

# INTERVIEW SKILLS

PREPARE TO ACE THE INTERVIEW

When interviewing for a new opportunity, the majority of your time should be spent preparing. Preparation boosts confidence and helps you stand out from the competition. Here are some interview questions to prepare for ahead of time. Meet with a career specialist to discuss interview preparation. Practice by utilizing the StandOut mock interview tool in the Resources section of your UCR Handshake account.

## Common Interview Questions

- Tell us a little about yourself.
- Why does this position appeal to you?
- Why do you want to work for this company/organization?
- What are your greatest strengths/weaknesses?
- What experiences have prepared you for this position?
- How would a colleague or previous supervisor describe you? What questions do you have for us?

## Behavioral-Based Interview Questions

These questions determine if you have the skills needed for the job and what your reaction could be when faced with a similar situation in the future. Themes typically include teamwork, leadership, conflict resolution, problem solving, failure, time management, and customer service. To prepare, match your experiences (school/work/organizations) to the themes that appear in the job description. Below are examples:

**Team Player** – Tell me about a team project on which you worked.

**Leadership** – Tell me about a time when you demonstrated leadership skills.

**Conflict** – Tell me a time when you dealt with a challenging person.

**Problem Solving** – Describe a situation in which you solved a difficult problem.

**Failure** – Tell me about a time you made a mistake. What did you learn from it?

## Technical Questions

Specific companies/industries may ask questions to assess skills and knowledge. Examples may include writing samples, computer coding, and business case interview questions. Example: "What new feature would you add to MS Word if you were hired?"

## Situational Questions

Situational Questions put you in a theoretical situation and you are expected to answer what action you would take. For example a situational question can be: "How would you respond to a dissatisfied customer?"

## Questions to End the Interview

Always have three to five questions prepared for your interviewer. They can include:

- What are the top goals for the first six months in this position?
- What is a typical day like in this role?
- What types of training and professional development opportunities are available?
- What are characteristics of the ideal candidate for this position?
- What is the best thing about working for this organization? What is the greatest challenge?
- What is the next step in the selection process?

## Technique to Answer Behavioral-Based Interview Questions

S

SITUATION

Detail in the background. Provide a context. Where? When?

T

TASK

Describe the challenge and expectations. What needed to be done? Why?

A

ACTION

Specify the action taken. What did you do? How? What tools did you use?

R

RESULTS

Explain and quantify the results: accomplishments, recognition, savings, etc.

CONTINUED ON THE BACK 

## 10 Tips For Successful Interviewing

1. Research the company/industry. Impress the interviewer with your knowledge of the organization's core products/service, clients, and accomplishments. [Glassdoor.com](https://www.glassdoor.com) offers company reviews, CEO approval ratings, salary reports, interview reviews/questions, benefits reviews, office photos, and more — all shared by those who know the companies best, the employees.
2. Review the job description for key skills and qualifications, and identify how your abilities and experiences are a good match for the job.
3. Practice, practice, practice answering typical interview questions. Be upbeat and use specific examples to demonstrate your skills. To get started, practice by utilizing the StandOut mock interview tool in the Resources section of your UCR Handshake account. Then, make an appointment with a career specialist for a mock interview critique.
4. Prepare questions for the interviewer. These demonstrate that you are interested in the company and the job. Avoid questions about money/benefits.
5. Know what to expect. Ask the recruiting coordinator about the type of interview (group/panel/individual) and with whom you'll be interviewing.
6. Wear a suit! Your attire and appearance will make a strong first impression. You want to be viewed, and remembered, as a professional.
7. Arrive five to ten minutes before your interview. Get good directions to the interview location and know how traffic will impact your travel time. If you will be interviewing virtually or over-the-phone, ensure that you are in a quiet space and that you have a stable connection.
8. Turn off your mobile device. The interviewer should have your full attention. Distractions, such as calls and texts, demonstrate a lack of interest in the company and the job.
9. Smile, relax, and be confident — even if you don't feel like it. Interviewers want to connect with you as a professional and as a person. Try to be yourself, even if you're nervous.
10. Follow up with a thank-you note or email within 24 hours of the interview.



### Day of Interview Checklist

- Dressed to impress
- Mints
- Portfolio:
  - Extra resumes
  - List of references
  - Paper and pen
  - Questions for the interviewer • Recruiter contact information
- Parking/emergency money
- Mobile devices turned off
- Ace the interview
- Send a thank-you note

This information is accurate and reliable as of the date of publication, but may change without notice. Please contact the Career Center for the most up-to-date information. (08/23)