

UNIVERSITY of DUBAI



جامعة دبي

## INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES TIPS

*Building Your Career Tools*



INTERNSHIP & CAREER  
DEVELOPMENT CENTER





## WHAT IS AN INTERVIEW?

An interview is a formal consultation or meeting for the purpose of ascertaining and evaluating the qualifications of a person, group of people, or company to fill a particular job situation.

## INTERVIEW TYPES

### Initial Screening Interview

A short session during which the employer tries to narrow down the field of applicants who meet the job qualifications. Screening interviews may be conducted either over the telephone or in-person and with one person or several.

### Follow-Up Interview

Follow-up interviews are almost always conducted in person and can last from an hour to one or two days. They can involve either a single interview or a series of sequential interviews with individuals and groups. Occasionally, a presentation, meals, and/ or social events are included, depending on the nature of the job. There are multiple objectives to these follow-up interviews: to further evaluate candidates' match with the position, to choose among the top candidates, and to "sell" the workplace and position to the candidates.

### Telephone Interview

An advantage to being interviewed over the phone is that you can easily refer to notes that remind you of key points to include. A disadvantage is that you will not be able to



receive or convey non-verbal cues. It is important to speak clearly and more slowly than you might in person. Don't be shy about asking the interviewer to repeat something you are not sure you heard or understood. Show your level of interest by what you say, e.g. "I'm excited to be considered for this position", and by the inflection in your voice.

### **One-On-One Interview**

One person interviews the candidate and makes the hiring decision. These interviews can range from being very informal and conversational to being more formal and structured. Follow the lead of the interviewer, but keep in mind that no matter how informal, this is a conversation with an agenda. Project enthusiasm, maintain good eye contact and be professional.

### **Panel Interview**

If you are being interviewed by a group of people, remember to make eye contact with all of your interviewers. Connect first with the person who asked you the question, and then glance at the others in the room to gauge their responses and interest. Finally, reconnect with the person who initially asked you the question. Try to link your answers to others that were asked, and get the interviewers to talk among themselves. Make sure you get the names and roles of all of those who participated in the interview.

## **INTERVIEW TIPS**

### **Preparation and confidence**

- Prepare yourself practically for the interview.
- Gather information which is useful during the interview.

### **Checklist**

- Confirm time, date and location of the interview and name of interviewee where appropriate.
- Get there no earlier than half an hour before the interview time.
- Dress professional.
- Ensure the receptionist knows you are there.

### **Be on time! Be Prepared!**

- First impressions are usually lasting impressions. It's better to be early than late and to strike up a conversation or two with staff members while waiting. This will help you learn about the organization and you can use this information in your interview.
- Look at the company's website and learn something about the company before you attend your interview.
- Write down and practice answers to possible questions.

### **You never get a second chance to make a first impression**

- A good smile always pleases people.

- Dressing professionally is very important. Keep in mind the cultural preferences of the country you are working in.
- Shake hand firmly.
- Maintain eye contact.

### **Do not talk too much**

- Do not interrupt the interviewer when he/she is talking. Give him/her the opportunity to finish what s/he is saying.
- It is important to listen to the question asked and then answer that specific question.
- Keep your answers to two to three minutes at the most. When you limit your time, you tend to stay more focused.

### **Be enthusiastic and positive**

- Do not mention negative incidents with previous employers.
- Focus on positive achievements and views.

### **Look in the Eyes**

- Eye contact shows confidence and is one of the most important aspects of nonverbal communication, it can make a significant difference to how the first impression the prospective employer has of you.

### **Talk about specific achievements**

- This will help the interviewer understand your strengths in terms of measurable outcomes.

### **Explain Why You Left**

- Follow these guidelines when an interviewer asks, “Why did you leave your company?” Carefully describe the reason for your departure, and do not go into details unless asked.

### **Questions to ask the Employer**

- Good questions to ask early in a job interview: “What are you looking for in a new employee?” and “What would be my first priorities in the job?” The earlier you can ask these questions, the sooner you can start tailoring your answers to the employer’s priorities.
- At the end of the interview, ask, “Based on what we’ve talked about today, I feel positive about the position. Do you have any concerns about my ability to do the job?” Often, that gives you a chance to counter any reservations.

### **Know What You Offer**

- Prepare answers for possible open-ended questions, such as, “Tell me about yourself” by making a list of your skills and abilities that match the employer’s requirements.

- The closer your skills and traits are to the job description, the better chance you have of landing the job.
- You should leave the interviewer with a clear picture of what you have to offer.

### **Prove What You Could Do - Sell Yourself**

- Always put a positive spin on your answers to difficult questions.
- If you lack a particular skill or do not know a certain computer program, be sure to emphasize how quickly you learn.
- Give an example of a time when you were able to get up to speed in a similar situation.
- Companies are interested in people who can hit the ground running.

### **Talking Salary**

- Let the interviewer bring up the subject of money.
- If you are asked what your salary expectations are too early in the process, just say you would rather postpone that discussion until you have more information about the position.

### **Ask your way into a better job**

- You cannot really tell how good a job is from an ad. There's often a gap between the exciting opportunity portrayed in the ad and the actual job.
- After you are offered a job, but before accepting it, ask a few more questions, or even ask permission to talk with your future coworkers.

### **Follow the interviewer's lead**

- During the interview, your interviewer will give you information that can guide you on how to behave during the meeting.
- Observe your interviewer's style. Listen very carefully, and let him/her know that you have been listening by asking relevant questions and making appropriate comments.

## **INTERVIEW FOLLOW UP TIPS**

### **Purpose**

Following an interview, promptly (within 2 business days) write a letter to the interviewer and thank him/her for the interview. The purpose of this letter is to:

- Show appreciation for the employer's interest in you.
- Reiterate your interest in the position and in the organization.
- Remind the employer about your qualifications for the position. If you think of something you forgot to mention in the interview, mention it in your follow-up / thank-you letter.
- Demonstrate that you have good manners and know to write a thank-you letter.
- Follow up with any information the employer may have asked you to provide after the interview.

### **Hard Copy, Handwritten or Email?**

Thank-you letters can be hard copy-typed, handwritten or e-mailed. Hard copy letters are the most formal and are appropriate after an interview. Handwritten letters are more personal, and can be appropriate for brief notes to a variety of individuals you may have met during an on-site interview.

### **What to Do if You Don't Hear From the Employer**

Before your interview ends, your interviewer should inform you of the organization's follow-up procedures; from whom, by what means, and when, or if, you will hear from the organization again. If the interviewer did not tell you, and you did not ask, use your follow-up / thank-you letter to ask.

If more than a week passes beyond the date when you were told you would hear something from the employer, call or email to politely inquire about the status of the organization's decision-making process. Someone (or something) or an unexpected circumstance may be holding up the process. A polite inquiry shows that you are still interested in the organization and may prompt the employer to get on schedule with a response. In your inquiry, mention the following:

- Name of the person who interviewed you,
- Time and place of the interview,
- Position for which you are applying (if known), and
- Ask about the status of your application.



## SAMPLE INTERVIEW FOLLOW UP LETTER

Date: 21st January, 2010

Ms. Laila Latif  
HR Manager  
ABC Company  
P.O Box 14263, Dubai, UAE

Dear Ms. Latif,

**Ref: Thank you for Initial Interview at XYZ Company for ABC Post**

Thank you for the opportunity to visit you and see your facilities last Wednesday. Both the interview and the tour made for an interesting and fulfilling day.

I was particularly impressed with your warehousing procedures. Mr. Ahmad was very thorough in explaining the process to me, and I will be corresponding directly with him to express my appreciation. Incidentally, the process you use is quite similar to one I have been researching in an independent study this term. Perhaps I can share my final report with you and Mr. Ahmad.

Again, thank you for your hospitality during my visit and for all your efforts to it. Having seen your operation, I am all the more enthusiastic about the career opportunity that Sheldon Company XYZ offers. I look forward to your decision.

Sincerely,

Dania Al Jamali

## THE TOP 10 COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### 1. Tell us about yourself.

- What makes you special? Why should we hire you?  
**Tips:** Prepare several selling points about yourself. Give a quick “elevator speech” that overviews your experience and achievements.

### 2. What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?

- How do you perceive your talents and abilities as a professional? Will you be an asset to our organization?
- How honest are you being about yourself with us? How realistic are you?  
**Tips:** Sell yourself. If you don't promote your strengths, nobody else will. Prepare six or seven responses. Be “confidently humble.” Present your weakness as a positive. Don't talk too long or emphasize your downfalls.

### 3. What motivates you?

- What are your values? If we hire you, will you easily get distracted by a higher pay?  
**Tips:** Prepare several selling points about your values. This can include how much you like to contribute to the society or if you like leadership, variety or security in a certain job. Try to resist saying money is the only motivating factor!

### 4. Why are you interested in working here?

- How dedicated are you? Do you have a passion for this type of work?  
**Tips:** Keep your answer simple and to the point. Stay away from responses such as, “Many of my friends have worked here.”

### 5. Why should we hire you?

- Can you convince us you’re “the one?” Can you sell your “product?”  
**Tips:** Make a powerful statement about the value you’ll bring to their organization.

### 6. Where do you see yourself five years from now?

- Will you only be here for a year before moving on, or are you committed to staying here for a while? Are you a stable person? Can you set goals for yourself?  
**Tips:** Be aware that they might not want to hire someone who will only be around for a year or two. Feel free to say that you have one goal at the moment: to be the very best employee for that particular job.

### 7. How do you define success?

- How ambitious are you?  
**Tips:** Emphasize on your need to be successful at whatever you do and show your passion for the particular role you are being interviewed for.

### 8. Would you be willing to pursue an extra certificate or credential?

- How is your attitude? How flexible are you?  
**Tips:** Tell the interviewer how important professional growth is to you.

### 9. Are You Still Employed and If Not, Why Not?

- Are you committed? Will you stay with current position if employed? If not, why not?  
**Tips:** If you aren’t, you can still use your answer to this question to shine a light on your positive features. For example, if you were laid off or terminated, focus less on the actual termination and more on what you learned from the whole process.

### 10. Do you have any questions for us?

- Are you prepared to ask questions? How interested are you in this position?  
**Tips:** List five or six questions on an index card. Ask at least one question, even if all of your prepared questions have been answered. Never say, “No, you’ve answered all of my questions.”

## REFERENCES

<http://ilearn.senecac.on.ca/careers/interviews/types.html>

<http://www.careerbuilder.com>

[http://www.jobskills.info/resume\\_edge/types\\_of\\_interview.htm](http://www.jobskills.info/resume_edge/types_of_interview.htm)

[http://jobsearchtech.about.com/od/interviewtips/Interview\\_Types\\_Tips\\_and\\_Techniques.htm](http://jobsearchtech.about.com/od/interviewtips/Interview_Types_Tips_and_Techniques.htm)

<http://www.difc.ae/careers/recruitmentCentre.php?contentId=32>

<http://www.alljobsuk.com/ivtips.shtml>

<http://www.jobsdb.com.my/MY/EN/V6HTML/jobseeker/section2902.html>

## BOOKS AVAILABLE IN UD LIBRARY

- Power Interviews: Job-Winning Tactics from Fortune 500 Recruiters / by Neil M. Yeager and Lee Hough, John Wiley.
- Fearless Interviewing: How to Win the Job by Communicating with Confidence / by Marky Stein, McGraw-Hill.
- How to Interview and be Interviewed by Michele Brown and Gyles Brandreth. Brown, Michele, 1947.
- Essential Interviewing: A programmed approach to effective communication / by David R. Evans.

## VIDEOS AVAILABLE IN UD LIBRARY

- Common mistakes people make in interviews [DVD].
- Ten things not to do in an interview [DVD].
- Hiring Secrets: 12 tips to get candidates to reveal their true selves [DVD].
- Hiring Success: A Step-by-Step Guide [DVD].



**INTERNSHIP & CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

P.O. Box 14143 Dubai

Tel: 04 224 2472, Ext: 671 | 662, Fax: 04 223 3944

Website: [www.ud.ac.ae](http://www.ud.ac.ae)