

OSU Student Mock Interviews

Purpose: This guide was developed to give a general overview for how to conduct a basic interview with special applicability to these student mock interviews. It should serve as a primer for those without interviewer experience. For those with experience, as an interviewer or interviewee, feel free to add to this guide for the purposes of conducting your interview.

Introduction: An actual interview should be a chance for both interviewer and interviewee to get to know one another and ask questions about the job and the company. An interview candidate should feel comfortable and at ease which should enable the candidate to reveal more of their nature in the process while answering questions relevant to the position. The more relaxed and casual the interviewer is, while not being informal, the more relaxed the candidate will be.

As an example that you can adapt for your interview: Say with a genuine smile, “Good afternoon. Welcome. Please have a seat and make yourself comfortable.” Once seated, “I am *Anna* and I am with human resources. This is *Jim* and he is a pilot with this company. We would like to give you an overview of how the interview will proceed as we want to make this as relaxing as possible for you. The interview should take about twenty minutes. We’ll be going through your resume with you and we will ask a few questions about your experience. You’ll see us writing things down, but please don’t let it make you feel nervous as this is part of the interview process. There is water on the table if you should need any during the interview. Shall we get started?”

In order to give us a structured view of a candidate and a basis on which to compare candidates in a real-world situation, there are a few attributes about the person that we want to assess in a short period of time.

1. Technical Skills (most likely not applicable to our mock interviews)
2. Communication Skills
3. Decision-Making Abilities
4. Leadership
5. Team Orientation
6. Customer Service
7. Self-Assessment

Because of the generality of these interviews and the “job posts”, technical questions most likely won’t be helpful to the mock interview experience. It would be good to emphasize at the end of the interview the necessity of technical knowledge in positions where it is applicable. Employers will ask these in an interview, or have the candidate take a practical or written test.

The time allotted will almost always expire too quickly for a full assessment. Provided below are a set of sample questions you can use. Also feel free to draw upon your own experience.

Sample questions:

(Note: "TMAAT" = "Tell me about a time")

Communication Skills

- TMAAT you disagreed with your supervisor.
- Have you ever disagreed with a policy? How did you handle it? (Also Leadership, Team-Orientation)
- TMAAT you had to deal with a difficult person. (also Customer Service)
- TMAAT you disagreed with a coworker.
- How have you handled working with a difficult coworker?

Decision-Making Abilities

- When have you disagreed with a policy and what did you do?
- Have you encountered any management or school policies that you feel are unfair to you? (also Team-Orientation)
- What is the hardest decision you have had to make?
- TMAAT you had to change your approach, strategy or actions to meet a goal. (also Leadership, Team-Orientation)

Leadership

- If you were CEO for a day, what would you do?
- What is your definition of a professional?
- Have you ever disagreed with a policy? How did you handle it? (also Communication Skills, Team-Orientation)
- Have you sent any ideas or recommendations on policy change that were accepted?
- TMAAT you had to change your approach, strategy or actions to meet a goal. (also Decision-Making Abilities, Team-Orientation)
- What makes a good _____? (insert job title: dispatcher / pilot / manager / etc)
- Tell me about two memorable work projects, one a success and one a failure.
Follow-up: To what do you attribute the success or failure?

Team-Orientation

- TMAAT you had to use teamwork to get something accomplished.
- Have you encountered any management or school policies that you feel are unfair to you? (also Decision-Making Abilities)
- Have you ever disagreed with a policy? How did you handle it? (also Communication Skills, Leadership)
- TMAAT you had to change your approach, strategy or actions to meet a goal. (also Decision-Making Abilities, Leadership)
- Describe for us your ideal work environment. What qualities in a workplace and co-workers are important to you?

Customer Service

- TMAAT you provided excellent customer service or lent a helping hand
- TMAAT you had to deal with a difficult person. (also Communication Skills)

Self-Assessment

- Tell us about yourself.
- Please describe your responsibilities at your current position. What tasks are included in a typical work day? Who do you report to and interact with while performing your duties?
- Describe a good day at work.
- Describe a bad day at work.
- What makes you mad?
- What makes you uncomfortable?
- How do you think the company will benefit by hiring you?
- How would your boss describe you in three words?
- How would you describe yourself in three words?
- What did you love about your last job?
- What did you not like about your last job?
- What is your biggest accomplishment?
- We have only one position open. Why should we hire you?
- Give me three of your weaknesses and strengths.
- How can you turn your weaknesses into strengths?
- What do you do to manage stress?
- Where do you see yourself in five years? Ten years?
- Do you have any questions for us?

Follow-up: For the purposes of the mock interview, we want to give constructive criticism at the end of the interview. First, it is important to tell them what they did well. Examples: "Your stories were well formed." "It's obvious you prepared."

The criticism they receive should reflect a few of the more major items you see that might hinder them in an interview.

Examples of things to comment on:

The first impression:

- How are they dressed?
- How was their posture throughout the interview?
- Did they fidget?
- Did they maintain eye contact and look at all parties in the room?
- Did they look/sound confident?

The interview:

- Were all interviewers included in the conversation? Emphasize the importance of giving equal time to the HR representative. Many times they make or break the decision to hire the applicant.
- Did the candidate use an excess of jargon, assuming everyone understood?
- Were the candidate's stories well-formed and concise and did the stories give the interviewer a complete understanding of what was going on?
- Did they have answers for the questions?
- Were they too negative?
- Were they too combative?
- Were they too laid back?
- How was their closing statement? Did it wrap up what they wanted to convey?

Remember that all criticism should be constructive. There is an art to criticizing. Instead of, "Is that the only suit you could find?" say, "Nice suit, but if you can find one, a black suit would be better for an interview of this type."

You may also suggest places to find more reference material and information on interviewing techniques, including campus resources at Student Services or the On-Campus Recruiting office. There are industries built to help people prepare. Our own alum, Justin Luedeke (2005), has written a book for pilot interview/career success. More information can be found at his website: <http://www.pilotcareerprep.com/>

That's it! Please feel free to help us improve this document for future use. You can email suggestions to Adam Stiffler at: adam.stiffler@gmail.com

Thank you for your participation and help.