

Overview:

Throughout an interview process, you will likely have one or more behavioral interviews with a company of interest. If you are ever unsure of the type of interview you are scheduled for, you can ask your recruiter for clarity in advance. Behavioral Interviews allow recruiters and members of a hiring team to assess how and if your past experiences, behaviors, and skills demonstrate the key characteristics and competencies they have deemed essential for the role for which you are interviewing and/or the company. They also allow the hiring team to delve further into the experiences listed throughout your resume, and in some cases, learn more about you outside of what you have included on that document.

Before the Interview:

- *Spend time thoroughly researching the company.* You will likely be asked why you are interested in the company, and you want to be able to connect your interests back to the organization's mission, values, and past/current work.
- *Familiarize yourself with the job description.* You want to be able to draw correlations between your past experiences, skills and overall qualifications and the position requirements. Highlight the most important qualifications from the job description, and then mark up your resume with those words to begin to identify what you will talk about in the interview.
- *Draft 3-5 questions for each interview.* If you have several interviews within one day, make sure that you have questions prepared for each person you'll be speaking with. These questions should be authentic to your curiosities and should not be easily answered by searching the internet or the company's website. If you know the names of the people you are interviewing with, it is a good idea to tailor your questions to that person's background and work that they do within the company.
- *Prepare responses to classic interview questions.* These can be questions about yourself and your interests and about your background/experience as it pertains to the job description. You should not write out a script for these responses, as you may come across as sounding too rehearsed. Instead, it will be particularly helpful to practice your responses aloud or write a few bullet points per question to help you to remember what you would like to say.
 - ***Tell me about yourself.*** You will be asked some version of this question in every interview. Take 1.5-2 minutes to provide the employer with relevant details about your present, past and future. Include specifics about your current work/area of study (present), highlight 2-3 related projects/work experiences (past), and explain how these skills, qualifications and experiences align to the position/make you a strong fit (future).

(Prepare responses to classic interview questions cont.)

- **General Interview Questions:** Prior to formal behavioral interview questions, an interview may ask you general questions that can include follow-up questions regarding content on your resume, your skill sets, your interest in the company, etc.
- **Behavioral Questions:** These questions center around your experience and align closely to the job description. Always respond using the STAR response method to ensure you are providing the full context of your experience to the employer. To learn more about the STAR response method or question examples, read ahead to the “During the Interview” and “Examples of Behavioral Interview Question” sections.

During the Interview:

- *Arrive early and dress professionally.* When in person, you should arrive 10-15 minutes before your scheduled arrival time and for video meetings, you should arrive 5 minutes early. For most phone interviews, the employer will call you, but if you are initiating the call, do so right at the agreed upon time. Be sure to dress appropriately, whether you are talking in-person or virtually.
 - Typically, this means business professional or business casual. If you are unsure of the company's dress code/interview attire expectations, ask your Career Consultant or the recruiter you've been working with throughout the process. For additional guidance you can turn to the Professional Attire Guide in Canvas.
- *Remember to smile and stay confident!* You have been selected for this interview because you are a capable and qualified candidate. Smiling throughout the interview will not only show the interviewer that you are interested in the opportunity, but it will also relax you.
- *Respond thoroughly using the STAR response method.* If you are unfamiliar with the STAR method, it stands for Situation, Task, Action and Results, and helps you ensure that you are providing the interviewer with all of the relevant information in response to their question.
 - **SITUATION:** What was the context? Who was involved? Where were you working?
 - **TASK:** What were you asked to do? What problem were you trying to solve?
 - **ACTION:** What steps did you take to complete the task, or solve the problem? Who did you collaborate with? What skills or tools did you use? What were your behaviors and actions?
 - **RESULTS:** What was the outcome? What lesson did you learn? How did others react?

After the Interview:

- *Follow-up and thank the people with whom you interviewed.* During the interview, be sure to ask your contacts for their email addresses, and within 24-hours of your interview, send each interviewer a personalized thank you note. In the note, emphasize your qualifications and skillset in relation to the position. Try to mention something you and the person talked about that made this a memorable or enjoyable experience. Send separate thank you notes to each individual you interviewed with, and make sure they are different from one another.
- *Be patient as you wait for next steps and decisions.* We recommend waiting to check-in on the status of your application until 1-2 weeks after your interview, unless you have been given a different timeline, longer or shorter, by the employer.

Examples of Behavioral Interview Questions:

- ***Tell me about a time when you worked with someone who was difficult.*** Employers may ask this question to gain an understanding your ability to work effectively with others. For those hiring for a team, they may want to ensure that you can build professional relationships and overcome any obstacles in the collaborative process.
- ***Give me an example of a time that you failed or made a mistake.*** This question allows employers to see if you are willing to acknowledge mistakes that you have made, but also to see how you recover from them or what you have learned. Your emphasis should be on these learnings instead of dwelling on the mistake itself.
- ***Tell me about one of the most challenging problems you have had to solve while on a team.*** Evaluating your teamwork, collaboration and resiliency is essential for those hiring for a team. Your interviewer wants to know that in challenging times, you can effectively communicate and work well with others on your team to find solutions.
- ***Describe a long-term project you worked on—how did you stay on top of deadlines?*** An employer may ask you this question to understand your time/project management skills, as well as how you operate under pressure. The employer wants to ensure that you can work efficiently/effectively and be accountable.

Additional Support Resources:

- [Big Interview](#): Allows you to practice key questions by recording and reviewing your responses.
- *Mock Behavioral Interviews*: Schedule a 40-minute appointment with your Career Consultant, and mark “Mock Interview” as your note. These allow you to practice popular interview questions and/or prepare for a specific interview and receive immediate, constructive feedback from a member of the CPDC.

Questions?

- Appointments with your Career Consultant can be scheduled through Handshake.
 - Handshake → Career Center → [Appointments](#)