

Career Directions

Interviewing Tips

What follows¹ is a range of questions and suggestions that will help you prepare for and participate in a job interview. These tips can also be applied to interviews for committee work, educational opportunities, and so on.

Preparing for the Interview

1. Find out what type of interview to expect. How many people will be interviewing you? Who is the contact person?
2. Confirm the date, time and location of the interview, particularly if the organization has more than one site. On the day of the interview, be sure you know how to get to the interview site, and allow yourself extra time to get there.
3. Do some research about the organization. What are its values, mission and philosophy? What is its strategic plan? Have there been recent changes in senior leadership or amongst members of the board? Is the organization downsizing, merging or expanding its programs? Have there been any recent staff layoffs? You'll be able to find much of this information on the organization's website.
4. Review the ad or job description for the position for which you are being interviewed. Be ready to articulate how your skills, expertise and accomplishments meet the position requirements.
5. Anticipate potential questions you may be asked during the interview, and prepare answers to those questions. You should also be ready to ask questions of the interviewer(s). See the sections that follows for examples.
6. Practice interviewing with a friend, colleague, mentor, instructor or career coach. Ask for feedback on the nature and delivery of your answers.
7. Bring extra copies of your résumé to the interview.
8. Contact your references ahead of the interview. Then, brief them after the interview so that they know and understand the issues and/or strengths that you'd like them to reinforce.
9. Be respectful to everyone in the organization. For example, receptionists often play an informal role in the hiring process.

¹ Adapted from Donner, G.J. & Wheeler, M.M. (2009). *Taking control of your career: A handbook for health professionals*. Toronto: Elsevier.

Questions You May Be Asked During an Interview

1. Tell us about yourself, your background, education and career history.
2. What words best describe you? How would your colleagues describe you?
3. Describe a significant accomplishment of yours in the past year. What was the situation, what action did you take, and what were the results?
4. Describe a situation that demonstrates your ability to adapt to changes in the workplace.
5. Describe a difficult work situation you have had to deal with. How did you handle it?
6. What are your strengths? What have you identified as your areas of development?
7. Describe the best manager/supervisor you have ever worked for. What made her or him the best?
8. Where do you see yourself in five years? What are your long-term career goals?
9. Why do you want to work for this organization? Why do you want this position?
10. If we hired you, how would you make a difference in this organization?

Questions You May Ask at an Interview

1. How would you describe the philosophy and goals of the organization's programs or departments?
2. What is the mandate or key deliverables for this position?
3. Why is the position vacant? What happened to the last person in this position?
4. If the position is new, what supports are in place?
5. What type of orientation will I receive? What resources will I have access to during my orientation?
6. What are the ongoing opportunities for professional development?
7. Where can I go from here in the organization? What are the career advancement opportunities?
8. To whom will I report? And, what is your management style?
9. What other health care providers work on this team or for this service or program? What is the mix of skills and expertise?
10. In your opinion, what will be the major challenges of this position?
11. What hours will I be required to work? Is there an opportunity to create flexible working hours?