



Interview Checklist

The interview process can be scary, but it doesn't have to be! University of Maryland students and alumni are well-prepared for a variety of jobs, internships and other experiences, but the key to landing the position is being prepared for the interview! Use the checklist and interview tips below to make sure you stand out in your next interview.

KNOW YOURSELF AND THE ORGANIZATION

- Identify at least ten strengths. Use the [BSOS skills inventory](#) to determine your current strengths and make a plan to gain more skills within your major courses.
- Research the organization. Use resources such as [Firsthand/Vault](#), [Glassdoor.com](#), the organization's web site/pamphlet information, [Hoovers.com](#), work/personal contacts or [Terrapins Connect](#), etc.
- Create three reasons why you are interested in the organization (i.e., the population they serve, a special program they offer, the work culture of the office, etc.) that highlight the research you have completed.
- [Research the average salary](#) for the position BEFORE you go to the interview.

PREPARE FOR QUESTIONS DURING THE INTERVIEW

- [Identify the types of questions](#) that may be asked (i.e., case interview questions, traditional questions, brain teasers) during the interview. Most industries start with the traditional interview questions.
- [Create a story line](#) that emphasizes your knowledge, skills, and expertise (keep it to under 2 minutes).
- Develop examples that emphasize your experiences and your ability to apply them to a work situation.
- Prepare at least three "stories" that you can confidently speak about to highlight a specific skill or quality (i.e. communication, analytical abilities, etc.) during a behavioral interview. Use one of your skills from above to practice the [STAR technique](#).
 - Describe a specific Situation or Task _____
 - Explain what Action you took _____
 - Describe the Result or outcome _____
- Practice how you sit down and be aware of your [body language](#). Be open and approachable by leaning forward slightly. Crossing your arms and slouching translates into disinterest or being unprepared.
- [Practice interviewing](#). Video tape yourself using Interview Stream, complete a mock interview at the University Career Center, or mentally review interview questions.

GATHER MATERIALS

- Buy a [conservative business outfit](#) in which you feel comfortable - don't forget the professional shoes, belt, etc.!
- [Prepare at least ten questions](#) to ask at the end of the interview (only ask three).
- Map out your drive/metro to the location. If you're nervous about getting there, do a practice run the day before.
- Print several copies of your resume, list of references and any other relevant papers requested on resume paper.
- Contact [your references](#) to alert them of your interview and prepare them for possible questions from the employer.
- Draft a [thank you note/email](#) before the interview so that all you have to do is include some details afterwards and send it within 48 hours.

TIPS FOR DURING THE INTERVIEW

Do:

- Arrive 10-15 minutes early.
- Be pleasant to everyone (even as you drive in).
- Make eye contact, initiate a handshake and introduce yourself as the employer approaches.
- Mimic the interviewer's body language.

Don't:

- Look at your phone AT ALL.
- Be afraid to ask for clarification to ensure that you fully answer a question.
- Answer "yes" or "no." Expand on questions and comments to keep the conversation going.
- Bad mouth prior employers or co-workers.



Review the tips listed below each sample interview question to identify the motivation behind commonly asked questions. How would you respond?

Overall employers are trying to assess:

- Why are you interested in the position and the company?
- Why should the company be interested in you?
- How will you fit in with the company and other team members?
- What is your orientation toward life and work?
- Do you have the skills, knowledge, and experience to do the job?

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Tell me a little about yourself.

Talk about your experience, qualifications, and accomplishments – avoid speaking about your childhood, weaknesses or hobbies. Employers will take note of how you start your response, so consider beginning with your “tagline” and impress them by mentioning the skills/qualities they are requiring.

Why do you want to work as a ?

Share some of the details of the job and why they interest you, as well as how your interest has developed.

What qualifications do you have? What skills can you bring?

Pull an example from your list of top ten skills that you have already prepared. Mention two to three skills and be prepared to share a story that demonstrates each. The concrete example will really drive your point home!

Tell me about my company. Why are you interested in this organization? (i.e., Why do you want to work for us?)

Before you go on the interview, visit the organization’s website or use the UMD Alumni Advisor Network to locate an alum to ask more about the organization. Identify the organization’s size, key products or services, the markets where it competes, and its overall reputation.

How many other positions have you approached?

This question allows the employer to determine if you want a job anywhere or with them and how much time they have before you accept another position. Consider answering with something like... “Several for back-up, but this is where I truly would like to work. Everything we have discussed today is exactly what I have been looking for.”

How long do you plan to work here? What are your plans after this internship?

They are trying to assess your general interest in the field or examine if you are goal oriented. If you have applied to a full-time position, state that you hope to establish a career there. If it is a short-term assignment, list a couple of activities you are considering after the internship or fellowship closes (it doesn’t have to be written in stone, just show them you have been considering your options).

Walk me through your resume.

Start with a summary statement- “I have completed two internships and one volunteer position working in the international development area. These experiences allowed me to gain ... skills. Specifically, as an intern with...”. Selectively mention duties that are relevant to the position but remember to keep your response to two minutes or less.

What did you like most about that job?

Your answer here will highlight what you value in a work environment/duties/management. Consider sharing some of your work collaboration accomplishments, favored work duties, or the way things were managed.

Tell me about your education or training.

Explain your education path and discuss any classes, projects, and/or research, or internship experiences where you gained skills related to the position at hand.