

On-Site Interview

Stephen F. Austin State University | Center for Career and Professional Development

While an on-site interview is still an interview, it is now your job to evaluate. Determine if your expectations are met regarding the job, company culture and values, organizational structure, lifestyles (both at work and leisure), employee interaction, and work environment.

Preparing for your visit

Contacts

Record the name and phone number for your point of contact and information on who will be meeting you when you arrive.

Schedule of events

Verify the date, start and end time of the interview, and get specific directions on where to meet. On-site interviews usually last the better part of a day, so plan to visit only one company. Ask for an itinerary of the day's events that provides the name, title, and areas of responsibility of the persons with whom you will be meeting. Try to understand how each person relates to the others and determine questions to ask each.

Travel arrangements and expenses

Employers will usually pay your expenses; however, verify who will cover expenses and arrangements (ex. hotel, airfare, etc.). If the organization is paying for your trip, keep an accurate account of your **minimal** expenses (ex. meals, tips, cab fare, etc.). Some companies reimburse you at the time of your visit; others will mail it to you.

The day of your visit

During your on-site visit you will meet many employees: Human Resources representatives, your potential supervisor, possible co-workers, and members of middle management. It is vital to be polite to everyone you come into contact with, be it the security guard, receptionist, an employee in the restroom, a waitress, or other candidates.

Psychological tests

Some firms use psychological testing. These are usually written tests and are designed to evaluate your suitability for a particular type of assignment.

“ A group of candidates may be invited for individual interviews during the same time period. Your challenge is to distinguish yourself from your competition. One way to do this is to acquire more than a cursory knowledge about the company. ”

Meals

On-site interviews often include meals or receptions, so consider it part of the interview. Try to find common grounds of interests (ex. SFA, tennis, travel, etc.). Stay away from controversial or political topics. And of course, make sure to brush up on your etiquette!

Close the interview

Do not leave the interview without closure. If you're interested in the position, let the interviewer know. Also, never leave the interview without thanking the employer for the opportunity and inquiring about the next step in the process.

After your visit

If you do receive a verbal offer, you may wish to accept on the spot or you may wish time in which to make a decision. If the latter is the case, do not hesitate to say so. Always ask for a written confirmation. Such a letter will probably cover fringe benefits, moving arrangements, starting date, etc. It is good to give the company a time frame in which you will make a decision.

Thank you letters

When you return home, take time to write a thank you letter to everyone who spent time with you that day.

Employer response

If you do not hear from the employer within three weeks, then you may want to contact them to inquire about your status.