

# How to Prepare for a Job Interview

*“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.” - Benjamin Franklin.*

Preparation is a key step in the job interview process. Preparation helps you anticipate potential questions and practice your answers, so that you feel confident when the time comes. It is absolutely necessary to prepare before a job interview. How well you prepare will determine how successful you are in the interview.

Here are a few steps you can follow:

## **1. Research the organization**

- Visit the organization’s website so that you can describe the following:
  - Values and mission statement.
  - Projects, products, services and client-base.
  - Recent announcements, projected growth and stability of the company.
- If you have questions that come up, write them down. You will be able to ask these questions during the interview.

## **2. Compare your skills and qualifications to the job requirements**

- Analyze the job description.
  - Take note of the knowledge, skills and abilities that are listed.
    - How do your skills compare to what they are looking for?
  - Write down your strengths and how they can contribute to the position.
- Determine where the open position fits within the organization.
  - Who will you be reporting to in your role?
  - Will you have coworkers?
  - Use this information to consider skills and strengths that might be important for you to emphasize.

## **3. Prepare and practice your interview responses**

- Most interviews involve a combination of open-ended, behavioral, and/or situational questions.
  - It’s best to practice a variety of different questions, to help you be the most prepared and confident before your interview.
- Register with [www.biginterview.com](http://www.biginterview.com) to help you prepare for your interview.
  - On this website, you can learn about typical interview questions, record your answers, and receive feedback on your interview skills.

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- This website has an excellent list of general interview questions, as well as specific questions for each industry.
- Meeting with a Student Success Advisor at the Student Success Centre is another way you can develop your interview skills.
  - Appointments can be booked through the [www.mysuccess.lakeheadu.ca](http://www.mysuccess.lakeheadu.ca) website.

## 4. Plan what to wear

- Employers will form an initial impression of you before you even sit down to begin the interview
  - Your clothing for the interview will demonstrate to the employer your understanding of the position and your professionalism.
- Wear clothing that is appropriate for the position
  - For example, wearing a shirt/tie and dress/skirt for an office position.
    - When in doubt, it is ok to dress slightly more formal than the position.
  - Make sure your clothes are neat and wrinkle-free.
- Be sure that your overall appearance is neat and clean
  - Do your hair, make sure your teeth are clean.

## 5. Bring appropriate materials

- You should bring the following to your interview:
  - Copies of your resume and cover letter
  - A notepad or professional binder and pen
  - A list of references (if requested by employer)
  - Information you might need to complete an application
  - A portfolio with samples of your work, if relevant