Types of Interviews

Always check with the employer in advance, so you know what type of interview to expect, as there are a variety of styles and formats. Below are some of the common types of interviews that you may encounter.

Phone Interview

Phone interviews are commonly used to screen candidates to narrow the pool of applicants who will be invited for in-person interviews. Without visual and body language cues, telephone interviews rely heavily on the content in your answers, and your ability to project enthusiasm and interest in your voice.

Some Specific Phone Interview Tips Include:

Scheduling
- If the employer calls you when you're not expecting it to schedule the interview and/or to conduct the interview, it's completely appropriate to ask to call back within a reasonable amount of time so that you can prepare.
- When offered the interview, ask for the names and contact information of the people who are interviewing you since you won't be able to exchange business cards.

Environment
- Ensure a quiet environment, free from noise and distractions.
- Have your "tools" by the phone; resume, cover letter, job description, pen and paper for notes, company research, a list of questions to ask, and water.

Dress
- Groom and dress as you would for work to help project confidence.

Technology
- Make sure your phone is fully charged and that you have good reception.
- Don't use speakerphone.
- Turn off your call waiting.

Body Language
- Standing will give your voice more enthusiasm and intensity, and smiling helps to project friendliness.
- Speak slowly, clearly, and directly into the phone.
- Check in with the interviewer. Phone interviews can sometimes be awkward and it's difficult to discern when to stop talking. Make your answers concise and clear and feel free to ask "did I answer your question?" or "do you want me to speak more on this?"

Skype Interview

Like phone interviews, Skype interviews may also be used to screen candidates, but can feel more personal because they allow for a face-to-face interaction. Because your interviewer can see you and the location you're in, it's important that you're dressed, and act, as you would for an in-person interview and that you're in a quiet and pleasant looking environment.
Scheduling

- When offered the interview, ask for the names and contact information of the people who are interviewing you since you won’t be able to exchange business cards.

Environment

- Ensure a quiet environment, free from noise and distractions. Also, make sure your environment/background is clean and pleasant looking.
- Close email and other applications that may distract you.
- Have a pen and paper for notes near the computer (but out of view of the camera), in case you need to write something down, as well as water.

Dress

- Groom and dress as you would for an in-person interview.

Technology

- Test audio, video and practice in advance.
- Use an appropriate Skype name and photo.

Body Language/Eye Contact

- Sit back from the camera so your hands are visible.
- Maintain good posture and appropriate gestures.
- Speak to the camera, not the screen, so that you maintain good eye contact.

Group Interview

This typically includes a company and position presentation to multiple candidates simultaneously, and group interactions such as work simulation exercises. Employers use this type of interview to assess things like communication, interpersonal, team and leadership skills, as well as how you handle stress. Introduce yourself to the other candidates before the interview begins. Actively participate – which includes listening – but don’t interrupt others or dominate the conversation. Watch your non-verbal communication and pay attention to all of the interviewers for valuable clues.

Panel Interview

Various representatives involved in the hiring process may meet with a candidate at the same time for a panel interview. These are often conducted just like any other interview (namely, consisting of common and/or behavioral interview questions), but are unique in that rapport can be more difficult to establish with each person on the panel. Because this is such an important part of the interview process, take the opportunity when you are introduced to look each person in the eye, greet her/him using her/his name and shake hands.

As you answer questions, respond by making eye contact and using the name of the person who asked the question, then include the rest of the panel in your answer. As you answer, try to cross reference answers you’ve previously made (if it’s appropriate), but don’t simply repeat your previous answer. When preparing questions be sure to include ones that are relevant to each person’s role within the organization.

At the conclusion of the interview, be sure to get business cards for all panel members to send each of them a thank you note.
Behavioral Interview

Many employers use an approach called “behavioral interviewing.” This consists of the employer asking you to describe your skills and experience by telling brief stories about tasks, responsibilities, successes or failures.

Examples of Behavioral Questions

- Give me an example of a time when you had to juggle multiple tasks.
- Tell me about a situation in which you solved a problem as a member of a group or team.
- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult person. What was the result?

Answers to behavioral questions should describe specific situations where your actions are the focus and should invoke the S.T.A.R. method:

S - situation (give an example of a situation you were involved in that resulted in a positive outcome);

T - task (describe the tasks involved in that situation);

A - action (what did you do/what actions did you take to complete the tasks effectively);

R - result (what was the outcome? what happened?). Often, behavioral questions are used to assess skills required by the position, such as time management, teamwork, initiative, organizational and communication skills.

For more information, check out our Behavioral Interview page.

Situational Interview

This type of interviews are similar to behavioral interview questions - but they are focused on the future, and ask hypothetical questions, whereas behavioral interview questions look at the past.

The advantage is that employers can put all candidates in the same hypothetical situations, and compare their answers.

Situational Interview Questions

- What would you do if you made a strong recommendation in a meeting, but your colleagues decided against it?
- How would you handle it if your team resisted a new idea or policy you introduced?
- How would you handle it if the priorities for a project you were working on were suddenly changed?
- What would you do if the work of an employee you managed didn't meet expectations?
- What would you do if an important task was not up to standard, but the deadline to complete it had passed?

Adapted from betterteam.com
More examples of Situational Interview Questions can be found in our List of Interview Questions sheet.

Case Interview

This style is usually seen in interviews for management consulting and investment banking but is also used in other industries. Candidates are given a case – a set of facts – to analyze and solve. Generally interviewers are looking at the approach used as much as the answer. Be sure to build a logical framework for answering the question. It is generally expected that you will ask questions. Interviewers are usually assessing quantitative and analytical skills, problem-solving, communication, listening ability, creativity, flexibility, and the ability to think quickly under pressure. It is imperative to prepare for this style of interview, and try not to “wing it.” Research the company you’re interviewing with as companies often post guides for “acing the case interview.”

Check out our Resource Page on Case Interviews as well.

Technical Interview

Technical interviews are common for employers recruiting for engineering, science, or software roles. Essentially, it is an interview to assess your technical ability for the role, and the depth and breadth of your knowledge in your chosen field.

Technical interviews are also designed to assess your problem-solving skills, your communication skills, and your ability to think under pressure. The process that is used to solve a given challenge is of interest to employers, as it gives them a glimpse into how you would solve a real-world problem at work.

There are various formats for a technical interview that you may encounter. Your experience will vary depending on:

- The employer;
- The type of position (full time, co-op/internship);
- The type of role (for example, software development, operations support, plant engineer, hardware design engineer).

For more information, please visit our Technical Interviews Page

Recorded Interview

With pre-recorded interviews, the clue really is in the name – candidates are normally given a set of interview questions and asked to record themselves answering these questions.

While it sounds simple enough, pre-recorded interviews can actually be pretty tricky to master, particularly if you’ve only been given a set amount of time to give and upload your answers. In that case, the pressure really is on. Here are some tips for you to consider:

1. Treat It like Any Other Job Interview
2. Practice, Practice, Practice
3. Remember, You’re Not a Robot
4. Don’t Rush It
5. Take Advantage of the Situation
To learn about how to Create a Video-Friendly Environment and for details on how you Master a Pre-Recorded Interview, please visit your Recorded Interviews Resource Page.

**TIP:** while the employer will be focusing on you, they’re probably going to give your background a quick once over too – so don’t let a controversial poster or picture catch their eye for all the wrong reasons!

Adapted from interviewstream.com and bubble-jobs.co.uk