

Workstudy Interview Preparation

Prepare for Success!

- Research the area you are interviewing for.
- Arrive 10 minutes early.
- Dress to project the image of confidence and success; your total appearance should be appropriate to the job. Your outfit should be clean, ironed, and fit comfortably. Only wear business casual if you are absolutely sure it is appropriate.
- Prepare to bring additional materials to the interview such as copies of your resume.
- Plan ahead by thinking about what you want the employer to know about you. Prepare key points you want to communicate about yourself and how you plan to make them.

During the interview:

- First, build rapport with the front desk staff or receptionist who greets you.
- Think positively! If you don't think you are the best candidate for the job, you will not get hired.
- 93% of communication is non-verbal. Your general appearance, facial expressions, and tone of voice, sell your attributes. Build a strong connection in the following manners:
 - Your eye contact should be open and direct when listening, asking, and responding to questions.
 - Your posture should be well-balanced, upright, relaxed, forward-facing, and open. Know your nervous habits and practice controlling them. Be sure to lean forward slightly to communicate interest.

- Be positive and confident and “own” what you have done and what you know.
- Always create a dialogue with the employer by asking questions related to the current topic and requesting more information when asked vague questions.

Questions employers might ask you

1. “Tell me about yourself.”

Pretend that the employer said “Tell me about yourself and why you are interested in this job?” You might answer this question by quickly mentioning your relevant background, experience and skills and then explaining why you believe the job would be a good fit for you.

2. “Describe three things that have been most important to you in a job.”

Be truthful about what matters to you professionally rather than personally.

3. “What do you know about this organization/area of the college?”

Provide an answer that indicates that you have researched the company before the interview. Example: “I’ve talked with some of your employees and they feel that this a good company to work for because...” “I have been reading that your company is really growing fast, planning two new branches this year. I want to work for your company because the future looks promising.”

4. “What is your biggest strength and your biggest weakness?”

You can give examples of your strengths if you wish (e.g. “I’m an excellent writer. Most of my teachers have commented on my ability to organize my thoughts and communicate with a variety of audiences.”) With your weaknesses, explain how you work around them or try to strengthen them. Avoid sharing a weakness that directly relates to the job’s requirements.

5. “Describe your ideal supervisor.”



It is much easier to answer this question if you already know the supervisor and his/her style. If not, you may want to state broad preferences, or consider mentioning how you would be a good supervisee.

6. “Why did you choose your major?”

If your major is unrelated to the industry, consider what aspects of your interests are most relevant to the job and focus on that side (e.g. your love of independent quantitative analysis vs. your love of team projects.)

7. “Tell me about a time when you worked as part of a team.”

Pick a specific example that has a “happy ending” and about which you are proud.

8. “What specific skills have you acquired or used in previous jobs that relate to this position?”

Be sure to have thought about your skills before the interview. A good way to do this is to highlight the skills mentioned in the job description and then think about how you might be able to prove each of those skills.

9. “How would your best friend describe you?”

A popular variation of this question is to state three adjectives that describe you -- short but informative.

10. “Why should we hire you?”

You may want to say something like “ I think there are three main reasons you should hire me. First...” Three main selling points will stick in the interviewer’s mind. Structuring your answer with numbers will keep you focused. This is not the time for many details. This question is best answered with a summary of your major assertions.

Questions you can ask employers

How would you describe the duties of the position?

How would you describe a typical day and/or a typical week in this position?

How much travel is normally expected?

How frequently do you relocate professional employees?

Why are you looking to fill this position? (Is it a newly created job? Did the previous employee leave? Why?)

*Referenced the Teachers College, Columbia University