INTERVIEWS:

During interviews, employers will ask you a variety of questions about yourself, your experience, the company and your technical knowledge. Depending on the type of position, you may also bring a portfolio of your work.

The sample interview questions provided in the following pages are examples of the typical questions asked, but are not the only questions which may come up. Prepare by writing a ‘cheat sheet’ of responses. Your responses can also be a great way of generating content for your cover letter!

Often, you will be asked to go through a phone or video interview before you are invited in for an in-person interview, but each employer is different. Sometimes there will be multiple rounds of in-person interviews with different people before they make an offer.

Email careerservices@nhia.edu to research, rehearse a mock interview, or sign-up to use a quiet interview room.

Interview Tips & Advice:

RESEARCH: Research the company thoroughly before attending any phone or in-person interview. This research can help you come up with questions to ask. Examples of questions to ask are, what projects are coming up in your schedule, what skills and working style are compatible for your team? Prepare by bringing your resume and notes to questions you think they might ask. Think about answering each question with approximately three sentences. This is a super-loose recommendation, but can help to frame your comments to be clear, concise and compelling.

PREP YOUR MINDSET: To promote portraying open and friendly body language, treat yourself well. Listen to music, take a walk, eat well beforehand (protein, carbs, and chocolate for me) and give yourself some time to slow down and focus. Keep a non-distracting mug or glass of water within arm’s reach to take a drink if you need it.

PROJECT CONFIDENCE: Speak clearly and slowly, to sound like you know what you are talking about. If you find yourself unsure of a response, answer as best you can in a confident voice and describe what process you will take to find the answer.

NOTES: Have a note pad and pen ready for interviews. Take notes if needed for your reference at a later date. This can also be a great place to jot down a few questions you’d like to ask, facts or notes to jog your memory and to note down the name(s) of people/person interviewing you.

THANK YOU: Prepare and send a hard copy thank you card or note soon after your interview. Prepare a head of time by buying cards and stamps. Of course change this up, but here is a basic template. There are more examples online.

“Thank you very much for the opportunity to interview with you today. I enjoyed meeting your team and learning more about the position. It sounds like an amazing opportunity I would be honored to receive if chosen. You can add in more specifics, if applicable, about projects or initiatives you spoke about during the interview or forgotten skill or experience. If you have additional questions, please don’t hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,
Your Name
The In-Person Interview:
Before an in-person interview, ask who you will be meeting and what you should bring with you - be prepared! If there is even a small chance you will be late, call ahead to alert them and explain why. Apologize as best as you can.

Remember that your interview starts the minute you walk in the door, shake hands, smile, say ‘hi’, and introduce yourself. Turn off your cell phone, get rid of your gum and act professional even when waiting to be met with. Bring a few copies of your resume to hand out.

Dress conservatively - keep attire neutral and professional, and everything neat and clean. Avoid wearing fragrance, as it could bother the interviewer. As an artist, feel free to express your personal style, but not at the cost of appearing unprofessional. Definitely no graphics, jeans, or sweatshirts!

The Phone Interview:
A phone interview is essentially the same as an in-person, with one added bonus: you can have “cheat sheets” right by your side! Dress and groom as you would for an in-person interview. This can help you feel your best and prepare mentally for your interview. Have your resume and CV to reference for dates, the following sample interview question tips, and a summary about the company ready for when they call. Address the caller formally, and use correct English (no slang!) - most importantly, relax!

When arranging a phone interview, select a time and location where you can be alone in a quiet room. Be sure you have good cell service, or when possible, call from a land line.

The Video Interview:
Pick a quiet place to record, that has good lighting and a pretty simple, clutter free, non-distracting view in the background. I would avoid putting yourself in front of windows or a lighting situation which might put you in shadow. Overhead lights are also tough, because they can also cause harsh shadows. Instead, evenly light yourself from both sides. Watch for glare in the camera or in your eyes.

Practice looking directly into the camera on your device. It can be tempting to look at yourself as you record, because as humans, we are wired to pay attention faces, especially if they move! Place your camera at eye level so it doesn’t appear that you are looking up or down at your audience.

Test all your equipment, including your connection. Silence all notifications or alarms on your devices. I’m happy to do a run through with you.

Dress and groom yourself as you would in an in-person interview. This can help your mindset as much as it communicates to your audience how interested you are in the position. Choose clothing colors that complement the room you are in and don’t clash or conversely meld in too much.


SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

Tell me about yourself.
What are you passionate about?
What are your goals for the future?
Tip: No need for a life story, just provide relevant facts about your education, experience and current life situation. This response should be similar in content to your cover letter.

Why are you currently looking for employment?
Why did you leave your last position?
Tip: Keep this answer straightforward. Are you new to the job market? What are your aspirations? Do you want to advance your career? Were you laid off?
What do you know about this company?
   What can you contribute to this company?
Tip: Do your research before you go to any interview. Know the key people in management, know what the company is involved in, know if they’ve been in the news recently. Stand out as someone who is prepared!

Why do you want to work here?
   What interests you about this job?
Tip: Again, be prepared. Mention your career goals and plans for the future, and highlight how that directly ties into this company.

At your last job, what were your primary responsibilities?
   What challenges and problems did you face?
   What have you learned from your mistakes?
Tip: Provide specific examples whenever possible, don’t just sum up the day to day responsibilities.

What experience do you have in this field?
   At what level did you start, and what is your most recent level?
Tip: Mention all related experience you have, and mention some that may not be related but which presents you in a positive light. Retail sales could translate to people skills, time management and work ethic!

What would your co-workers say about you?
   What did you like or dislike about your previous position?
Tip: Stay positive, and get as specific as possible. Give an example of a coworker you have worked with and the outcome of that collaboration.

Have you done anything since graduation to further your experience?
   What have you been doing since your last job or since graduation?
Tip: Mention classes, workshops, hobbies and sports – anything which demonstrates good work skills such as motivation, time management and team work.

Where else have you applied?
   What are your current career goals?
Tip: Be honest, but don’t sound too desperate. Mention a few companies which may be direct competitors to the one you are interviewing at, but don’t go into too much detail.

How are you when working under pressure?
   How do you handle stress and pressure?
Tip: Stay positive, whenever possible provide an example of this type of work – a deadline for a project at NHIA can be just as valuable as an answer.

What motivates you to succeed?
   Are you a self motivator?
Tip: Don’t mention money, it reflects poorly on you. Instead, focus on things such as positive recognition, self improvement, helping others and being a leader in the field.

What is your greatest strength?
   How will your greatest strength help you in this position?
Tip: Don’t hold back and don’t be shy. Why would you make a great employee? Keep all your strengths work related.

What is your greatest weakness?
   How do people most often criticize you?
   Described the last time you were annoyed or angry.
Tip: Give an example of something that is a mild weakness, and immediately follow it with your plan for improvement. Don’t say you have no weaknesses, and don’t admit to too many!
What type of salary requirements do you have?
What are your short term and long term salary requirements?
Tip: Try and avoid giving a number. Check out internet resources to see what others in this position are making (salary.com), if you have to give a number provide a range instead of a solid figure.

How are you working in a team?
Describe your work style.
Do you prefer to work independently or with a team?
Tip: Give examples of how you work with a team, college projects that involve collaboration are a good example. Describe the role you like to take within a team.

Would you rather be liked or feared?
How would you like your colleagues to perceive you?
Tip: You’d rather be respected. Having your coworkers like you means nothing if they walk all over you, having your coworkers fear you leads to bad professional relationships.

Give me an example of a suggestion you have made at work which was implemented?
Describe a difficult situation and how you handled it.
Tip: Have a story ready about a time that you thought of a great idea, put it into action and the outcome was good. This can absolutely be something that occurred in college, or can be as simple as when you asked your work to rearrange the menu board for better customer comprehension.

Have you ever had trouble working with a colleague?
How would you handle a disagreement with a colleague or boss?
Tip: This type of question tests how you manage conflict and if you are self aware. It is okay to pause for a minute to think it over. Prepare by thinking of an example of where you made a decision that and enabled you to turn the situation into a positive. Be specific, but give only a tiny bit of context, how each party responded and finally how you actively helped the situation. Examples could be times you; asked about their perspective by sitting down and talking about it, waited until the project is complete and debriefed about ways to improve our preparation, focused on the skills they contributed to the team instead of the negatives.

Would you rather work for money or job satisfaction?
What are you looking to get out of this position?
Tip: It is okay to say that money is a factor, but focus on how you want this job to better yourself as an individual, to advance your career or to participate in something great.

Will you put the interests of the company ahead of your own?
Do you take your work home with you?
Tip: Try to avoid directly answering this, as either answer is tricky. Instead, let the interviewer know that you are a person who commits fully to a job and sees it through to the end.

Why should I hire you?
Why are you the best person for the position?
Tip: Go back to your cover letter - make connections for the interviewer about your experiences and how they directly relate to the position requirements.

Do you have any questions?
Is there anything about this company that you would like to know?
Tip: Ask about how soon the position would start, ask what projects the company is currently involved with, and ask which type of working style works with their team. Use this chance to again display your knowledge about the company.