

Interview Types

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

There are many different types of interview methods and techniques. Every job is different, so be prepared! As you progress through the interview process, you will experience one, a combination, or all of these.

Case Interview

- Demonstrates your problem-solving skills
- Interviewer will outline a situation or provide you with a case study and ask you to formulate a plan that deals with the problem
- You do not have to come up with the ultimate solution; interviewer is looking for how you apply your knowledge and skills to a real-life situation
- Speak and reason aloud so interviewers have a full understanding of your thought process
- Before answering, be prepared to ask numerous questions for clarity and information purposes

Critical Thinking Interview

- Demonstrates your common sense, creativity and problem solving skills
- Interviewer is not necessarily looking for an exact right answer

Example: "How many jellybeans will fit in a 747?"

"Does the plane have seats in it? As that would affect how many I could fit in. Also, when do I need this information and what will we use it for? What size jellybean? Can I ground them up or melt them to get more in? Do we want to get more in? Does it have to take off and land? Can I fill up the fuel tanks?"

Group Interview

- Interview with several other candidates at the same time
- You want to be seen as a team player
- The interviewer will ask questions of no one in particular in hopes that a "leader" will emerge
- Include everyone in the group; if a quieter person hasn't said much, ask them their opinion
- Praise others; give credit to others who have good ideas
- Designed to uncover the leadership potential of prospective managers and employees who will be dealing with customers
- Goal is to see how you interact with others and how you use your knowledge and reasoning to influence others

Hypothetical Interview

- Demonstrates your problem-solving skills
- You must be able to think on your feet and analyze the situation while keeping in mind the company's culture and values
- Concentrate on showing a logical thought process in developing your answer. There is sometimes no one right answer, but there are definitely wrong ones

Example: "What would you do if 2 out of 3 people did not show up for their shift?"

Steps to problem solving:

1. Gather relative information
2. Evaluate your information
3. Prioritize the information
4. Propose and weigh possible solutions
5. Choose and propose your solution
6. Discuss how you would evaluate the effectiveness of your solution

Meal Interview

- Interviewer will be evaluating your social skills and manners in this casual, more relaxed setting
- If you haven't done so yet, make a point to familiarize yourself with the basics of [Etiquette](#)
- Use the interview to develop common ground with your interviewer

Panel Interview

- Interviewed by several people at the same time
- When a question is asked, you want to direct 50% of your eye contact to the person that asked the question and the other 50% to the other members of the panel
- Put your group management and group presentation skills on display and find a way to connect with each interviewer
- Try to get everyone's business card so that you can write each one of them a [thank you letter](#)

Serial Interview

- You will meet several people throughout the day, usually back-to-back. One person will interview you, then pass you to the next person, and so on throughout the day
- Can be physically and mentally stressful because they can often take the entire day
- Remember that each time you are passed onward your chances of being hired improve

Stress Interview

- The employer is interested to see how you handle pressure
- You feel as if you are being interrogated rather than interviewed
- The trick is to stay calm and composed while addressing their concern or answering the question

Example: "Your extracurricular activities sound shallow."

Behavioral Interview

- The basic premise is that your past behavior is the best predictor of your future actions
- To answer, you must describe *in detail* a particular event, project or experience and how you dealt with the situation and what the outcome was
- Behavior-based questions generally begin with "Give me an example of...", "Tell me about a time..." or "Describe..."
- Recall recent situations that show favorable behaviors or actions, especially those involving coursework, work experience, leadership, teamwork, initiative, planning or customer service
- Be sure the outcome or result reflects positively on you (even if the result itself was not favorable)

S.T.A.R. Method

- S. Describe the **Situation** you were in or
- T. Explain the **Task** you needed to accomplish
- A. Describe the **Action** you took and
- R. Reveal the **Results** of your experience

Example: Tell me about a time when you were on a team and a member wasn't pulling his/her weight.

"I had been assigned to a team to build a canoe out of concrete. One of our team members wasn't showing up for our lab sessions or doing his assignments. I finally met with him in private, explained the frustration of the rest of the team, and asked if there was anything I could do to help. He told me that he was preoccupied with another class that he wasn't passing, so I found someone to help him with the other course. He not only was able to spend more time on our project, but he was also grateful to me for helping him out. We finished our project on time and got a 'B' on it."

Find other behavior-based interview questions throughout the [What Will They Ask?](#) guide.