

Types of Interviews

After reading this segment, you will be able to:

- Identify the predominant types of interviews used by employers

Introduction

Since the interview is the last phase in the selection process, employers use interviewing styles that assist in revealing those attributes of the candidate that are most essential for the job and most beneficial to the organization. Interviews can be conducted one on one, in a panel, or as a group. Interviews can be informal or formal, relaxed or stressful, directed or undirected.

The key to preparing for an interview is to find out before the interview how the interview will be conducted. You can do this by asking the following questions when the interview is being scheduled:

- How many people will be interviewing me?
- Will I be the only person interviewed at one time?
- What kind of questions will be asked?
- How can I best prepare for this interview?

Becoming familiar with different types of interviews will give you a chance to be better prepared.

Assorted Interviews

Here are descriptions of the most common types of interviews:

The Exploratory or Information Interview

The exploratory or information interview is used as a screening and fact-finding tool for you, the candidate. This interview is used to

- find out about a company as a potential place to work, including its corporate culture, organizational structure, and future growth,
- learn about an occupation, including the educational requirements, experience needed, and responsibilities involved in doing a job, and
- find out about the hiring trends, positions available, and application procedures.

Carefully select the questions you will ask so that you can obtain practical information. Be prepared to leave your résumé for future reference. As for any interview, be sure to follow up with a thank you letter.

To find out how to conduct an information interview, read [Information Interviews](#) on this Website.

The Directed Interview

The directed or directive interview involves the interviewer using an outline and asking specific questions within a certain time frame. The interviewer works from a checklist and takes notes. This type of interview is impersonal and seeks to reveal facts.

The Undirected Interview

The undirected or non-directive interview is unstructured and allows candidates to discuss their qualifications openly. This interview gives candidates a measure of control over the interview, providing for an opportunity to concentrate on strengths and to show leadership and organizational abilities.

The Panel Interview

A panel involves a number of interviewers. The composition of this panel could include:

- The supervisor
- The manager
- A union representative
- A human resources officer
- An employment equity officer
- Employees from the department that is hiring

Typically, members of the panel will ask one question that represents their area of concern. To succeed at this type of interview, it is best to anticipate and prepare for questions on a variety of issues related to the organization and to the occupation. Thorough company and occupational research will help you to prepare for such interviews. For more information on doing employment-related research, visit [Researching Employment](#) on this site.

The Group Interview

The group interview is used by some large companies or organizations for graduate intakes when several graduates are interviewed at one time. This interview can last from two hours to a day or longer and usually includes a group problem-solving exercise.

The interviewers may ask questions in an unstructured manner; therefore, the questions and comments may be unrelated to one another. This type of interview is used to:

- Observe how candidates react under pressure
- Evaluate how individuals interact with people with different personalities

- Test for communication skills
- Assess the "fit" with the group

It is wise to seek the advice of someone who has experienced this type of interview before engaging in this process.

The Sequential Interview

Some interviews are sequenced over a longer period, such as a half or full day. These interviews are used as an assessment tool. The first stage may begin with a panel interview, followed by a tour around the company (during which the assessment continues). The interview sequence may then conclude with another interview when you may be asked questions that test your creativity or your "fit" within the organization.

Further, you may be invited to more than one interview; for instance, the first may be an overall screening, followed by some form of assessment, then a post-assessment follow-up.

The Stress Interview

The stress interview intentionally creates and promotes discomfort. The interviewer may have an abrupt or brash attitude. Alternately, the interviewer may stare, be silent, and spend time taking notes. The purpose of this type of interview is to test the candidate's ability to be assertive and handle difficult situations.

The Behavioural Interview

In behavioural interviews, candidates are asked to respond to questions that require examples of previous activities undertaken and behaviours performed. To succeed at this type of interview, be prepared to give accounts of how you have dealt with difficulties on the job. The purpose of this type of interview is to predict future performance based on past experiences.

Become familiar with various types of interviews, as you may encounter interviewers who blend styles to suit the interview objectives and to test for employment readiness.