

Interviewing Guide

Northland College Career Education Center

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Interview Guide

Have you secured an interview, but aren't sure what to say, or what kind of questions to ask? We can share some helpful tips with you!

A common mistake made when planning for an interview is thinking you just have to show up, shake hands, & answer a few questions, share a copy of your resume with the employer, and then leave. But, it doesn't quite work that way. This guide will walk you through the steps of the interview process.



Pre-Interview

There are areas in which you should prepare yourself before an interview, like knowing information about the position for which you are interviewing, as well as the company. Looking at the website will help you learn more.

The more you know about your employer and his/her organization, the more comfortable you will feel during the interview. Also, you will impress the employer with your knowledge and will need to convince him/her of your interest.

Make sure you know about the following:

- Type of organization and its function
- Mission and goals
- Products and services, projects, and new trends in the field
- Competitors, size, location (local and international)

Practice makes perfect! Interviewing is a skill. You are encouraged to anticipate interview questions and plan your responses. Mock interviews are a way to practice your interviewing skills.

For more information:

Northland.edu/career-resources

 Northland College Career Education Center

 Northland College Alumni and Student Network

Answering Questions

What questions should I be prepared to answer?

The employer who is reviewing your resume will most likely ask you about your interests, educational background, work history and/or experience in the field, career interests, skills, and your motivation.



Some questions he/she may ask are:

Tell me about yourself.

Tell me at least 3 accomplishments from your last position.

What are the three most important skills you developed in your previous jobs/internships?

What distinguishes you from other candidates?

Why should I hire you?

Is there anything else that you would like to tell me regarding your qualifications?

Illegal Questions

State and federal laws regulate these questions, and you don't have to answer them if you feel uncomfortable.

Some of these questions include:

Are you married? Single? Divorced? Engaged?

Do you have any children? Do you want children in the future?

How old are you?

Asking Questions

What questions should I be prepared to ask?

The employer will expect you to know about his/her organization, yet you need to have additional questions in mind.



Some questions you may ask are:

What will be expected of the person who is hired for this particular position?

What qualities are you looking for in candidates for this position?

Can you tell me about a typical day here?

What is your favorite aspect about working here? Least favorite!

Questions not to ask

There are questions that aren't appropriate to ask during an interview.

Some of these questions include:

What product does your company produce?

How are women treated here?

How much money will I make?

Do I get any vacations or breaks during the year?

Do NOT ask about salary unless it is brought up. Salary is a question/discussion that takes place only when a job offer is on the table!

Interview

On the day of the interview, make sure you are dressed appropriately. Take a look at our Dress Professionally section for details. **Also, remember that on time is late, 15 to 10 minutes earlier is on time.**

During the interview, remember to practice strong verbal and nonverbal skills:

- ◆ Shake hands firmly and look the employer in the eye when you are talking
- ◆ Sit up straight with your shoulders back and hands resting on your lap, and make sure to smile when responding to questions (when appropriate). A smile will show the employer that you are confident, while it shows your enthusiasm to work for him/her.
- ◆ Speak clearly, don't mumble, and use the employer's name, pronouncing it correctly.

If you practice these tips, you can be sure your interview will be a successful one!



Be professional—General Guidelines

- ◆ Dress professionally. Make sure your attire is clean and wrinkle free.
- ◆ Make sure your hair is clean, neat and professionally styled. Make sure it does not cover your face.
- ◆ Remove facial and any body piercing other than single ear jewelry for interviews.
- ◆ Any visible tattoo should be covered.
- ◆ Less is more. Keep your look simple and successful.
- ◆ Arrive at least 10 minutes early for your interview. Introduce yourself to the receptionist.
- ◆ Abstain completely from using your cell phone and other electronic devices, food and beverages, smoking, and chewing gum.

Dressing for Success: Business Casual Guidelines Northland College Career Education

The basics:

Business casual is crisp, neat, and is classic rather than trendy.

Clothing should be neither very tight nor very loose.

Clothing that covers the legs, chest, and shoulders is highly recommended.

Khaki or dark pants that are neatly pressed, and a pressed long-sleeved, buttoned solid shirt are always good choices.

Remember that you are not trying to stand out for your cutting edge look, but for your good judgment in a professional environment. A good rule of thumb is to dress for the status of the job that you want, not the place you are at currently.

Clothing choices that fit in the business casual category:

Shoes: Wear leather shoes that are in good condition. Flats, dressier boots, and low heels are acceptable. Avoid sandals, athletic shoes, or hiking boots.

Socks: Wear dark socks that are long enough so you don't show skin when you sit down.

Pants/Skirts: Fabrics should be crisp; colors should generally be solid. Navy, black, gray, brown, and khaki are always safe bets. For the most business-like appearance, pants should be creased and tailored (fit to correct length). Skirts should come to at least the knees while standing. While seated, thighs should be covered. Skirt slit, if present, should not go above the knee while standing. NO jeans or jean skirts!

Shirts/Sweaters: Long-sleeved shirts are considered dressier than short-sleeved, and are appropriate even in summer. Choosing white or light blue solids, or conservative stripes, are your safest bet. Polo shirts (tucked in, of course) are acceptable in more casual situations. Sweaters are also appropriate, if they fit well, are knit, and not highly patterned. Matching collared shirt and tie under a sweater is a nice business casual look.

Sport blazers and cardigans: If they fit well, are in good condition, and are not highly patterned, blazers and cardigans are good business casual choices.

Ties: Ties are generally not necessary for business casual, but if you are in doubt, you should wear one. It never hurts to slightly overdress. By dressing nicely, you pay a compliment to your host.

Belt: If you choose to wear a belt, it should match and fit well. Leather is the best material for business casual. Try to match your belt color with either your shoes or your pants/skirt.

Accessory choices for business casual:

Wear no more than 3 pieces of jewelry. This ensures your jewelry is not distracting.

Your nails should be clean, neat, and an appropriate length.

Your hair should be out of your eyes.

Make-up should look natural.

Avoid perfume and cologne. This includes body spray and strongly scented aftershave.

**Contact the Career Education Center
to schedule a mock interview.**

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