



## Tips for the Interview



Whether you're a seasoned professional or a recent graduate, the prospect of facing potential employers can evoke a mix of excitement and anxiety. However, with thorough preparation and strategic planning, you can boost your confidence and greatly improve your chances of acing the interview. From researching the company and understanding the role to practicing common interview questions and refining your communication skills, taking proactive steps to prepare will not only impress your interviewers but also position you as a strong candidate worthy of consideration.

**For in-person interviews**, know exactly where you need to go and know who you will be speaking with. You may want to do a test drive prior, preferably during the same timeframe that you would be driving there for your actual interview. Understand traffic delays might occur, so make extra time for accidents or personal incidents.

Your interview starts when you enter the area of the building. Be considerate of the people driving around you. Be aware of how you are conducting yourself in the parking lot, the lobby, and with employees. You never know who is watching. Keep this in mind after your interview as well.

Arrive 10 to 15 minutes early. This will give you time to check in, take a breath, and calm yourself before it starts.



**For virtual interviews**, test the platform that you will be conducting the interview on (Zoom, Teams, etc). Ensure that your camera, microphone, and speakers are in working order and that you know how to use the platform. The last thing you want to do is fumble around with fixing issues during the interview. Look at the background in view of the interviewer and make sure it is appropriate, not messy, or allows others to walk behind you. Consider using a virtual background. Make sure that you have a quiet place where you will not be interrupted. Set an alarm so that you do not lose track of time. Log in a couple of minutes early.

## **Dressing for your interview**

can be nerve wracking if you have never done it before.

It's important to understand the work culture you are about to enter. Your attire is also determined by the role you will play if you get the job.



Always dress at least one level higher than what your future coworkers wear. For instance, if you are interviewing for a place that wears jeans and t-shirts, you might consider khakis / slacks and a polo shirt. If they wear suits, you will want to wear a suit as well.



**For management roles specifically**, you will want to increase that dress standard. For environments in which they wear jeans and t-shirts, professional business attire is going to be the best option. Consider wearing a suit, or at minimum a business jacket.

Your clothing should fit you properly and should be appropriate. Do not wear anything too tight, too loose, or that makes you fidget. Your attire should not be overly eccentric or revealing.





### **Preparing for questions**

Practice answering questions beforehand. Understand your skills and how you will utilize them to the benefit of the organization.

You can practice by doing mock interviews with mentors or recording yourself answering questions. Be aware of repeated words, such as “UM,” tone of voice, body language, and hand gestures.

You can see the top questions asked by interviewers by visiting our [Downloadable Materials](#) page and selecting [Top 53 Interview Questions](#).

Use your Talents ASCEND profile pdf as a tool for outlining your narrative. Review your skills and be able to discuss each one with examples of how you have used them in your previous work experience.

A common request is “Tell me about yourself.” This is a great opportunity to give your “elevator pitch,” a 30 second description outlining who you are, what you do, and your goals. Keep this related to your career aspirations.

During the interview it is important to listen closely to the questions being asked of you. Keep your answers clear, short, and stay on the point. If the interviewer wants additional information on the subject, they will ask.

If you are asked about former employers, keep it positive even if it was a negative experience. Talk about the lessons you learned and what you are hoping to gain in your next career.





**Asking questions** is an expected part of the interview process.

You should do your research on the company prior to your interview. During this research, come up with 2 to 5 questions that you will ask when prompted. Some of these questions may be answered during your interview, which is why it is important to have a few extra to choose from.

Keep your questions handy in a professional notebook that you will have with you during the interview. You may also want to use this notebook to take notes during your conversation. It is customary to request permission from the interviewer to take notes.

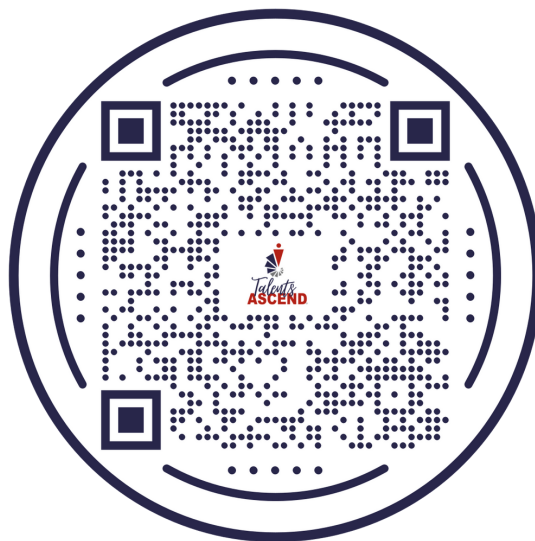
You may want to ask what the next steps in the process will be and when you might expect to hear from them.



**After the interview** consider sending a “Thank You” card or email. This will make an additional positive impression on the interviewer(s). The hiring process may take a few weeks or even have multiple steps involved. Be patient.

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