

The Selection Interview

Preparation Guide



You've been called to a selection interview. Congratulations!

The selection interview is one of the measurement tools used during the recruitment process in order to perform an objective evaluation of a candidate's skills. It constitutes an integral part of the selection process and provides candidates with the opportunity to introduce themselves, and to promote their accomplishments and degree of expertise with respect to the requirements of the position. For the candidate, it's also a chance to gather more information about the position to be filled as well as the prospective employer. The interview is a way of confirming whether the career opportunity coincides with the candidate's expectations, or whether the candidate's profile responds to the needs of the company.

This guide is designed to help you prepare for your interview by providing thoughtful suggestions to help your interview go smoothly.

Preparing for the interview

The better you prepare, the greater the likelihood that you'll arrive at your interview brimming with confidence!

Recruiters often make use of the behaviour-based interview, which rests on the premise that the best way to predict a candidate's future performance is to analyze his/her productivity in the past and present. Therefore, the interview's objective is to collect as much information as possible in order to support a candidate's application.

The selection interview is a shared responsibility. Your objective should be to project an image consistent with your profile in addition to demonstrating a clear interest in the position. The recruiter's job will be to evaluate your suitability for the position based on the associated selection criteria.

We strongly recommend that your interview preparation places emphasis on the skills and accomplishments most relevant to the position for which you're applying. Since the interview will prompt you to share your real-life experiences, your preparation should involve two components: analysis of the **job requirements** and a self-assessment of **your skills**.

1. Analysis of the position's job requirements

Examine what the organization is searching for. Analyze the job posting and get the information you need from the appropriate resources.

- What are the qualifications and skills required for this position?
- What are the main issues and challenges associated with the job?
- How are your skills and accomplishments useful, relevant or applicable to this position?

During the interview, place your emphasis on demonstrating the compatibility between the skills required for the position and those you possess. How and in what types of situations have you demonstrated the use and mastery of the skills required?

2. Self-assessment of your skills

Anticipating the questions you could be asked and rehearsing the corresponding answers you wish to provide is a good way to prepare! Using previous performance appraisals, and feedback from immediate supervisors, colleagues or even past teachers, identify your strengths, skills, aptitudes and accomplishments as well as the traits you would improve. Think about past situations when you were called upon to apply them, and for each one, analyze the following:

- What role did you play, and what were your daily tasks and responsibilities?
- What were your main accomplishments?
- How did you overcome the challenges with which you were faced?
- What initiatives did you undertake toward self-improvement?
- What are you most proud of? Why?
- What did you learn from this experience?

Here's a tip: take notes that you can review as required prior to your interview. Also, take the time to examine the types of responses you've prepared in advance by asking yourself what the interviewer's perceptions would be. If you need to, you could practice with a person you trust and request feedback to help you determine the following:

- What is the first impression given off by your application?
- What overall image does your application project?
- What positive attributes could your potential employment bring to the organization?

During the interview

Exude confidence, ensure that you're appropriately dressed for the type of job available and give a firm handshake. During the course of the interview, the questions asked will centre on the demonstration of your know-how. We recommend that you respond using specific examples and real-life experiences.

When it comes to a selection interview, you are your own best ally! Have you:

- Collected **information about the job** and the company?
- Collected **information about the challenges** and issues associated with the job or the company?
- Been informed about the **job posting**?
- Performed a **self-assessment** of your skills and accomplishments?
- Prepared your answers** to the most commonly-asked questions, including those that relate to your experience and education?
- Formulated questions** that you'd like to ask the manager or recruiter?

Your choice of response should emphasize your skills and their relevance to the job requirements. A simple way to structure your responses is to employ the **STAR** method:

- **S**ituation you had to face, OR
- **T**ask you were asked to complete
- **A**ction that you undertook
- **R**esult of your actions

Remember: the examples you provide should highlight your style and personality as well as the strategies you use to reach the objectives assigned to you.

A few tips for a successful interview:

- Before the interview, **review your notes** on your skills and accomplishments.
- Stay calm and **be yourself**. Give an accurate portrayal of your skills.
- Answer the questions in a conversational tone. Be **spontaneous**.
- Describe your accomplishments and their relevance to the job in a clear and concise manner.
- Request **clarification** if you don't understand a particular question.
- Ask questions**. Reaffirm your interest in the job, if needed.

After the interview

Shortly after the interview, make notes on the following:

- How did the interview go?
- What were the strong points of this interview?
- Did you have difficulty answering certain questions? What would you do differently next time?
- What information did you forget to mention?

The act of writing and reviewing these notes will help you identify your strengths and the ways with which you can improve your performance in an interview.

To seal the deal, communicating with the interviewer to express your gratitude for the interview should be included on your "to do" list.

Want to learn more?

Would you like to explore certain aspects of this guide in greater detail? Here are some links that may be useful to you:

- <http://interview.monster.ca/index.asp>
- [Workopolis: Interviewing](#)