

Questions to ask employers

- What are the opportunities for professional growth?
- What is the time frame for advancement?
- Identify typical career paths based on past records.
- How is an employer evaluated and promoted?
- What is the retention rate of people in the position for which I am interviewing?
- Describe the typical first year assignments.
- Tell me about your initial and future training programs.
- What are the challenging facets of the job?
- What are the company's plans for future growth?
- Is the company stable and financially sound?
- What is the company's record of employment stability?
- What industrial trends will occur in this company?
- How has the company fared during the recent recession?
- What makes your firm different from its competitors?
- What are company's strengths and weaknesses?
- How would you describe your company's personality and management styles?
- Is it company policy to promote from within?
- Tell me the work history of your top management.
- What kinds of career opportunities are currently available for my degree and skills?
- What are the expectations for new hire?
- Describe the work environment.
- What is the overall structure of the department where the position is located?
- Why do you enjoy working for the firm?
- What qualities are you looking for in your new hires?
- What characteristics does a successful person have at your company?

After the interview

Provide whatever applications, references, or transcripts requested by the prospective employer as soon as possible. Following the interview, be sure to write down the name, title, and address of the recruiter. Follow-up letters are an appropriate method of maintaining contact with the interviewer. Use these letters to express thanks for the time and opportunity to be interviewed. Let the employer know you want the job.

THE INTERVIEW: 5 STEPS TO SUCCESS

1. KNOW YOURSELF

- Values / Needs
- Interests
- Realistic goals
- Skills (Transferable, Functional)
- Experience

2. KNOW THE EMPLOYER

- Products / service
- Size of organization
- Geographic locations
- Financial structure
- Trends / future growth
- Reputation

3. INTERVIEW PREPARATION

- Formulate questions for interviewer
- Review possible interview questions
- Practice interviewing

4. THE INTERVIEW

- Dress appropriately
- Maintain eye contact, correct posture, etc.
- Translate skills & past experience
- Expect the unexpected

5. INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP

- Write thank you letter
- Provide upon request additional references, transcripts, etc.
- Prepare for a second interview



San Francisco State University Career Center

1600 Holloway Avenue, Student Services Building 206, San Francisco CA 94132
Tel: 415/338-1764 • Fax: 415/338-2979 • careerct@sfsu.edu • www.sfsu.edu/~career

Interview Preparation

Identify

- Target organization or company
- Target position
- Job responsibilities and requirements of the position
- Skills you have that match the requirements of the job
- 2 or 3 strengths you have that would make you more effective in your targeted position
- Relevant work experiences that qualify you to perform in your targeted position
- Special interests/activities do you have that would enhance your ability to contribute and perform on the job
- 1 or 2 weaknesses you have that when turned around may be viewed as strengths?

Useful Resources

Printed & electronic resources

- Employer directories such as Bay Area Employer Directory
- Corporate directories such as Moody's Manual
- Occupational directories such as Occupational Outlook Handbook
- Newspaper & magazine articles such as Wall Street Journal
- Company literature such as Annual Reports
- Job trends and qualifications such as the Career Center
Job binders

On campus resource libraries

- Career Center, Student Services Rm. 206
- J. Paul Leonard Library, See Reference Librarian, Main Floor
- J. Paul Leonard Library, Media Access Center, 3rd floor

People resources

- Drop-in Counseling
- Informational Interviewing
- Professional/trade associations
- Reference librarians
- Family and Friends
- Faculty members

Questions Most Asked by Employers

Frequently asked interview questions

- Why do you want to work for this company?
- Tell me about yourself . . .
- What is your greatest strength? Weaknesses?
- Where do you see yourself in three to five years?
- What are your goals?
- What is your GPA? Does it reflect your abilities?
- What characteristics do you think this job requires?
- If hired, what abilities would you bring to this position?

Knowledge of job and company

- What is your knowledge of the position you are applying for?
- What attracts you to our company?
- What do you think are the most important skills needed to do this job?
- What would you change about our company if hired?
- What kind of salary are you looking for?

Organizing, planning and leadership

- How do you schedule your work day?
- When you are given a major project, how do you go about getting it done?
- If you were in charge of a team project, how would you organize and delegate responsibilities?
- How would you describe your leadership style?
- What applied theories and concepts would you use in this position?

Problem solving and decision making

- Are you more intuitive or logical in solving problems?
- Give an example of your problem solving style.
- Have you ever received differing instructions from two different people?
- What did you do?

Knowledge and technical skills

- What kind of equipment can you operate?
- What computer skills / knowledge can you bring to this position?
- What computer languages are you familiar with and can program?
- Describe a major class and / or internship project.

Maturity, Judgment and Poise

- Describe a difficult situation you faced at work.
- How did you handle the situation?
- What would you do differently?
- How do you work under pressure