you think a friend or professor who knows you well would describe you?
- What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
- How has your college experience prepared you for your career choice?
- Why should I give you an internship?
- What led you to choose your field of major study?
- What college subjects did you like best? Why?
- What college subjects did you like least? Why?
- Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
- Which is more important to you, the money or the type of job?
- What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- What major problem in school or at work have you encountered and how did you deal with it?
- What have you learned from your mistakes?
- How do you work under pressure?
- In what kind of a work environment are you most comfortable?
- Do you think your grades are a good indication of your academic achievement?
- What have you learned from participation in extracurricular activities?
- In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?
- What qualities should a successful intern possess?
- Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and subordinates.
- What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction?
- Describe your most rewarding college experience.
- If you were hiring a student for this position, what qualities would you look for?
- What are your long range and short range goals and objectives?
- What specific goals, other than those related to your occupation, have you established for yourself?
- What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
- What do you really want to do in life?
- How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
- What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?

QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEWER

General Information

There is not a set number of questions to ask. However, your questions should show a thought process. Employers are interested in candidates who ask pertinent questions and who can converse based on what they know. Prioritize your questions based on the interview and realize that some of the questions may be answered during the course of the interview. If this occurs, it is perfectly fine to state, "I was interested in knowing about _____, but that information was provided during the interview." However, if all facets of your question were not answered, you may ask for clarification.

Remember:

The best questions - for both the interviewer and the interviewee - are open-ended questions. That is, they are questions that cannot be answered with a "yes" or "no."

It is okay to have a list of your questions in front of you and to take notes when the questions are answered.

If a question was already answered during the interview, skip it and move to the next one on your listing.

Breathe. Relax. Have confidence. You may have butterflies in your stomach, but no one else can see that. Look for a good fit.

QUESTIONS

- What do you most enjoy about your work with this organization/company/agency?
- How will my performance be measured? By whom?
- What are the day-to-day responsibilities of this job?
- What are some of the skills and abilities necessary for someone to succeed in this job?
- What particular company equipment and software do you use? (To be asked if you require specific materials to perform your duties.)
- Can you describe an ideal intern?
- What were the greatest strengths and weaknesses of the last person who had this position?
- Can you describe a typical week in this position?
- I enjoy work that is fast-paced, high energy and requires innovation and creativity. Will this position provide that kind of environment?

PITFALLS TO AVOID/NEGATIVE FACTORS LEADING TO REJECTION

We've all made mistakes or wished we had handled some things differently - even the person interviewing you. So, if someone appears to dwell on an "imperfection," turn it around. What matters the most is not that you encountered difficulty, but that you **LEARNED** something from the experience. If you had a bad semester, can you explain it? Was there a family illness? Did you take on a job with too many hours? Did you goof off? Don't try to hide it or brush it off. Take ownership and then explain what you did to prevent the pitfall from reoccurring.

Potential employers will possibly take note of the following:

A poor scholastic record: low grades without reasonable explanation

Poor attitude: lack of self confidence (It is okay to be nervous, but be in control of it. Breathe. Relax. Remember, you are also interviewing them to be sure it is a good fit.)

Lack of goals/objectives: poorly motivated/does not know her/his own interests (Where do you want to be in five years? How will this internship fit into those goals?)

Lack of interest in our type of business/lack of interest in our company/not interested in the position we have to offer (If you realize that the opportunity is not a good fit, remember, you are still gaining valuable interviewing experience. Stay engaged in the conversation. You can always courteously turn down the position.)

Lack of enthusiasm/lack of drive/not sufficiently aggressive/little evidence of initiative (You might be thinking, "I just want a job. Just hire me already." But what you should be thinking is, "I really want this job. What can I do to really sell myself during the interview? What would make me want to hire myself?" Would you want to hire someone who just wanted a job or would you rather hire someone who could show you that they were the best candidate for the job?)

Inability to express self/poor speech/inability to sell self (Practice, practice, practice. Rehearse behind closed doors. Or with a trusted friend. Or in front of a mirror. You don't want your answers to be rote, but you do want them to be polished.)

Poor personal appearance/lack of neatness/careless dress (Dress to impress. You really never do get a second chance to make a first impression.)

Lack of maturity/no evidence of leadership potential

Lack of extracurricular activities/inadequate reasons for not participating in activities (Employers are looking for well-rounded individuals. They want to know that you work well but also that you realize the importance of balance.)

Failure to get information about our company/lack of preparation for the interview/did not read the literature (Check out the website at the very least!!)

Inadequate preparation for type of work/inappropriate background (If this is the case, then it is not a good fit and a rejection is a good thing. They would not be happy with your performance and you would not feel valued or appreciated. Keep looking!)