

# Interview Guidelines

The interview process provides both you and the employer the opportunity to determine if the position is a good career match. It is a chance to enter into a conversational environment.

The interview is a time during which you want to maximize your opportunity to present your skills as they relate to the position. This is not usually the venue in which to discuss personal matters or interests. Of course, social etiquette should be observed and light conversation may ensue.

Verbalize your skills and provide specific examples of how you acquired and successfully applied them. When you apply knowledge it becomes a skill. Discuss skills attained through :

- class projects
- personal/home systems
- co-operative education/internships
- community service
- volunteer projects
- on the job

Remember when discussing skills in the interview they are not only acquired from a job. Once you can apply what you learn that knowledge becomes a part of your skill base.

## :: Rule of Three

When responding to questions try to use the "rule of three". This is a very common technique that is used when persuading others. You may answer a question by saying, "let me cite three examples where I used a DBMS (database management system):

- "I created a web page for the Farmington Agency that allowed their customers to check personal account information on-line. This required that I develop a MS Access database to be integrated into the website."
- "In my Cooperative Education internship with the Portland Rose Festival, I created reports from data in MS Access by writing a VB program."
- "I designed a database for a DEQ application as part of my CIS 275, Database Development course. I wrote SQL queries to retrieve data utilizing the same database in SQL Server."

When preparing for the interview you may answer most questions using the "Rule of Three". Acknowledge at least 15 of your most marketable skills. Then develop specific examples showing how you used them successfully.


## :: Preparation checklist for successful interviewing

1. **Be on time.** This means ten to fifteen minutes early.  
**Begin with a firm (not tight) handshake and know the interviewer's name and how to pronounce it.** You should use Mr. or Ms.
2. **Bring extra copies of your resume, samples of projects, pens and a notepad.** But don't take notes during the interview. Limit your samples and bring them in a folder or briefcase.
3. **Expect to spend some time developing rapport.** Personal chemistry is a main ingredient in the hiring process. Relax and think of the interview as a conversation, not an interrogation.
4. **Pay attention to your physical posture.** Avoid negative body language: frequently touching your mouth, faking a cough, gnawing on your lip, tight or forced smiles, swinging your foot or leg, folding or crossing your arms, slouching, avoiding eye contact, fidgeting. Your best feature is a relaxed, confident smile.
5. **Make eye contact with the interviewer and answer his/her questions in a clear voice.** Remember to listen and avoid talking too much. Communication is a two-way street.
6. **Show self-confidence.** Be honest and straightforward. Never apologize for lack of experience or weaknesses, but don't be overconfident or cocky.
7. **Dress professionally and comfortably.** You will be judged in some respects by what you wear and your physical appearance. When in doubt, dress conservatively.
  - **For women:** A straightforward business suit is best. Wear polished dress shoes. Be moderate with make-up and avoid perfumes. Wear simple jewelry. Hair and fingernails should be well-groomed. If you are a smoker, be aware of the smell of smoke on your clothing/breath.
  - **For men:** A clean, ironed shirt and conservative tie are highly recommended.  
A simple jacket or business suit is also a good idea. Wear polished dress shoes. Face should be clean-shaven; facial hair should be neatly trimmed. Hair and fingernails should be well-groomed. Avoid cologne or after-shave. If you are a smoker, be aware of the smell of smoke on your clothing/breath.
8. **End the interview with a handshake and thank the interviewer for his or her time.**
  - Reiterate your interest in the position and your qualifications.
  - Ask if you can telephone in a few days to check on the status of your application. If they offer to contact you, politely ask when you should expect the call.
  - After the interview, send a "Thank You" note. Time it so it arrives before the hiring decision is made.
  - Follow up with a phone call if you are not contacted within a week of when the interviewer indicated you would be.

## :: Interview assignment

Answer the question, "Tell me about yourself" or "what qualifications will you bring to this position," using the rule of three. Make sure you provide information that relates to a position of your choice and include specific examples describing these skills.

The "interview" encompasses the entire time you are on site and/or in communication with a company representative. It is not just the time you are being asked questions.

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