



HOW TO ANSWER KEY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

When the employer asks, “Why are you interested...?”

You can show your interest *and* show that you would be a good fit for the job and company by mentioning two or more of the following points in your reply.

- Interest in the job itself (“I read the job description and particularly liked....”)
- Interest in long-term career opportunities with them (“I liked what your recruiting information said about opportunities for...”)
- Interest in the industry or a specific product they make (“I’ve been reading about this industry and there appears to be a lot of growth potential for your product.” Or “I’m impressed by the fact that your product is number one in the industry.”)
- Interest in the company itself (based on what you’ve heard or read about the company—maybe reference something on their website or a comment like, “I saw an interesting article in the Wall Street Journal that...”)
- Interest based on the fact that the successful employee characteristics they describe in their recruiting information matches you (and how).
- Something about the company (job, product) relates to a course you especially liked, a project you worked on, a hobby, etc. (“I’ve been interested in this industry since my sophomore year when I joined the Future Truck project team.”)
- Interest in one or more of their locations (CAUTION: make sure they’re hiring for that location first!)

When the employer asks, “What are your strengths?”

You should be prepared to list 3—5 (with specific examples) that are relevant to the job for which you are interviewing. Examples can come from previous work experience, academic experiences, extra-curricular activities. Make sure your examples follow the C.A.R. or S.T.A.R. format.

When the employer asks, “What are your career goals?”

You should answer that question by focusing on what’s relevant—as if they had asked, “What elements of your career goals fit with this job, this company, this industry...?”

When the employer asks, “What questions do YOU have?”

You should not ask questions that have been thoroughly addressed in the job description or information session. You should focus on details of the immediate job responsibilities, learning about the group in which you would work, inquiring about on-the-job or other training, the employer’s expectations of new hires, how your responsibilities might change over time, current challenges and initiatives faced by your future department, the organization as a whole, this industry. Essentially, your questions can help you determine whether this job and company are right for you! Your key questions should be consistent to all your interviews, so you have a basis for comparison if you get more than one offer. (See the ECS Student Handbook, and the handouts in the “Resources”→“Documents Library” section of your CareerEngine account for additional suggestions.)

When the employer says, “Well, I see our time is almost up,” do you end your interview on a positive note?

- Thank the recruiter; let them know you enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about....
- Express interest in the job and summarize why you’re a good candidate.
- Ask about the next steps in the process and timing of the decision.
- Ask for a business card. (And follow up with a thank you letter or email within 48 hours.)