



Interview Preparation and Tips

Published by

Career Services

Gettysburg Campus – 717-339-3576 – careergettysburg@hacc.edu

Harrisburg Campus – 717-780-2522 – career@hacc.edu

Lancaster Campus – 717-358-2290 – careerlancaster@hacc.edu

Lebanon Campus – 717-270-6359 – careerlebanon@hacc.edu

York Campus – 717-718-0328 – careeryork@hacc.edu

June 2017

Job Interview Tips



Before:

- Research the organization and position
- Consider common interview questions and prepare potential answers; think about your strengths and what you could bring to the position
- Make a list of any questions you have about the job
- Print copies of your resume, cover letter, etc.
- Plan your route for getting to the interview so that you'll be able to walk in 15 minutes early
- Prepare your attire – business professional is best
- Turn your cell phone off or on do not disturb

During:

- Be yourself
- Greet your interviewer with a firm handshake
- Smile, make eye contact, and try to appear calm, confident, and assertive
- Be enthusiastic and positive, and show that you are interested in the organization
- Use proper grammar and diction, and select your words carefully (avoid “um” and “like”)
- Highlight your strengths and qualifications; put a positive spin on anything that could potentially sound negative
- Ask questions about the position and organization (avoid questions that you could have already researched)



After:

- Thank your interviewer for taking the time to meet with you before leaving the interview
- Follow up with a thank you note – a note sent via mail is best, but email may also be acceptable in some cases
- Use this as an additional opportunity to express your enthusiasm for the position and organization

20 COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The more prepared you are going into an interview; the more likely you will be able to put your best foot forward. The key to good interviewing is to demonstrate your personal competence by answering questions with confidence.

As you prepare for your next interview, please keep in mind these common interview questions. Obviously, an individual cannot plan for every single question that may be asked, but reviewing potential questions and thinking of your own responses will certainly help to prepare for common questions. The more prepared that you are will help to ensure a successful interview. You leave a positive impression and increase the chance of getting a job offer.

Here are some common questions and tips on how to respond:

1. ***Tell me about yourself.*** Talk about your background. Focus on your education and skills for the position, but you can also include some personal information like where you were raised. Think in terms of the “30 second commercial” to grab the interviewer’s attention.
2. ***What did you enjoy about your most recent position?*** Working with people, administrative duties, supervisory or training responsibilities, travel, etc. are all examples; try to focus on things that you would most likely be doing in the new position in which you are interviewing.
3. ***Why do you want to work here?*** Talk about information from the research you have conducted about the company and position. Talk about the reputation of the company or something that you liked about their website. You could even reiterate something that they shared earlier in the interview that excites you.
4. ***Describe an ideal work environment.*** Look at your ideal job preferences list, be realistic but try to align your answer to the job profile of the new position to which you have applied.
5. ***Tell me about some things you have done that show initiative.*** Think about a time when you offered to work on a project outside your normal responsibilities. Explain the idea, the support you received, how you initiated the project and the positive outcome.
6. ***What are some of your greatest accomplishments?*** Talk about situations where you were faced with a problem or difficult assignment, the steps you took to be successful, and the final result. Use action words to describe your accomplishments.
7. ***What is a weakness you are aware of and would like to improve upon?*** Be as positive as possible and talk about how the weakness is actually a good thing like “I will work on a project until it is totally finished. That might mean that I stay after work to get my other work done. But that is how I manage tasks and it seems to work so far.”
8. ***Describe how you work under pressure.*** It is not just enough to say “good”. Provide a concrete example where you can demonstrate how you have handled working under pressure.
9. ***Tell me about a time when you were criticized at work.*** Talk about how you take constructive criticism and how you implemented the changes that were suggested to you. If you were ever corrected, talk about what you learned from the experience and insist on not repeating behavior.
10. ***How do you handle change?*** Change is inevitable, so answer this question in a positive manner with an example of a past experience.

11. **What are your goals (short-term and long-term)?** Consider telling them that a short-term goal is to secure this position and that a long-term goal would be to move up within the organization. Not everyone wants to move up in an organization; you could state a long-term goal is to establish yourself well in the position.
12. **What did you enjoy least in your past position?** Choose something that is not too negative and certainly not required for the position for which you are interviewing.
13. **Why do you want to leave your current position?** Being laid off or caught in a company downsizing unfortunately does happen. This is not a negative reflection on you as an employee so it is appropriate to share. Overall, try to never share a negative circumstance. If you were fired from a position, you'll need to think about the big picture of how you've learned from that experience and one that will not be repeated. Other reasons for seeking a new job could be seeking a full-time position, one within your career field, or one that meets your personal interests and goals. In the end, be honest and positive.
14. **What are your salary requirements?** Tell them that this is negotiable and to answer this you would need to know more about the job requirements, benefit package, etc. If they insist you offer a specific figure, offer them a range based on what you already know and your experience. Make certain you research the salary range at www.acinet.org to give an educated figure. You do not want to provide a range too low or too high. Do your homework!
15. **With 10 being the highest, rate yourself between 1 to 10.** Don't tell them 10 or anything lower than 7.5. Describe why you provided the score that you did.
16. **What type of people do you not enjoy working with?** A possible answer is "clock watchers and people who find the negative in everything". To conclude, tell them the environment and culture in which you do enjoy working.
17. **Do you prefer working alone or as part of a team?** Talk about your willingness to work in a team environment as well as your skills to work alone to complete a project.
18. **What qualities should a successful manager possess?** Talk positively about some of the managers you have worked with in the past and what qualities they offered and why you enjoyed working for them. Use key terms like open-minded, patient, and available.
19. **What would your references say about you?** Hopefully, they will say positive things about you – you should have an idea of how your references are representing you. This is your opportunity to, once again, share positive traits about yourself. Remember to notify your references of your job search plans and seek their approval before listing their contact information.
20. **Why should we hire you?** You obviously do not know the other candidates, but this is your opportunity to leave a good impression. This is your chance to summarize some of the skills you shared during the interview process highlighting how well suited you are for the position. Remember to end with emphasizing your interest and enthusiasm for the position.

At the end of the interview, remember to ask meaningful questions about the company in order for you to determine if this is the right employer and the right position for you. After all, interviewing is a two-way street. Finally, be certain to inquire about next steps of the hiring process and learn the timeline, if possible. Interviewing can be a successful experience. Good Luck!



Questions to ask during/end of an interview

- What do you look for in an employee?
- Can you describe the ideal person for this job?
- What is the best part about working for ABC Company?
- What attracted you to this company?
- How long did the last person in this position work here?
- What can I expect as a typical day's duties?
- Would you describe a typical workday and the things I would do?
- Which duties or responsibilities are most important for this job?
- What are the major challenges the new hire will face in this job?
- How will I be trained or introduced to the job?
- What are your expectations and how will I get evaluated?
- How would I get feedback on my performance?
- How long should it take for me to get my feet on the ground and become productive?
- What are the department's goals for the year?
- Who are the key people I'd be working with and what do they do?
- If hired, would I report directly to you, or to someone else?
- How soon do you plan to fill this job?
- What is the timeline for the position to be filled?
- Are there any final questions that you have for me to further explain my skillset for this job?

Dressing Professionally



Men:

Do's:

- Suits in neutral colors
- Long-sleeved collared shirts in light colors
- Conservative tie
- Polished shoes
- Dress socks that match shoe color
- Conservative watch or other simple accessories
- Well-groomed hair
- Well-groomed facial hair or clean-shaven face
- Clean and groomed fingernails

Don'ts:

- Wrinkled clothing
- Shorts, jeans, t-shirts, sneakers, or other casual clothing
- Strong cologne
- Visible tattoos or piercings

Women:

Do's:

- Suits in neutral colors (either pantsuits or skirt suits are acceptable, skirts should be around knee length)
- Professional tops in light colors
- Professional shoes (closed-toe, low heel or flat)
- Hosiery with skirts (neutral colored is best)
- Minimal accessories and make-up
- Well-groomed hair
- Clean and groomed fingernails with light-colored or no polish

Don'ts:

- Short skirts
- Low-cut tops, midriff-baring tops, or tight clothing
- Too large or too many accessories
- Extremely high heels
- Wrinkled clothing
- Shorts, jeans, t-shirts, sneakers, or other casual clothing
- Strong perfume
- Visible tattoos or piercings (other than ears)

