

# What do Employers Look For During an Interview

As they gather information about a candidate, employers rely heavily on interviews to answer three key questions.

1. **Does this candidate have the skills and abilities needed to do the job effectively?**

Convincing an employer that you possess these skills and abilities requires that you have more than just a superficial understanding of the job. You will need a clear understanding of the position, the employer's expectations, and a working knowledge of the industry.

Always review any available organizational recruiting literature as well as the Occupational Outlook Handbook, relevant trade journals, and other materials in the Career Resource Room. Informational interviews with current professionals are an outstanding source of firsthand information about position responsibilities and specific employers. Once you have an understanding of a job's requirements, review your resume and identify specific activities, work experiences, or classes that have allowed you to develop and demonstrate the skills, abilities, or specialized knowledge being sought.

2. **Does this candidate possess the enthusiasm and work ethic needed to do what will be expected?**

In answering this question, employers are focusing not so much on your skills and abilities, but on your personal qualities and your character. Doing the research suggested above will allow you to demonstrate your knowledge of the position, the particular field or industry, and your investment in the interview process. Highlighting courses, activities, or experiences that were especially challenging and that required a great deal of perseverance will provide the employer with examples of your high energy level, diligence, and ability to commit to a goal.

3. **Will this candidate be a cooperative team player and fit in well with our organization?**

In some direct or not-so-direct way, you will be asked, "Why are you interested in this position? Why are you interested in this organization?" Your task is to develop a strong response with solid reasoning backed by examples. "I want to work with people" is not a sufficient response.

Demonstrate your knowledge of and your interest in the activities, philosophies, people, and goals of the organization. Create a connection between what you have learned about your own leadership or interpersonal style (through activities or experiences) and the leadership or interpersonal styles you see in the career and in the organization.