The Interview—What Will They Ask?

Typical Questions Asked By Employers
An interview is a dialogue. It is an opportunity for you and the interviewer to learn more about each other and is not about winning the position. Focus on creating a relationship based on rapport, and on understanding and addressing the potential employer’s concerns. You will probably be observed on how you react to certain questions and how you are able to “think on your feet”. Memorizing questions and answers is not the best way to impress a prospective employer. However, your preparation is essential to answer the common questions listed below.

General Tips On How To Answer Questions
Think about each question before answering. Consider what information the question is really probing you for. Pausing a bit will give you time to take a deep breath, relax and collect your thoughts. Remember, the key is to listen to what the employer is asking and to answer the questions thoughtfully and succinctly.

What They May Ask
- Tell me about yourself.
- Why do you want to work for this organization?
- Why do you want this job?
- What do you know about our products/services?
- Why did you choose your particular field of study?
- There are thousands of possible careers. Why do you want to follow this particular career path?
- Why did you choose USC?
- What distinguishes you from other candidates?
- What job-related skills have you developed?
- How does your education relate to this job?
- Which classes in your major did you like best? Least? Why?
- What motivates you most in a job?
- Describe how you handle stress. Give me an example.
- How do you handle criticism?
- Give me an example of a situation in which you worked through a problem to find a solution.
- What kind of supervision gets the best results from you?
- Do you prefer working with others or alone?
- What is your experience working on a team (work or school)?
- What kind of job do you expect to hold five years from now? In ten years?
- What are your career goals—both short-term and long-term?
  - Where do you see yourself in five years? Where do you see yourself in 10 years?*
- Do you think you have achieved what you wanted to?
- Describe your perfect job.
- What do you consider to be your greatest strengths?
- What personal development strategies have you used to overcome any of your weaknesses?
- Discuss two accomplishments from your college experiences.
- What are your salary expectations?
- How do you feel about working overtime?
- Are you willing to travel?
- Are you open to relocation?
**What They Should Should Not Ask**

- Are you married?
- When do you plan to start a family?
- What race are you?
- What is your national origin?
- How old are you?
- What is your religion?
- Have you ever been arrested?
- What type of military discharge did you receive?
- What is your maiden name?

**What You Should Ask**

- Can you tell me more about the structure of your training program?
- What challenges are currently facing your organization/industry?
- What kind of training would I be given for this position?
- What qualities are you seeking in the person for this job?
- Tell me about the type of projects past employees/interns have participated in.
- Is this job an addition to staff or a replacement of a past employee?
- Tell me about the immediate projects the person coming into this job will be responsible for.
- What attracted you to (organization name you are interviewing for)?
- What are the things you like most about working here?
- What are the metrics the company/group uses to measure performance?
- How do you define success?
- What exciting or challenging directions do you anticipate over the next few years?
- How do you measure an individual’s success in your organization?
- What is the next step?
- When will you make your selection?

**What You Should Not Ask**

- What does your company do?
- What can your company do for me?
- What is the salary?
- What types of benefits do you offer?
- How much time do I get for vacation?
- How much is the signing bonus?

**Thank You Notes**

After each interview, ask for a business card. Once you have left the organization, take a minute to sit down and make a few notes about the experience. This will help you customize your thank you note to each individual interviewer. Many recruiting days include multiple interviews. You do not want to send a template thank you note to everyone you interviewed with; make it personal. Your thank you note should be timely and sent within 24 hours of the interview.