



BEYOND THE ACADEMY INTERVIEWS: PREPARING FOR QUESTIONS

PREPARATION BASICS: IDENTIFY YOUR STRENGTHS

Graduate students sometimes wonder, “What do I have to offer the world outside of academe?”

Rethink your accomplishments and abilities from the perspective of a different kind of employer.

SKILLS AND QUALITIES

- Self-motivated
- Ability to reach and defend conclusions
- Leadership
- Analytical
- Strategic thinker
- Presentation/communication skills
- Problem-solver
- Ability to deal with ambiguity
- Autonomy/teamwork
- Successful in competitive environments
- Thorough and efficient researcher
- Ability to convey complex information to a variety of audiences
- High performance under pressure

INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

You may encounter different types of interviews

- Resume-based
- Behavioral
- Case Study

Be prepared for all types.

CONVEY

- Problem solving
- Decision making
- Integrity
- Leadership
- Initiative and creativity
- Communication skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Adaptability
- Ability to deal with ambiguity

STANDARD INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Tell me about yourself?
- What do you know about our organization?
- Why do you want to work for us?
- Why you? What can you do for us that someone else can't?
- Your resume suggests that you may be over-qualified for this position. What is your opinion? Why do you want this job? Are you over-qualified?
- What important trends do you see in our industry?
- What do you find most attractive about this position? What seems least attractive?
- What do you look for in a job?
- What features did you like the most about graduate school/former position/project?
- What are your weaknesses?
- What are your long-range goals?
- What motivates you?
- What has been your toughest challenge?
- How do colleagues describe you?
- Why did you choose your field of study?
- What has been your most rewarding academic experience?
- What have you done that shows initiative?
- What frustrates you?
- What new skills have you developed in the past year?
- What have you learned from your mistakes?
- What qualities do you admire most in others?
- How would you describe your work style?
- How do you manage time?
- How do you deal with pressure?
- How do you resolve conflicts?
- Where do you see yourself five years from now?
- How do you define and evaluate success?
- How would you define a good manager?
- What is your leadership style?

COMMON BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS

- Describe an instance when you had to think on your feet to get out of a bad situation.
 - Give me an example of a time when you had to deal with unreasonable expectations.
 - Tell me about a time when you successfully persuaded someone to do things your way.
 - Give me an example of your ability to think outside the box.
 - Tell me about a time on the job that tested your coping skills.
 - When have you had to cope with the anger or hostility of another person?
 - Give me a specific occasion when you conformed to a policy with which you didn't agree.
 - When have you had to deal with an ambiguous situation at work?
 - Give me examples of your ability to adapt to a variety of people, situations, and environments.
 - Have you ever had to deal with an unresolved situation on the job?
 - Tell me about a time when you worked effectively with someone you didn't like (or vice versa).
 - Tell me about an experience that illustrates your ability to influence another person verbally.
 - Tell me about a time when you were willing to disagree with another person in order to build a positive outcome.
 - Describe a time when you had to sell an idea to a boss, authority figure, or technical expert.
 - Tell me about a time when your ability to reward and encourage others created positive motivation.
 - Tell me about a time when you were asked to compromise your integrity.
 - Describe a time when you had to bend the rules in order to be successful or accomplish a goal.
 - Give me an example of a time when you used facts and reason to persuade another person to take action.
- Give me an example of the greatest success you ever had in the use of delegation.
 - Have you ever made an unpopular decision?

What questions are appropriate for YOU to ask during the interview phase?

Use this opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge of the employer/industry, play to your strengths, and gather info. Questions that refer to information you've gained during the interview reflect your attentiveness and interest. You might ask:

- Is this a new or a replacement position?
 - (If new, how does it factor into the employer's overall plans for growth?)
- How would you describe a typical day for this position?
- What do you enjoy about working here? Least favorite aspects?
- What have previous people in this position moved on to?
- What is the average stay in this position?
- How much travel is involved?
- How frequently are employees relocated?
- What kind of initial training would I receive?
- What opportunities exist for professional development?
- Describe the ideal first year for someone in this position.
- What are the prospects for advancement beyond this level?
- Does the organization promote from within? Fill senior-level positions with outside hires?
- What is a typical career path at your organization?
- What is your timeline for making a decision in this search? (They will usually tell you, but if they do not, feel free to ask.)