

Before, During and After Your Interview

Preparing for a job interview can be a nerve-wracking experience, but with the right approach, you can walk in feeling confident and ready to succeed. This guide provides practical steps for each phase of the interview process: from researching the company and practicing your answers beforehand, to making a great first impression and handling questions smoothly during the interview and following up professionally afterward. By following these simple yet effective strategies, you'll be well on your way to acing your next interview.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Research the Company:

Take some time to learn about the company's mission, vision, values, and products/services. Review its website, social media, and recent news to understand the company culture. Explore its sustainability policy, outreach programs, and volunteer opportunities as well. If you know someone who works at the company, consider asking them for insights into the company, including its history and the people with whom you'll be interviewing.

Prepare Your Answers:

Practice common interview questions. Jot down bullet points for each question on a notecard so that you can practice them repeatedly until you're comfortable with your answers and delivery so that your answers flow naturally. Use the CAR (Challenge, Action, Result) Method to structure your responses, especially for behavioral questions. This will help you stay organized and demonstrate confidence.

Practice Your Interviewing Skills:

Do a mock interview with a career advisor (Saremi Center for Career Development), professor, coach, friend, or family member. During this practice interview, wear the professional clothes you plan to wear in the interview, including shoes, so you'll feel comfortable in them.

Ask for feedback on your body language and responses. Were you sitting upright in the chair? Were there questions that you stumbled over? Did you exhibit any nervous habits?

If you're rehearsing alone, use a mock interview platform like **StandOut** to record and review your answers. You can create a custom interview using general questions, ones specifically designed for your major or for specific skills, or a combination thereof. You'll receive immediate feedback generated by AI. StandOut can be accessed through the AIC My Apps Dashboard or by [clicking here](#).

DURING THE INTERVIEW

Make a Great First Impression:

Greet each interviewer with eye contact, a firm handshake (neither hand-crushing nor limp), and a friendly smile. While this may vary slightly from one country or culture to the next, it is the generally accepted custom in the United States. First impressions matter, so stay confident and polite.

Stay Cool Under Pressure:

If you struggle while thinking of a response to a question during the interview, think PIE, which stands for “passionate, interested, and engaged.” This will help you to maintain your confidence, even if you're still gathering your thoughts, and demonstrate that you can remain calm and collected in a stressful situation.

Prepare for Next Steps:

Thank each interviewer for their time and ask for their business card. This will give you their contact information for follow-up. Before leaving, ask about the next steps in the hiring process and when you can expect to hear back.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Send a Thank-You Email:

Within 24 hours, email a short and personalized thank-you note to each interviewer. Be sure to address them respectfully and use professional language. Use this simple four-point structure:

1. Thank them for their time.
2. Reaffirm your interest in the position, referencing something specific that was discussed during the interview.
3. Highlight how your skills/qualifications align with the job.
4. Express your eagerness for the next steps.

Reflect & Improve:

One of the best ways to evaluate your performance in an interview is to reflect on the experience promptly after the interview. Many people find it useful to write down a few thoughts about what went well (Good), what you could improve (Bad), and what you should avoid next time (Ugly). This GBU self-evaluation will help you improve your skills for future interviews!