

University of Montana

Interview Preparation

BUILD KNOWLEDGE ABOUT JOB/INTERNSHIP

1. Obtain information about **INTERVIEW**

- Is it phone, in-person, Zoom, group, panel, behavioral, one-on-one, local or fly-out interview?
- Reflect on past performance: how have previous interviews gone? Strengths? Areas for growth?

2. Research the **JOB & COMPANY/ORGANIZATION**

What do you know about the company and job? Why do you want to work here?

- Company Culture
 - Research the company on Website, LinkedIn, Social Media, Google, and Glassdoor.com
 - Research the field and industry
- Use LinkedIn to research and connect with people that work there – family, friends, GRIZ Alums.
- Link to company on social media

3. Discover your **RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI)**

What do you uniquely bring to the role?

WHAT does the employer want you to do? Review and expand on keywords.

- *When have you done that? What was the result? Tell a story about it.*

HOW does the employer want you to express yourself? (friendly? organized? leadership? teamwork?)

- *When have you demonstrated those characteristics? Tell a story about it.*

WHY does the employer need to hire someone – what is the goal of the role? (make money? drive sales?)

- *When did you do, or support that goal? Tell a story about it.*

4. GENERAL INTERVIEW TIPS & TRICKS

- In the first 7 seconds you have made your first impression – was it positive?
- Listen to the question and answer it; stay on topic.
- Omit filler words (um, like, you know). Use a strategic pause to allow time to think of what you want to say.
- Use appropriate language and don't overshare— marital status, religion, politics, parenthood, etc.
- Be prepared to share stories and show your work (portfolio, web design).
- Do not bad-mouth any past job, employer, situation — stay focused on the positive.
- Don't talk salary. If they offer you the job, then salary becomes a topic.
- Remember, you are interviewing them, too! Ask questions.

5. VIRTUAL INTERVIEW TIPS

- Download online video platform early to ensure audio and camera function.
- Dress professionally from head to toe – limit jewelry and makeup.
- Create a neutral background and light yourself from front.
- Create a cheat sheet with talking points.
- Try to look at camera, not people.

INTERVIEW TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Reflect on past performance and achievements -- tie them to the job, company, or industry.

1. CIRCLE BACK

All answers should circle back to the job expectations or requirements.

2. ELEVATOR PITCH – SELF-INTRODUCTION *(job fairs, networking, interviews)*

- Prepare **1-2-minute** pitch of your background and experience – consider past (hometown), present (education and experience), future (academic and professional goals) format and incorporate soft skills.
- Focus on your relevant academic and professional experience and achievements.
- Write this down and **practice** this until you know it well.

3. PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

Share something about **past** (hometown), **present** (degree), and **future** (career in ...)

Identify their need and fill it – connect your past or successes to their needs.

- *Tell me about yourself.*
- *What is your greatest weakness?* – past weakness, now strength; weakness you are improving.

4. POWER OF 3

Pick 3 keywords in the job posting that you have **success** doing. Focus on those.

Pick 3 keywords in the job posting that you see as an **opportunity for growth**.

- *What is your greatest weakness?* –unrelated weakness; compensate with strength in related areas

5. PICK 1 – “WATER WINGS” TRAIT – 60 second sell

Pick **1 personality trait or characteristic required** that student excels in. Focus on it.

- Soft skills: communication, teamwork, problem-solving, creativity, **adaptability**, time management.
- Come back to this trait in responses to interview questions.
 - *What is your greatest strength?*
 - *Tell me about a time you were working on a team and it didn't go well (CAR).*

6. SHOW & TELL – TELL STORIES ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE

Focus on what they would care about, want to hear about.

- *What sets you apart?*

STAR: SITUATION, TASK, ACTION, RESULT

CAR: CHALLENGE, **ACTION**, RESULT

- *Tell me about a time you worked on a team and things went south...how did you improve that situation?*

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW

PRE-INTERVIEW

- Charge your cell phone fully; Google Map the location and pin it in your phone
- Have company address and phone and your contact's phone readily available
- If an on-site interview, drive it first – find parking. Do you need money?
- Choose appropriate outfit for job
- Professional women do not take purses into interviews – take portfolio with paper, pen and breath mints
- Less is more — make-up, perfume, jewelry.
- Prepare and take your Professional Reference list as a “leave behind”
- Write down questions you want to ask the interviewer at the close of the interview
 - *What keeps you here? What makes a new hire successful? What are 30-60-90 days expectations? How is performance measured? What departments does the role collaborate with? What challenges is the company currently facing?*

INTERVIEW DAY

- Be EARLY
- Take 1-2 copies of your résumé to the interview in case it's a group interview
- Leave cell phone in the car or in your pocket on silent
- Wait to be invited to sit down.
- Have a solid handshake, not fishy

POST-INTERVIEW

- Thank interviewer(s) for their time
- Email a thank you within 24 hours - reference appreciation for interview and excitement for opportunity. Restate your interests and bridge it to something learned in the interview.
- Be brief and highlight your continued interest in the position after the interview



Check out the following learning journeys on Elevate U Online for more tips and techniques you can utilize as you prepare for interviews:

- **Preparing for an Interview:**
 - Review interview formats to prepare for all types of questions.
 - Ask about the format and structure of interview questions.
- **Company Research:**
 - Learn to conduct deep, meaningful research into companies (organizations) for interview prep.

GRADUATE or PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL INTERVIEWS

These types of interviews are to determine your fit for the program or lab.

INTERVIEWERS might contemplate:

1. Can we offer you the training you desire?
2. Will you fit with the family, the program, the culture?
3. Are there too many applicants with a specific focus? (e.g. not all 80 incoming law students can be criminal lawyers)
4. Will you finish the program, classwork, and thesis/dissertation? Does your résumé show instability, university- and job-hops?
5. Will you be a good representative of our school or program in the community and field?
6. Will you continue your professional learning? Research? Publish? Teach?
7. Will you step into leadership roles in the lab, program, school, and/or field?
8. Does past schooling, labs or jobs show your desire for advanced study in the field?
9. Will you represent the program on professional associations and/or in the community as an engaged professional? Go above and beyond classroom expectations?
10. Who are your references? Someone I respect in the field, or know?
11. What do you offer in exchange for a tuition-free TA position?
12. What does your past performance (behavior) tell us about your future performance (behavior)?
13. Will you give back to the school or program as an alum?

QUESTIONS FOR YOU might include:

1. Why us, this field, and this program (lab, law school, med school, PharmD program, MA, PhD)?
2. Did anyone within the program recruit you to apply? Do you have a mentor (or lab) set-up already?
3. What other schools did you apply to and why?
4. What are your career goals?
5. Why this area – this unique population?
6. What's the top concern of the industry or the field? (are you on top of your game?)
7. What lab or faculty would you want to study under or TA for? Where do you see yourself fitting?
8. Are you interested in teaching or a TA/RA role in the future?
9. What might concern us about your application materials? (your weakness)
10. Why are you a good fit for this school/program? What sets you apart?

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

We cannot predict exactly what questions you'll be asked...

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. Tell me about yourself
2. Why do you want to pursue a career in this field/industry?
3. Why this program/company/organization?
4. What do you consider your greatest strengths?
5. What do you consider your greatest weaknesses?
6. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
7. What are your long-term goals?
8. What qualities do you look for in a supervisor?
9. Why should we hire you? What sets you apart from other applicants?
10. In what type of work environment do you perform best?
11. How has your background prepared you for this position?
12. Describe a situation when you had to work in a team.
13. Describe a situation when you had a conflict at work. How did you handle it?
14. Describe a situation when you demonstrated leadership.
15. Describe a time when you worked under pressure.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYERS

1. What qualities are you looking for in a new hire?
2. What characteristics does a successful person in your organization/company/program possess?
3. What are your top goals for this position in the first 6-months? 1 year?
4. Can you describe a recent change the organization/company made based on employee feedback?
5. What kind of opportunities and funding are available for professional development?
6. How would you describe your management style / the style of management/leadership at the company?
7. What are some of your top values at this company?
8. If you were starting this job now, what advice would you give to yourself?
9. What is a typical schedule for this role / what are the typical work hours?
10. What do you enjoy most about your work with this organization?
11. What is most challenging about your work with this organization?
12. How do you promote work/life balance at this company?
13. What are the next steps in the hiring process?
14. What does the training process for this position look like?

UTILIZING AI FOR YOUR INTERVIEW

Artificial intelligence is a remarkable tool. It equips your computer to analyze data, offer predictions, and expedite decisions when extra support is needed.

However, despite AI's intelligence, it sometimes falters in matters of common sense and context. While it excels at producing impressive data, its efficiency is lacking in data-sparse environments. Additionally, AI can display potential bias and limited creativity. As we dive into the landscape of AI integration, we must also consider the concerns of privacy, security and the unforeseen consequences of using this tool.

PROS OF USING CHATGPT FOR INTERVIEWING:

- **Practice and Feedback:** ChatGPT can simulate a real interview scenario, allowing you to practice answering common interview questions and receive instant feedback on your responses. This can help you refine your communication skills and improve interview performance.
- **Availability:** ChatGPT is accessible 24/7, allowing you to practice at your own convenience and pace.
- **Variety of Questions:** You can practice answering a wide range of interview questions from different industries and roles. This can help you become more versatile in your responses and better prepared for various types of interviews.
- **Unbiased Evaluation:** ChatGPT provides objective feedback without any biases, which can help you identify areas for improvement that you might not receive from human interviewers.
- **Confidence Building:** Regular practice can help boost your confidence by familiarizing you with the interview process and reducing anxiety associated with interviews.

CONS OF USING CHATGPT FOR INTERVIEWING:

- **Lack of Human Interaction:** ChatGPT lacks the emotional intelligence and personal touch of a human interviewer. Interviews are not just about answers; they're also about building rapport and demonstrating interpersonal skills.
- **Limited Context:** ChatGPT may not fully understand the specific context of your background, experiences, or the company you're interviewing with. This can lead to generic or less tailored advice.
- **Inaccuracies and Misguidance:** ChatGPT might occasionally provide incorrect information or guidance, which could potentially mislead you in your interview preparation.
- **Overreliance on Prompts:** If you rely solely on ChatGPT for interview practice, you might become accustomed to certain prompts and not develop the ability to handle unexpected or challenging questions.
- **Technical Limitations:** ChatGPT might struggle with highly technical questions or specialized industries where domain-specific knowledge is crucial. It might not be the best resource for honing technical skills.
- **Lack of Nuance:** ChatGPT might miss the nuanced aspects of an interview, such as non-verbal cues, tone of voice and real-time interaction dynamics.

HOW TO GENERATE PROMPTS FOR YOUR INTERVIEW

To use ChatGPT to generate prompts for an interview, follow these steps:

- **Set Clear Objectives:** Clarify the role or industry for which you're preparing.
- **Provide Context:** Introduce the purpose "I need help generating interview prompts for a software engineering role." Briefly explain the type of questions you're looking for.
- **Request Prompts:** Ask ChatGPT to generate relevant prompts. "Could you provide me with some behavioral questions that assess teamwork and leadership skills?" Be specific about the criteria you want to cover in the prompts.
- **Review and Refine:** You can ask ChatGPT to modify or expand on certain prompts by asking "Can you give me more examples that focus on problem-solving?"
- **Diversity of Question Types:** Ensure a well-rounded set of prompts that cover different aspects of the candidate's skills, experience, and personality traits.
- **Consider Follow-Ups:** ChatGPT can help generate follow-up questions for each prompt.
- **Combine with Human Expertise:** Consider involving a human with expertise in the field to ensure the prompts accurately reflect the requirements.

SAMPLE PROMPTS FOR INTERVIEWS

Before Interview:

1. What are typical interview questions asked by employers for this position: [POSITION]
2. What are typical interview questions asked by employers for this position: [POSITION] include questions about [SKILLS]
3. Give me some sample responses to interview questions for [POSITION]
4. Based on my experience in [POSITION], what skills should I highlight in an interview for [NEW COMPANY]. Use my resume as a reference. [PASTE RESUME]
5. You're the interviewer for this role: [job description]. Can you come up with 3-5 interview questions based on this job description?
6. I'm interviewing for [job title] at [company/type of company], and this is part of the job description: [section of the job description in question]. What does this responsibility entail? How do I showcase this skill in an interview?
7. I'm interviewing for [job title] and expect to be asked [question you think the hiring manager will ask you]. What's the best way to answer this question?
8. What are good questions to ask the organization while interviewing for this [POSITION]?

Post Interview:

1. I interviewed for [job title] at [company/type of company]. We talked about [describe what you talked about in the interview]. What should I write in my thank-you note to my interviewer who is [role of interviewer]?
2. I interviewed for [job title] at [company/type of company], and I'm planning to send a thank-you note to [role of interviewer]. Here's what I've written: [thank-you note draft]. Do you have feedback on how I could write this better?
3. I interviewed for [job title] at [company/type of company], and I have a follow-up question for my interviewer. How can I ask it in a follow-up email?
4. Write a thank you email to an interviewer. Reference [something you discussed].