

Marymount Manhattan College
Office of Career Services

Steps to a Successful Interview

Step 1: Do Your Research

- Know the mission, purpose, and identity of the employer
- Know how you could fit into their mission, purpose, and identity
- Know why you want this position with this specific employer

Step 2: Prepare Yourself

- Look up lists of common interview questions (see back)
- Dress professionally and appropriately for the job
- Eat and sleep well the night/morning before

Step 3: The Interview

- Arrive early, and be polite to everyone you meet (not just the interviewer)
- Smile, be confident, and avoid negative topics or phrases
- Have an answer to every question and use positive stories from past positions
- Articulate your transferable skills, and demonstrate your focused career direction

Step 4: Follow Up

- Always have a few questions to ask the interviewer (see back)
- Thank the interviewer for his or her time
- Be sure to get a business card from your interviewer
- Always follow up with a thank-you email or letter

Interview Rubric

	Excellent Interview	Average Interview	Needs Improvement
First Impressions	Your appearance is professional; you are wearing a business suit. You greet and shake hands with your interviewer correctly. Your conversation is enthusiastic and engaging.	You look nice, but you do not wear a suit. Your greeting is appropriate, but you forget to shake hands with your interviewer. Your conversation is enthusiastic and engaging.	Your attire is unprofessional: You wear jeans or shorts to the interview. You do not greet or shake hands with your interviewer. Your conversation is not energetic.
Interview Content	You are knowledgeable about the organization and position. You display poise and confidence. You relate your skills to the job very well.	You are knowledgeable about the position, but not about the organization. You display adequate confidence in your answers. You state your skills, but do not adequately relate them to the job.	You are not knowledgeable about the position or organization. You are not confident in answering questions about yourself. You do not state the skills you have to do the job.
Interview Skills / Techniques	You have excellent eye contact with your interviewer (without staring). Your language and grammar are appropriate. (No use of "um".) You speak at the correct speed.	You have adequate eye contact with your interviewer. Your language and grammar are adequate. You use "um" and other inappropriate terms, but not enough to disrupt the interview. You speak a little too quickly or too slowly.	You look at the floor or ceiling when speaking. Your grammar and language are inappropriate. You speak too quickly or too slowly.
Closing	You successfully convey your interest in the position. You ask appropriate questions. You thank the interviewer.	You convey some interest in the position. You are not prepared to ask questions. You thank the interviewer.	You do not show any interest in the position. You do not ask any questions. You do not thank the interviewer.

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15 Common Interview Questions

Here is a list of questions you may be asked in an interview. When giving your answer, remember to be:

- **Positive** – Keep a positive attitude about yourself and your experiences. Even if the position is not your dream job, your attitude will be remembered by the interviewer.
- **Specific** – When giving an answer, especially one where you are asked to describe something from your previous experience, strive to be specific.
- **Position-Related** – It is up to you to ensure that your answers directly relate to the specific position being discussed.
- **Knowledgeable** – You know your stuff and you have researched the company. Don't be shy about sharing your knowledge!

1. Tell me about yourself? (keep under one minute)
2. Why are you interested in working for this company?
3. If hired, how would you contribute to this company?
4. What are some adjectives to describe you? (prepare at least five)
5. What are your major strengths? (stress communication and teamwork skills)
6. What are your major weaknesses? (make sure to focus on your improvements)
7. What are your long term career goals? Where do you see yourself in five years?
8. Tell us about a time you had to work through a difficult situation?
9. Tell us a time where you had a major success at work?
10. Tell us about a time where you made a mistake at work?
11. Describe a time where you had to work as a team?
12. What kinds of people do you prefer to work with?
13. What kind of work environment do you prefer to work in?
14. How do you spend your free time?
15. Why should we hire you?

5 Questions to Ask the Interviewer

Here is a list of questions you want to consider asking the interviewer. When asking your questions, remember that this is your opportunity to:

- **Interview the company** – Both you and the interviewer wants to ensure a good fit. Make sure you address any questions about the company, as long as these do not pertain to specifics such as salary, benefits, vacation, etc.
- **Cover any areas not addressed in the Interview** – Have a great experience that wasn't touched on in the interview? Address it here.
- **Learn more about the industry** – Ask questions that allow you to showcase your industry knowledge while getting insight into the company and the industry overall.

1. How would you describe the working environment?
2. What are some of the major challenges of this position?
3. How do you think this company stands out compared to others like it?
4. What does a typical day in this position look like?
5. What do you like most about this company?