

## INTERVIEW

Once you have submitted applications, the next step in your job search is the interview process. Although you hope to interview for every position you apply for, that is probably not going to happen. Your application and resume have indicated to the employer you have the skills and experience that fit the position requirements. The interview is where the employer will determine if you are a good fit for not only the position but also the company. An interview also gives you the opportunity to determine if the company is a match for your personality and abilities.

Every job opening requires an interview. An interview is an opportunity to promote yourself and to showcase your skills and experience to support the employer's goals. You and the interviewer actually have the same goal—selecting the right person for the position.

Thorough preparation for an interview can turn the experience to an applicant's advantage. In most cases, people have more than one interview before getting a job offer.

### Interview Formats

**One-on-One Interview:** You meet with one individual from the company. This may be a Human Resources representative or a hiring manager.

**Panel/Team Interview:** A panel/team of people meet with each of the job candidates and ask each candidate the same series of questions. The panel/team may be made up of 2–10 people from different departments and positions in the company.

**Serial Interview:** The job candidate meets with a series of people, usually one right after another. After everyone has met with the candidate, the interviewers will usually meet to discuss the candidate and compare notes.

### Types of Interviews

There are several types of interviews, and each type is used for a specific purpose by the interviewer. Descriptions are provided for each interview type along with some strategies and tips for dealing with each different situation.

#### Telephone Interview

**Focus:** This type of interview is used to see if job candidates have the basic qualifications, and it helps to determine if you are a serious candidate. It is often conducted by someone other than the hiring manager. These interviews are usually less than 30 minutes in length and are designed to select candidates for a second interview.

#### Strategy:

- Establish credibility quickly; talk about how your skills fit the employer's needs and look for every opportunity to make key points.
- Prepare as though it is a live person-to-person interview.
- Use good telephone etiquette and speak clearly and distinctly.

#### Tips:

- Make sure that you schedule a time when it will be quiet and that you have your notes and questions prepared.
- Dress for the telephone interview—you will sound different if you get dressed and have combed your hair rather than if you are wearing pajamas and have a disheveled look.

- Be sure to have the job posting, a copy of your resume, and facts about the company to refer to.
- After a telephone interview, you should follow up with a thank-you, either by email or by U.S. mail, to the person who conducted the interview.

### **Virtual Interview (ZOOM, Microsoft Teams, Skype, Citrix GoToMeeting)**

**Focus:** This type of interview has become more common with advances in technology. Many companies are now using virtual interview formats, and this is also a means for an employer to evaluate an applicant's comfort and skill using technology. The employer is looking to gain a clear understanding of each candidate and how they would fit in the role and organization.

#### **Strategy:**

- Prepare your background. A window behind you will create a shadow. Do not have clutter visible.
- Sitting at an appropriate level at a desk or table looks professional. Make sure your face and upper shoulders are framed in the shot. Place the computer slightly higher than you normally do, so that it is capturing your face and you are not looking down at the screen.
- Look into the camera. If you look directly at the image of your interviewer on your computer screen, you will appear to be looking slightly away from the interviewer. Instead, looking directly into your webcam will read as direct eye contact on your interviewer's end.

#### **Tips:**

- If needed, download the meeting software at least one day before the

scheduled interview to ensure you are able to connect and navigate the system.

- Dress the part—wear what you would wear for an in-person interview.
- Practice in advance with a friend. Connect online to test the volume and camera. Run through some questions to see how you sound and appear on screen. Plan for technical difficulties. If using a laptop, keep your computer plugged in so the battery does not die.
- Keep all other programs on your computer closed.
- You do not want to be distracted or have interruptions. If you find the image of yourself distracting, change your setting to remove that window.

### **In-Person (Face-to-Face) Interview**

**Focus:** This type of interview may be the final interview before a job offer or a first interview in the hiring process. An in-person interview has been a traditional type of interview and can range from 30 minutes to more than an hour. The employer is looking to gain a clear understanding of each candidate and how they would fit in the role and organization.

#### **Strategy:**

- For an in-person interview, establish yourself as friendly and professional as soon as you arrive at the designated location. Greet everyone with a smile and follow the rules of good posture. Express your enthusiasm for the job and the organization.
- Build rapport with the interviewer and let your professional personality be a guide to build connections.

- Maintain professionalism and do not use slang terms or share personal information.
- Pay attention to nonverbal signals. Note how the interviewer responds to your responses. These are clues for you to be more concise in your answers or add more detail for clarity.
- Have extra copies of your resume to share and also a list of references.
- Turn off your phone and put it out of sight as soon as you enter the building.

**Tips:**

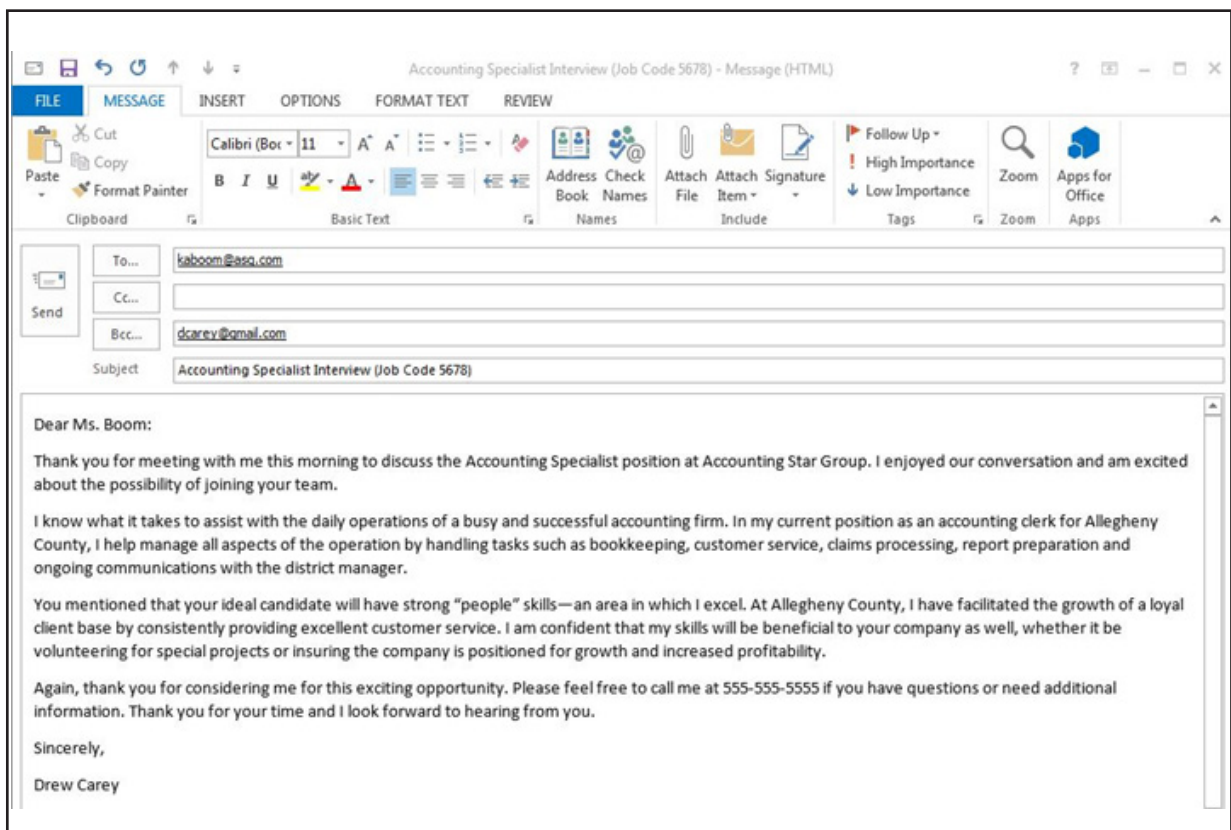
- Wear professional clothing that is appropriate for the position. If you have questions about what is appropriate attire for an interview, ask a member of the Workforce and Job Readiness team for guidance.
- Prepare answers to interview questions and practice with a friend. Use the internet to search for sample interview questions for the company and position you are interviewing for.
- Research the company and the people who will be interviewing you.

**Follow-up to an Interview**

A follow-up interview thank-you is an important step in successfully securing a position. In some cases, the follow-up thank-you was the determining factor in selecting the final candidate for a position. For this reason, you want your thank-you to be a positive and professional reflection of your ability to do the job well.

In today’s business environment, it is acceptable to send a thank-you via email.

**Thank-you emails should be sent within 24 to 48 hours after the interview.** Although you may think it is a good idea to send your email immediately upon leaving the interview, it is suggested that you wait a few hours so that you may reflect on the interview and write an effective message.



## Job Offer

The reward of having a successful interview and promoting your skills and experience to a potential employer is a job offer. Although everyone is very excited to receive a job offer, it is important to remain professional during the acceptance process—this will also start your career off on a positive note.

- Typically, job offers are first made in a phone call. During the call, remain professional and express your gratitude and excitement.
- Ask the caller what the next step is in the process. It is suggested that you do not accept the offer immediately, but ask for a consideration period of 24 to 48 hours.
- If the employer has not mentioned a written offer, ask for one. A written offer should detail the title of your

new position, salary, start date, working hours and benefits (health insurance, 401(k), vacation/sick days, flex time). Written offers may be sent in an email.

- As soon as you decide if you are accepting the position, notify the employer. The employer may require you to sign a written offer or contract as your acceptance.
- If you decide not to accept a job offer, you need to write a letter or email and decline the offer in a professional manner. It is important that you do not neglect this step or be rude when declining a position, since you may want to pursue other opportunities with the company in the future.

