



TYPES OF INTERVIEWS – FORMAT AND LOCATIONS

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INTERVIEW PREPARATION RESOURCE

When you receive an interview invitation, the hiring manager or human resources professional will typically share the interview format, location, length, and other relevant details. The interview invite will also typically offer an opportunity to request any accommodations you may need to feel supported in fully participating in the interview process.

There are various different types of interview formats, each with its own structures and expectations. Some common interview formats include individual interviews, panel interviews, group interviews, and multiple-round interviews. In terms of location, interviews can take place in-person, virtually via video-conference software, or over the phone. Each format and location has its own unique challenges and benefits.

In addition to this, some interviews may also include pre- or post- assignments or tasks (such as technical skills tests, or recorded/written responses to questions), while others may have specific components (such as presentations) that will take place during the interview. Finally, specific industries may rely on certain specialized interview types. For example, consulting firms often use case interviews, in which the candidate is asked to solve business problems and showcase their problem-solving abilities, critical thinking skills, and awareness of industry trends and knowledge.

Common Interview Types

Individual Interviews typically involve you and another individual, usually the hiring manager or recruiter. The benefit of an individual interview is that you can tailor your approach and focus on connecting with the interviewer as you showcase your skills, interests, and values. Conversely, individual interviews also mean that you only meet one person from the organization unlike a **panel interview** or **multiple round interviews**. When preparing for an individual interview, ensure that you try to learn more about your interviewer in advance, to help you build a rapport.



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Panel interviews are interviews that involve more than one interviewer. The interview panel may include the hiring manager, your direct supervisor (if different), a human resource professional, and a potential colleague. The panel interview offers an opportunity for you to understand how the role might work with prospective colleagues. Panel interviews can vary; one person from the panel may lead the interview by asking questions while others observe, or the interviewers may take turns asking questions – be sure to address each panel interviewer if they rotate the questions. As part of your interview preparation, research all of the individuals who will be on your panel.

Group interviews involve spaces where more than one candidate is present during the interview. The size and structure of the group interview may vary – however, the goal is for the interviewer(s) to meet multiple candidates simultaneously. Examples of different structures may include the group being asked a question and all the candidates taking turns responding to the question, or the group may be assigned a task to perform. Group interviews can help interviewers effectively learn more about candidates' workstyle and approach in team settings. To prepare, be sure to greet the interviewers and fellow candidates; when questions are posed, you may prefer to answer first and/or take some time to build your response. If another candidate has a good response, acknowledge the value-added, and build from it, if relevant and possible.

Multiple round interviews occur when you are expected to go through several interviews for a position. Your first round of interviews may be an initial screening process for them to create a shortlist of candidates to invite to the second round. For example, in a first round interview, you may meet with a Human Resources professional, who asks a few questions to ensure that you meet the minimum requirements for the role. The second and consecutive round of interviews are opportunities for the potential employer to learn more about you and how your experiences, skills, and values and how closely they align with the organization. Consecutive rounds are sometimes used by employers to help them decide between two or more qualified candidates. You may meet senior-level staff members beyond the first round of interviews, and some interviews may be testing different competencies – for example, there may be an interview that is more technical in nature, while there might also be a follow up interview in which they assess how well you might deal with clients. To prepare for multiple-round interviews, learn about who your interviewers are, and try to understand the expectations of the different rounds you may experience to better position your candidacy.



Interview Locations and Tips

In-person interviews typically take place at the office of the organization that you're applying to. In-person interviews offer more visual cues about the interviewers as compared to video-conferencing or phone interviews. They often offer the opportunity to learn about the organization through its physical environment. In-person interviews can sometimes have a little more small talk at the start as interviewers welcome you and lead you to the interview space.

Tips for an in-person interview.

Arrive early. Whether you are walking, commuting, or driving to the interview location, keep a safe buffer of time to avoid feeling rushed or delayed by transit issues, road closures, or traffic jams. Avoid being more than 10 minutes early to check-in for the interview as they may be wrapping up with another candidate; instead, you can wait in a nearby public space, coffee shop, or building lobby if you find yourself near the interview location early.

Dress appropriately and comfortably. Interview attire is typically more formal. You might be used to wearing formal clothes, or you may rarely wear interview attire. If you don't dress formally on a frequent basis, it can be helpful to try on your outfit in advance of the interview to make sure that you feel sufficiently comfortable. During the interview, you want to feel supported in focusing on the questions rather than distracted by uncomfortable clothing.

Be mindful of body language. While your interview responses communicate information to the interviewer(s), your body language also sends signals. During the interview, make eye-contact with the interviewer(s) when answering questions, and try to maintain a good posture (i.e., avoid slouching or lounging). At the same time, you can also gauge how an interviewer feels about your responses by paying attention to their body language and other visual cues.

Virtual interviews take place over a video-conferencing software platform; some popular platforms include Zoom and Microsoft Teams. To participate in virtual interviews, ensure that your device can access all platform features, including a camera, microphone, and strong internet connection. One benefit of a virtual interview is that you may have greater flexibility or autonomy in your interview space, which can help you feel more comfortable during the interview. For virtual interviews, it is best for your interview to arrive on-time or a minute or two early as the interviewer(s) may be finishing another interview or call.



Tips for video interviews

Test your tech. Ensure that the video-conferencing software on your device is up to date, and test the software a few days in advance to resolve any potential issues. You will also want to test the camera and microphone to make sure that there is appropriate lighting and clear audio. Before the interview, be sure to have your devices charged and plugged in and turn off any sounds or notifications that might distract you (e.g., email alerts, messages).

Have a backup plan. While you may do your best to prepare for the virtual interview, sometimes technology can unexpectedly fail. To be proactive, connect with the employer for their preferred phone number as an alternative way to join the interview if there are technical difficulties (i.e., lagging internet connection or power outage).

Prepare your space and yourself. Your interview space should be quiet and ideally private. If interviewers can see your space in the background, ensure that it is tidy; you may use artificial backgrounds if you prefer not to share your space with your interviewer(s). Determine the appropriate level of formality for the interview, and dress accordingly. "[Interview attire: what to wear](#)" has more information on considerations for how you might dress for an interview.

Phone interviews involve a call with the hiring manager or recruiter, and tend to be shorter in length compared to other interview formats. Typically, you would speak to one person during a phone interview. Phone interviews may be the first stage of a multiple-round interview process, as it allows recruiters to gather information about a candidate before inviting them to the next round of interviews. One of the main challenges of phone interviews is the lack of body language. However, one benefit of phone interviews is that it is easy to keep notes with you and have your application documents as you answer questions.

Tips for Phone Interviews

Find a quiet and private space, without any distractions. Avoid public spaces, as these often interfere with the quality of the phone call due to background noise. In addition, be sure to turn off any notifications from your phone to prevent disruptions. If you are unable to find a quiet space, consider an area on campus such as a study room.

Keep notes and take notes. Leverage the opportunity to keep your notes, resume, and a copy of the job description with you, and refer to them as needed to answer questions. Additionally, note down any relevant information shared by the interviewer(s).

Be ready to introduce yourself. For a phone interview, similar to an in-person interview, it is best to be at your chosen location in advance, so you can set up and prepare for the call. Be sure to introduce yourself at the beginning of the call, and express your enthusiasm.