



## Job Interview Skills

Preparing for a job interview is a key step toward landing the position you want. This handout offers practical tips and strategies to help you present your best self, answer questions confidently, and make a strong impression on potential employers.

### Preparedness

You should arrive at a job interview prepared with questions for the interviewer, necessary materials, and knowledge of the job and organization.

#### Tips:

- Prepare two to three questions to ask at the end of the interview. These questions are an opportunity to show the employer you are interested in learning more about the job. Avoid only asking questions only about benefits and pay in the first interview and instead focus on questions that allow the employer to expand on the role and how to be successful within the organization.
- Bring physical copies of your resume and cover letter. Even if you submitted them electronically, there may be someone at the interview who wants to look at hard copies.
- Bring a pen and notepad in case you need to take notes or jot down someone's contact information.
- Read the job description multiple times before your interview and research the organization by viewing its website, social media, etc. This enables you to tailor your interview answers to how you are qualified to fulfill the organization's specific mission, values, and programs.

### Physical Appearance

When attending a job interview, how you choose to present yourself communicates a lot about you. Employers gather information about your professionalism through your appearance before you even speak, so it is important to make a strong first impression through your physical appearance.

#### Tips:

- Attend the interview neatly groomed and dressed in appropriate, professional clothing. This applies to both in-person and online interviews.
- If an interview is held virtually, ensure clear camera and microphone quality. Before logging in to the interview, check your Wi-Fi connection, device battery, and your computer's access to the microphone and camera.
- For virtual interviews, locate yourself in a neat environment that is well-lit and non-distracting. It is best to situate yourself in front of a blank or simple wall or blur your background for less environmental distractions.

### Language and Vocalics

You should strive to be articulate and display an appropriate level of vocal variety and rate while speaking. Use professional grammar and language.

**Tips:**

- Portray confidence in your answers with a focus on your vocalics: the rate, pitch, tone, and volume of your voice. Use vocal variety to show enthusiasm about the position and speak confidently about your experiences.
- Avoid speaking too fast, monotone, rambling, filler words, or speaking too quietly, as these qualities portray a lack of confidence or make it difficult for the interviewer to understand you.
- Use appropriate language and grammar. Avoid jargon, cursing, or slang within your answers; speak professionally and with proper grammar.

**Physical Behaviors**

During the interview, display appropriate physical behaviors and body movement through eye contact, facial expressions, posture, hand and leg placement, gestures, and lack of fidgeting.

**Tips:**

- Maintain comfortable eye contact to show your attention and interest. Additionally, use engaged facial expressions and head movements (such as nodding) for further recognition of what the interviewer is saying.
- Maintain an upright posture and use composed gestures and movements to portray confidence. Avoid fidgeting or “loose” gestures, including swaying or twisting in your chair. For virtual interviews, choose a chair that does not swivel.

**Content of Answers**

Your answers should display knowledge, confidence, and experience relating to the field of interest. Provide thorough answers without digressing.

**Tips:**

- Provide specific examples to demonstrate skills and qualifications. Elaborate on your professional and personal background with anecdotes and metrics as they relate to the questions, avoiding any anecdotes that may be inappropriate or overly personal.
- Relate your examples to specific attributes of the job and organization you are applying for.
- Portray confidence in your answers. It is okay to speak proudly of your accomplishments, so long as you do not exaggerate your self-importance.
- If you are asked about your weaknesses, be honest. Employers do not want to hear that you “care too much” or “do not have any weaknesses.” Genuinely identify areas of improvement, then explain what actions you are taking to improve.
- When elaborating on specific experiences, consider the STAR method: situation, task, action, result. Provide an overview of a situation that you encountered that relates to the question being asked. Explain the task that needed to be completed and what actions you took to accomplish this task. Lastly, explain what the result of this situation was or how you resolved the problem at hand. This helps you keep answers succinct while still providing enough detail.

**Need more information or assistance?**

Schedule an appointment with the [Excel Multiliteracy Center](#). We are here to provide one-on-one and group assistance to any and all UCCS students!