

Preparing for Your Interview

Compliments of the Johnson County Community College Career Development Center
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Thorough research and practice *before* an interview can help you prove yourself during the interview. Your first step in preparing for any interview involves having an in-depth understanding of yourself and your abilities. Knowing your skills, values, interests, personality traits, and strengths will help you to articulate them during an interview. They will help you to demonstrate how your career or job choice is a good fit for you and why you are the best candidate.

Gaining a detailed understanding of the career you are exploring or the JCCC Career Program or job you are interviewing for is also critical. Taking the time to conduct research *before* the interview can make or break your candidacy.

An interview provides an ideal opportunity for you to showcase your oral communication skills. The value interviewers place on your ability to communicate is just one more reason why it is important to practice interviewing to perfect your skills.

To help you achieve success with the interview portion of your career exploration or admissions or job application process, **the following suggestions and resources available at www.jccc.edu/career-development are to help you achieve success:**

1. *Interviewing Guidelines* contain helpful information on the following topics:
 - a. Overcoming Interviewing Anxiety
 - b. Research Yourself
 - c. Research the Career or Job
 - d. Research the JCCC Career Program or Company
 - e. Positive Impressions—dress and grooming, body language, punctuality, speech
 - f. Commonly Asked Questions
 - g. Behavioral Interview Questions
 - h. Questions to Ask the Interviewer
 - i. Closing the Interview

Practice answering the sample interview questions found in this publication with a family member or friend. The more you practice, the more confident you will become as you also practice making good eye contact and synchronizing your body language with your interview answers.

2. *Perfect Interview* is NEW career development technology available on the Career Development Center Website to help you enhance your interviewing skills and develop an edge over your competition. Using *Perfect Interview* will give you practice responding to simulated interview questions either by text or video as you develop your interviewing skills. If you wish to use the video capture option to record and playback your responses, you will need a webcam on your computer.

To practice your interviewing skills, go to the Career Development Center Web site and:

- Click on *Get Work Experience*
 - Click on *Perfect Interview*
 - Click *Create Account* or *Log On* to get started
3. *CareerSpots Videos* are short, 3-to 4-minute videos on various topics related to career and job success. The most relevant topics for your interview preparation include:
- a. Top 10 Interview Mistakes
 - b. Interview Dress for Women
 - c. Interview Dress for Men
 - d. Ask the Experts
 - e. The Elevator Pitch
 - f. The Interview
 - g. Perils of Social Networking
 - h. The Art of Saying Thank You
4. *Informational Interviewing* is an option as you explore and research your career or job choice. Investigating job shadowing opportunities with professionals in your career field of interest can also be helpful to you. Informational interviewing is not a job interview. It, along with job shadowing, is a valuable career planning tool to receive first-hand information from individuals in the career field.

Sample interview questions for your consideration:

Tell me about yourself.

This is a standard question designed to break the ice. Don't tell the interviewer your life story. Offer a brief answer about you that relates to the career, job or career program you're interested in.

What's your greatest strength?

Relate your strength to the career field or, as a candidate, to the job or career program.

What's your greatest weakness?

Answer honestly and explain how you've become more focused, organized, or assertive in working to improve or manage your weakness.

Why do you want to be considered for this job or career program?

Be positive and enthusiastic. Frame your answer around what you can do; what type of employee or student you would be. Be sure to weave in some of the research you've done.

Why should we consider you?

Be ready to clearly explain how your skills and abilities match the qualifications of a successful career professional, employee or student and how you would fit into the career profession and/or work environment.