

INTERVIEWING



INTERVIEWS serve two purposes. For the prospective **EMPLOYER**, the interview is an opportunity to gather information about a candidate and to assess the "fit" between the candidate and the position.

For you, the **CANDIDATE**, the interview is an opportunity to highlight your skills, abilities, personal qualities, enthusiasm for the position and to evaluate your fit in the company/role.

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

PHONE INTERVIEW

A phone interview is often used as a first step in the interview process. The employer will call you. Phone interviews typically last 20- 40 minutes. A mock phone interview with a career counselor is the best way to prepare.

IN-PERSON / ON-SITE INTERVIEW

In-person (aka on-site) interviews take place at the employer. In-person interviews can range from 20-40 minutes for a first round screening, to 1-2+ hours for a second round screening. You can meet with people in multiple ways: one on one, panel, multiple rounds with one person or more. The employer often provides an itinerary one or two days in advance so you know the duration of the interview, with whom you will be meeting and where the interview will take place. A mock interview with a career counselor is the best way to prepare.

PRE-RECORDED VIDEO INTERVIEW

A recorded interview is often used as a first step in the interview process. The employer will send instructions, a link to a recording platform and a due date to the candidate. Recorded interviews typically last 20-40 minutes. The questions will be presented on the screen, and then the candidate will be given a prescribed time to record their response. Practice and gain familiarity with a pre-recorded interview by logging into Interviewing.com on Handshake (holycross.joinhandshake.com).

VIDEO INTERVIEW

An interview conducted over video (Google Hangout, Zoom, WebEx, etc.) is often used as a first or second round. The employer will specify their preferred platform. This allows for face to face conversation without having to physically travel to the employer. A video interview can range from 20-40 minutes for a first round screening, to 1-2+ hours for a second round screening. A mock video interview with a career counselor is the best way to prepare.



CONTACT US TO SET UP A MOCK INTERVIEW APPOINTMENT
EMAIL: CAREERS@HOLYCROSS.EDU

PREPARE TO INTERVIEW

RESEARCH

- Develop a clear understanding of the position, in addition to the job description by researching similar positions on Glassdoor.com and O*NETonline.org.
- Gain knowledge of the industry. Read industry based publications found in the resources section of Handshake. (holycross.joinhandshake.com)

REVIEW

- Always review the employer's website. Understand the employer's mission, vision, and core values. Look at social media and blog sections for relevant topics.
- Know the organization's competitors and be knowledgeable of recent news and events.
- Review your resume and identify specific activities, experiences, or classes that allowed you to develop and demonstrate the skills, abilities, or specialized knowledge identified in the position description.

WHAT TO WEAR

Proper attire for an interview typically consists of a well-tailored conservative business suit in dark blue or gray. Pair your suit with a clean, pressed shirt or blouse in white or blue and well-polished dress shoes. Appropriate appearance may also include a conservative tie, well-groomed or no facial hair and minimal make-up. All candidates should be neat, well-groomed and avoid using cologne/perfume or be wearing excessive jewelry.

WHAT TO BRING

Bring a simple folder, or leather portfolio with a notepad, a pen, reference list, breath mints, and a few extra copies of your resume.

PRACTICE!

Interviewing only improves with practice. An excellent way to assess and develop your interview skills is to conduct a mock interview with a staff member in the Center for Career Development.

CONTACT US TO SET UP A MOCK
INTERVIEW APPOINTMENT

CAREERS@HOLYCROSS.EDU

DROP IN HOURS

MONDAY-FRIDAY 1:00 - 4:00 PM
HOGAN 203

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

WHAT WILL THEY ASK ME?

Be prepared with responses that demonstrate self awareness and advanced preparation. Below you will find a sample of possible questions you may be asked. You do not need to memorize answers to each question.

- What are your long/short range goals? How are you preparing yourself to achieve them?
- What specific goals, other than those related to your occupation, have you established for yourself for the next 10 years?
- Where do you see yourself 5 years from now?
- What do you expect to be earning in five years?
- Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
- Define a rewarding career.
- What are your greatest strengths/weaknesses?
- How would you describe yourself? How do you think a friend or professor would describe you?
- What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
- How has your college experience prepared you for this particular career?
- Why should I hire you?
- What leads to success in this career?
- How do you define success?
- What do you think it takes to be successful in an organization?
- In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our organization?
- What qualities should a successful ___ possess?
- What 2 or 3 accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction?
- Describe your most rewarding college experience.
- If you were hiring a graduate for this position, what qualities would you seek?
- Why did you choose Holy Cross? What led you to choose your major?
- What college subjects did you like best/least?
- If you could do so, how would you plan your academic study differently? Why?
- Do you think that your grades are a good indication of your academic ability?

- Do you have plans for continued study? An advanced degree?
- Why are your grades low?
- What have you learned from participation in extracurricular activities?
- In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
- How do you work under pressure?
- What jobs have you enjoyed most? Least?
- Describe your ideal job.
- Why did you decide to seek a position with our organization?
- What 2 or 3 things are most important to you in your job?
- What criteria are you using to evaluate the organization for which you hope to work?
- Do you have a geographical preference? Why?
- Are you willing to relocate? Travel?
- What have you learned from your mistakes?
- How do your skills relate to our needs?
- Tell me about your most difficult course or professor.

WHAT SHOULD I ASK THEM?

Interviewers ask, "What questions do you have for us?" Prepare three to five questions that demonstrate your advanced preparation and allow you to explore areas that were not well explained in your research.

For example, you may wish to inquire about:

- Information gained from your research
- The training process
- The department's long term goals
- The career path of your predecessor(s) in the position
- Timeframe for hiring

DO NOT ask questions which are answered on the organization's website. In a first-round interview, do not ask questions about salary, vacation or benefits. The employer will provide ample opportunity to learn about these details later in the interview process or once an offer has been extended.

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING



BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWS assume that past behavior predicts future action. They are designed to assess your work-related skills and abilities by delving into how you functioned in your past jobs or extracurricular activities.

As with any sort of interview, there are a number of common behavioral "themes" or "competencies" that most recruiters are likely to assess. These include (but are not limited to) **leadership, interpersonal skills, communication, multi-tasking, flexibility, motivation, decisiveness and commitment.**

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

What is your greatest academic achievement? What did you do to contribute to that achievement?

Cite an example of when you were faced with an unpleasant task. How did you go about facing it?

Give a recent example of a conflict you had with a coworker or a supervisor. How did you handle it?

Describe a situation in which you had to use your communication skills in order to make an important point.

Tell me about a time when you had to use a persuasive argument to change another person's opinion. How did you do it?

Share an example of an important personal goal which you set, and how you accomplished it.

Have you ever had too many different tasks given to you to complete at the same time? What was your style in managing these?

Describe a situation in which you showed determination. How did you go about it?



STAR TECHNIQUE

The STAR technique is a good way to formulate your responses to behavioral questions. This framework will organize, structure, and arrange your thoughts so that you provide a complete, detailed answer.

SITUATION

Describe the situation you were in. Set the stage/context for the employer, and provide as much detail as is appropriate.

TASK

What needed to be done or accomplished? What was the task or problem being filled?

ACTION

What steps did you take? Keep the focus on you, even if you are discussing a group project. Describe how you contributed to the success of the team.

RESULT

What happened? What did you accomplish? What did you learn?

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS



An **INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW** is a conversation in which you gather information from an individual who is or has been employed in a career field of interest to you.

IT IS NOT AN **EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW!**

HOW IT WORKS

CONTACT SOMEONE

Initiate an informational interview by emailing the individual or connecting on LinkedIn. Let that person know that you are a student who is gathering information to assist you in career decision-making. Explain how you obtained the person's name. Mention your hope of arranging a meeting to discuss the industry, job and/or company etc. Make it clear that you are not asking for a job and state the amount of time you wish take. Be sure to convey genuine interest and enthusiasm! Be prepared to place a follow-up call to schedule a time to speak. People are well-intentioned and happy to speak with you, but frequently need a gentle nudge to respond.

PREPARE, PLAN, AND RESEARCH

Prior to your meeting, do some research to get a basic understanding of the industry, profession, organization, etc. Also, know your interests, skills, and values and how these relate to the career you are exploring.

You will be expected to lead the conversation, so prepare a list of questions.

If the meeting is in person, dress appropriately for the setting. Business casual attire is usually a good choice.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

Always present yourself professionally. Even if your job search is several years away, an informational interview can be a great opportunity to make a positive first impression. Be prompt and do not take up too much of the person's time. Be enthusiastic, shake hands confidently, and be polite. Keep notes of your meeting including helpful comments and the names of any referrals. Bring a copy of your resume. Consider asking your contact for advice on preparing an effective resume for an entry level position in their particular career field, or with whom else to connect with.

FOLLOW UP

Send a thank you email in which you refer to any interesting or useful information from your conversation.

STAY IN TOUCH

Through short emails or occasional phone calls, you may be able to establish an on-going relationship in which the person you spoke with becomes a mentor or key member of your network. Send an email every couple of months. Keep them apprised of your progress and efforts. Ask if you could "shadow" and spend a day at work with the professional.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

SAY THANK YOU

Immediately after each interview, send a thank you email to the individual(s) who interviewed you.

- The note should be brief. It may be e-mailed, handwritten or typed on quality bond paper and should be received within hours of the interview.
- Highlight or comment on topics discussed in the interview to reinforce your interest in the position.
- If you had a group interview, be sure to send individual thank you's to all interviewers.
- You may also wish to send a brief thank you note to any members of support staff (assistants, coordinators) who were especially helpful to you during the selection process.
- Each note should differ by referring to something specific you discussed in the interview.

HELPFUL HINTS

Be aware of **BODY LANGUAGE**. Your eye contact, handshake, smile, and posture all convey your interest in the position. Try to control nervous tics such as toe tapping, pen clicking, hair twirling, etc.

Be **CONFIDENT**, not arrogant.

Be **HONEST**. Do not exaggerate what is on your resume.

Do **NOT** take notes during the interview.

Do **NOT** complain or show any negativity.

Don't leave an interview without letting the interviewer know how **INTERESTED** you are. Just because you are there for an interview does not mean you want the job. Make yourself stand out!

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