

Interviewing Strategies

PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS

You will want to research the organization. Be aware of any industry or company news that could come up in the interview. Check the company's website, newsletters, and social media to be sure you're knowledgeable of current events. Consider talking to your network or past/current employees to get valuable insight and tips. Interviews typically are based on the job description so review the job posting to prepare for the interview.

TYPES OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Opener/Self-descriptive- Opening questions are generally similar, and because of this they are easy to be prepared for. Your answer should address your experiences, qualifications, and goals.

Examples

- Tell me about yourself and why you're interested in this position.
- Introduce yourself
- How would you describe yourself?
- What is your greatest strength?
- Why do you want to be a veterinarian?

Behavioral- Behavioral questions are designed to see how you've handled challenges in the past.

Examples

- Tell me about a time when you worked on a team.
- When was a time when you had to work under pressure?
- Describe an innovative or creative approach you've taken with a patient.
- Tell me about a time when you handled a case with a difficult client.

Negative- Negative questions address one of your weaknesses or failures in order to determine if you have some level of self-awareness. You should also demonstrate that you are able to put into action a process for improvement. Focus on ending your response on how you have learned/changed from the experience or what you are doing now to improve.

Examples

- What is your greatest weakness?
- Tell me about a time when you failed.
- Tell me about a time when you had a conflict with a co-worker. How did you handle it?

Situational- Situational questions are designed to see how you would make decisions on the job. You may be given a situation or case and asked to describe how you would handle it. It is advisable to give examples if possible.

Examples

- What would do if you found out a co-worker wasn't contributing equally?
- If you were the hiring manager for a practice, what qualities would you look for in colleagues?
- What would you do if you faced resistance when introducing a new idea/policy to a team?

Closing- Closing questions are always asked in some form. You should summarize your skills and abilities, directly addressing why you are a good candidate. Reiterate your interest in the position and remember to have questions prepared to ask the interviewer at the end of the interview.

Examples

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- Why should we hire you?
- Why do you believe that you are a good candidate for this position?
- Is there anything else that you would like to add?

RESPONDING TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

When answering interview questions, your answers should typically be 30-90 seconds. If you naturally respond in either short or rambling responses keep this in mind when practicing and work on ways to improve your response. Think of your responses to those questions as opportunities to share who you are and what you could bring to the organization all focused around how it relates to the job. When responding to questions:

- Touch upon aspects of your skill-set, education, and experience that are relevant to the position you are applying for or unique to UF CVM. Offer examples from clinical training/experiences, externships, rotations, software expertise, client communications etc.
- If a weakness or an area of development comes up during the interview, explain how you are improving and developing that skill set.
- When outlining your career goals discuss how the position and company you are applying to fit in.
- Ask your own questions about the company, position, training, and working environment- this shows genuine interest.
- When asked a difficult or multi-faceted question it is okay to ask for time to respond or request that your interviewer clarify their question if necessary. At the end of your response you can also inquire whether you've fully answered the question.

S.T.A.R METHOD

The S.T.A.R. Method is a technique for answering questions that helps you structure your answers in a way that gives the interviewer all of the relevant information about a specific qualification for a job.

Situation- Tell the interviewer about a specific challenge or situation. Give your audience context and enough detail to understand the story.

Task- What were you trying to achieve? What was the assignment? Tell the interviewer what you were trying to get accomplish in this situation

Action- What did you do? If there was a problem or challenge, how did you handle it? Tell your interviewer what you did and why.

Results- What was the outcome of this situation? Did you meet your objective? Don't forget to tell your interviewer what you learned from this experience, and how have you applied that knowledge since.

TIPS FOR INTERVIEWS

- Always greet interviewers with a firm handshake.
- Use titles such as Ms., Mr., Dr., etc. unless prompted to do otherwise.
- Speak clearly and deliberately at a conversational speed.
- Avoid filler words such as "um"

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- Maintain eye contact with interviewers
- Sit up straight in your chair. Don't lean too far forward or too far back.
- Be confident friendly and sincere

PRACTICE

- Stop by the CRC for an Express Drop-In Mock Interview or Express Drop-Ins in CVM on Thursdays from 8:30am-11:30am
- Log into Gator CareerLink and use the Virtual Mock Interview Module
- Make a Career Planning Appointment to practice with a CRC staff member or schedule an appointment with Katelyn Jerles in CVM at - <https://www.crc.ufl.edu/students/explore-majors-careers/let-us-help/>

FEEDBACK

ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS

- Turn off your cell phone completely or even leave it somewhere (in the car).
- Arrive approximately 10 minutes early.
- Bring a few copies of your resume on resume paper to provide to interviewers.
- Dress business professional in a suit and have clean, polished dress shoes. Pack a change of clothes in the chance the opportunity for a working interview arises.
- When entering an interview room, shake hands, make eye contact, and introduce yourself to every individual in the room.
- Always ask for contact information, such as a business card, after an interview to follow-up.
- When exiting the room, shake hands, make eye contact, and thank each of your interviewers.
- Never discuss salary in a first round interview unless the interviewer brings it up.

FOLLOWING UP AFTER AN INTERVIEW

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Follow-up with a thank you email or card within 24 hours of an interview. After an interview, you may not hear right away as to whether or not you've been hired. You can email either the HR Representative or Hiring Manager a week after an interview to see if they have any additional questions or need further information. After that, only initiate contact via email or phone once a week. The hiring process can be lengthy, so be patient.

PHONE INTERVIEWS

Phone interviews are typically short interviews typically designed to help the company decide whether to schedule a face-to-face interview. To help you maintain your focus during a phone interview:

- If possible, perform the interview in an empty room to eliminate distractions and use a land line for clarity. You can reserve an office space in OSI through Katelyn Jerles for these interviews.
- Turn off call-waiting to avoid any interruptions.
- Minimize background noise, e.g., avoid typing, dogs barking, cats meowing, playing music in the background, or taking the call on speaker phone.
- Answer the phone by stating your name (for example – “Hello, this is Albert Gator.”)
- Have your resume and a short list of accomplishments nearby to remind of things to mention during the interview and be sure to take notes.
- Smile. Even though your interviewers cannot see it, smiling brings energy and excitement to your voice.
- Be concise. You will not have non-verbal cues from the interviewer about when to stop speaking.

VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS

Virtual interviews help companies save resources while still seeing your personality and mannerisms. Here are some tips to make your virtual interview a success:

- Be sure that your username or handle is professional in addition to any past activity that may be visible.
- Make sure that you are in a quiet, well-lit location with a solid internet connection (consider using an Ethernet cord). You can reserve an office space in OSI through Katelyn Jerles for these interviews.
- Close other applications on your computer, especially if they might make noise during the call.
- If you are using a laptop, be sure that you are plugged into an outlet.
- Address any technology problems immediately. It's better to stop the interview than to give an inaccurate answer, because you didn't understand the question.
- Dress like you would for an in-person interview.
- Be sure your background is not cluttered or distracting to the interviewers
- Look directly into the camera, not the faces on the screen. It gives the impression of making eye contact.
- Be sure that the camera gives a good shot of your head, shoulders, and hands. Body language and non-verbal cues are important, so you want to be sure that the upper half of your body is visible.
- Smile and try to keep a pleasant facial expression for the duration.
- Use your notes sparingly. The interviewer can see your eyes, so it is important that you are not obviously reading from your notes.