

INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEWS: WHAT ARE THEY?

When you think of interviews, you might conjure up images of one-on-one meetings with professionals in suits, firm handshakes, and nervously answering questions about your strengths and weaknesses. Although this is one version of the classic job interview, **the definition has grown and changed** significantly in recent years.

Interviews, essentially, are **any official conversation between you and a professional in your desired industry**. These conversations take place **in person, online, and over the phone**. They might be aimed at **landing a new job or internship**, or the goal might be to **learn more about an industry** or position. They can look like that traditional question-and-answer format, or they can involve presentations, exercises, or panels of potential team members.

Whatever form your interview takes, it's important to **be prepared** and ready to make the most of it. This guide walks you through **tips, tricks, and best practices** for nailing your next interview.



WHY INTERVIEWS?

Interviews are so ingrained in the modern job market, we rarely **take the time to ask why** they're so important. That being said, it's important to think about why interviews are useful and important.

Simply put, interviews are **the most direct and personal way to evaluate a candidate**. Your resume, cover letter, and portfolio do a great job of illustrating your professional background and creative skills (or at least they should!), but it's interviews that help employers understand **who you are, not just what you've done**.

Interviews are also an opportunity for you to get a firsthand impression of a company. **Remember, it's not just about what an employer thinks of you. It's about what you think of them.** This is your opportunity to **ask questions**, get to know the people you might be working with, and clarify **what your life would be like** with this company.

THE INTERVIEW TIMELINE

BEFORE

Preparation is the most important part of nailing your interview. This is more than picking out professional attire or printing extra copies of your resume (although those are both good steps!). Preparing for your interview also means **understanding the position, the company, and yourself**.

Think of yourself as a brand and the employer as the customer. As soon as you get an offer to interview, it's time to do some market research. Start by **researching the company**, learning about what the role entails, and figuring out the best way to frame your experiences to **market yourself** to the employer.

Remember to always **double and triple-check the details** of your interview leading up to the day. Make sure you have the **time and location** right and that you have all of the materials you'll need. You don't want those little details to be the thing that costs you an opportunity.

For a deeper exploration into steps you can take before your interview, check out the links below.

DURING

On the day of the interview, be sure to **check the details one last time**. Make sure you have the directions, a full gas tank (if it's an in-person interview), ironed clothes, **extra copies of any printed materials**, and plenty of time to get to the interview location. You want to **arrive early**, so you have the opportunity to gather yourself and feel as prepared as possible before going in. **Most interviews last between 30-90 minutes**, but it's a good idea to clarify the time commitment required before arriving.

Typically, job and internship interviews follow the same general format:

1. Greetings & small talk
2. Introductions
3. Opening questions (for example: Tell me a bit about yourself)
4. Questions about your experience
5. Your questions & next steps

If you've prepped well, you will have **prepared stories and responses** to the more common questions and questions that are hinted at in the job description. Rely on the answers you've practiced, but never read from a script or memorize your answers exactly. **Remember to lead with confidence.** It's normal to be nervous, but if they didn't like you and your work, you wouldn't have gotten an interview!

For a more in-depth look into best practices during your interview, click on the links below.

AFTER

Staying in contact is a pivotal aspect of any post-interview strategy. You want to follow up, express your interest, and stay in the loop as much as possible as an employer makes their hiring decisions. However, **you don't want to cross the line into annoyance** by pestering them with too many emails.

Be mindful of the timeline in place. The **average interview process lasts around 27.5 days**, and final decisions are typically made within two weeks of the last round of interviews. However, **the timeline varies** from company to company. It's always best to ask for clarification on what the experience will look like early on in the process. Be sure to ask about **timing, communication, and how many rounds of interviews** they expect to hold before making a decision.

If you don't hear back within an established timeframe, it's a good idea to reach out and ask for an update. Remember to **be direct, polite, and professional in all of your communications**, and always **thank your interviewers** for their time and consideration.

Don't expect a final decision after a single interview. These days it's not uncommon to sit through three or more rounds of interviews before a final hiring decision is made.

For more insight into after-interview strategies, take a look at the link below!

COMMON CONCERNS

It's normal to be nervous leading up to your interview. To help assuage some of those fears, like accessibility, illegal, bad, and difficult interview questions, and salary discussion, email careers@ccad.edu for more support. We're happy to help!

PRE-INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

