

INTERVIEW SUCCESS

Bryant University

Amica Center for Career Education



What is a “Professional Interview”?

- An interview is a conversation between an employer and YOU to discover if you are the **right match** for their opportunity.
- It is also a conversation where YOU can determine whether the employer is the right match for your professional growth.
- The key to a successful interview is your preparation, research & knowledge. Take the time to learn interview success strategies.
- Interview strategies apply to all kinds of “professional interviews” for internships, full-time jobs and even graduate school.

Interviewing Basics

First Interview (screening interview)

- Helps a recruiter assess whether your qualifications match the position.
- Typically short in length
- Often held on campus, over the phone or via Skype

Second Interview

- More in-depth interview that may last from one hour to an entire day with one person or a variety of professionals.
- This interview may result in an offer or lead to a final interview

Final Interview

- Required in some cases for more in-depth skills assessment.

Types of Interviews

Campus Interview

- Typically a 30 minute initial screening interview.
- A 2nd in-person interview is expected to follow.
- Held in the Amica Career Center
- Apply through the [Bryant Career Connection \(BCC\)](#)

Phone Interview

- Initial screening interview.
- Typically short in length.
- A 2nd in-person interview is expected to follow.
- Make sure you are in quiet space with a reliable phone connection.

Traditional Interview

- Usually face to face with one recruiter or hiring manager.
- Interviewer asks straight forward questions that are obvious to the position requirements.
- Most common type of interview.

Skype Interview

- Prepare as you would for a traditional interview.
- Check technology.
- Choose a quiet location, free of personal objects and clutter.
- Dress professionally.

Types of Interviews

Case Interview

- All about how you solve a problem.
- Used to assess how you process information to come up with the best solution to a question, situation or challenge.

Interview Over a Meal

- Review basic dining etiquette rules.
- Manners count!
- Keep up the polite conversation.
- Order food & drink sensibly.

Panel or Group Interview

- Similar to a traditional interview, but you are interviewing in front of a panel or group of people at the same time.
- Manage your eye contact throughout.

Test or Task Interview

- Used to assess a candidate's strengths, skills and personality for a position.
- Common tests include: personality tests, ethics/honesty tests, computer/technology test, math test, office/clerkical test.

Know Yourself

- Knowing what you want is a key factor in successful interviewing.
- Take the time to assess your skills, interests, career goals, talents, values and passion.



- [Career Assessments](#) are available if you need assistance.

Dress for Success

Women's Attire

- Suit (navy, black or dark grey)
- Pants or skirt (the suit skirt should be long enough so you can sit down comfortably)
- Coordinated blouse
- Conservative shoes
- Limited jewelry (no dangling earrings or arms full of bracelets)
- Professional hairstyle
- Neutral pantyhose
- Light make-up & neatly manicured nails
- Portfolio



Men's Attire

- Suit (solid color - navy or dark grey)
- Long sleeve shirt (white or coordinated with the suit)
- Belt
- Tie
- Dark socks, conservative leather shoes
- Little or no jewelry
- Neat, professional hairstyle
- Limit the aftershave
- Neatly trimmed nails
- Portfolio



Research the Company

Here's what you should know:

- Company History
- What the company does: products, services etc...
- Major competitors
- Financial Stability
- Company Culture
- Recent articles published about the company
- New college graduate information (if published on their site)

RESOURCES for researching a company

Company Website

- Review the mission statement, company history, product/services information, company culture, college pages, videos.

Company Directories

- *Bryant's Krupp Library offers a variety of online resources and databases [here](#).*

Career Shift

- Company information, including contacts

LinkedIn

- Research company profiles.
- Use “find alumni” to find Bryant alumni (you can even contact them for additional information)
- Research your interviewers profile to find commonalities.

Glassdoor

- Find interview questions for specific companies, read job seeker reviews.

Social Media

- Read & follow what the company is posting on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.

Google Search

- Search the company name in Google and Google News.

Interview Logistics

When invited for an interview make sure you ask for the following logistics:

1. Date & time of the interview.
2. Location of the interview (specific address if you need for GPS).
3. Name(s) & Title(s) of interviewers.
4. Format for the interview: one-on-one interview, group interview etc...
5. Any advanced preparation that is required on your part.

Anticipate 2 Types of Questions

Traditional Interview Questions

(Often asked. Prepare in advance and know the strategy behind answering)

Examples

1. What do you know about our company?
2. Why do you want to work for our company?
3. Why are you interested in this position?
4. Tell me about yourself?
5. Give me an example of a strength and a weakness?
6. What can you bring to this position that is above and beyond other candidates?

Behavioral Questions

(Asks you to provide a specific example or tell a short story related to the position qualifications)

Examples

1. Tell me about a time when you helped a team be successful.
2. Talk about a time when you had a conflict with a team member.
3. Share a time you had to work under pressure to meet a deadline.
4. Tell me about a time when you solved a problem.

Strategies for Answering Traditional Questions

1. What do you know about our company?
2. Why do you want to work for our company?
3. Why are you interested in this position?

Strategies

1. Be able to articulate 3-4 facts about the company from your research.
2. Based on your company research be able to give 2-3 reasons why you want to work there. Be specific!
3. Be able to state 2-3 reasons why you are genuinely interested in the position. Be thoughtful and specific!

Strategies for Answering Traditional Questions

Tell me about yourself?

- This is an opportunity to give the highlights of your background as it relates to the position.
- Keep it short.
- End your answer by stating why you are interested in the position

Example: I am Junior at Bryant University majoring in Finance. I currently hold a leadership position in my Fraternity and was just selected to participate in the Archway Investment Fund, a real-world experience that teaches students how to manage a client portfolio. I am extremely interested in this internship because it ties directly to the content of this class. I also expect to offer skills from the class that apply directly to the internship.

Give an example of a strength & a weakness?

2 choices on how to best answer:

1. Pick a weakness that can also be perceived as a strength.

Example: I like to think of myself as a perfectionist. With my 3.8GPA and my Division 1 athletic schedule, I've done a pretty good job balancing everything. But, I have to admit that I can get focused and block everything else out at times, including my social life.

2. Pick a weakness that is NOT critical to the functions of the job.

Example: There are many things I wish I had time to learn while at Bryant, one of them is a second language. In this global economy, I recognize the importance of being bilingual. Perhaps in the future, I will be able to acquire these skills. In the meantime, I am certain that I do have the analytical strengths required for the position.

Strategies for Answering Traditional Questions

What can you bring to this position that is above and beyond other candidates?

- You can talk about your skills, but back them up with specific examples.
- Or, you could talk about how you might solve a company problem/issue.

Example: I have several qualifications that I feel set me apart from other candidates. One is my strong work ethic. I have been working since I was 13 years old. First, I started my own lawn mowing business and later I helped my family run their landscape business. Second, I have excellent client service and sales skills. I was able to increase sales in my family's business by 50% in a 3 year period. You mentioned that your New England sales territory has been declining. I believe that based on my past track record, I can successfully raise your sales figures. Here's how...

Strategies for Answering Behavioral Questions

1. Anticipate what questions will be asked
 - Refer to the original job description. Fold a piece of blank paper in half. On one side, write down the skills/qualifications the position is seeking. In the other column, write down an example of how you match each skill.
2. Practice telling your story
 - Your story/example should have 3 parts
 - P = Problem/Situation; A = Action; R = Result

Example:

Question: “ Tell me about a time you worked as part of a team to solve a problem.”

Answer: Recently, I worked as part of a team during the Bryant IDEA, a 48 hour project where we had to use the design thinking process to come up with a better solution for how to re-design a public library. As part of a 5 person team, we visited libraries in RI to observe, next we brainstormed our ideas for change, we then built a prototype and presented to alumni and employer judges. **(Problem/Situation)**

My role on the team was mediator. Everyone had so many ideas. I wrote them down and summarized our most popular themes. Next, I was instrumental in building the prototype because I had listened to everyone’s ideas. **(Action)**

Our team really came together in the end and our prototype was chosen for display. **(Result)**

Practice

- Practice your answers out loud before the interview!
 - With a friend or in front of a mirror.
- Schedule a **MOCK INTERVIEW** with a career counselor:
 - One-hour filmed session.
 - Simulates a REAL interview.
 - Feedback provided!
 - Professional dress required.



Salary

Never bring up salary during an interview, but...

BE PREPARED!

It is not uncommon for a recruiter to ask about your salary expectations.

Make sure you know the salary range for your career field.

- Research salaries by job title and/or company name:
 - [NACE salary calculator](#)
 - [Payscale](#)
 - [Indeed](#)

Consult with Career Center Staff

- National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) salary surveys
- Annual survey of Bryant graduates

- If asked for your salary requirements during an interview, here are some strategies:
 - Based on your salary research, **give a wide range**. For example, if the average offer for the job is \$50K, you might indicate your expectations between \$45-60K.
 - **Re-direct the question**. For example: “ I would love to learn more about the position and your salary expectations before I disclose my own salary requirements.”
 - Note: this strategy does not always work, you may be pressed to provide an answer, but it doesn't hurt to try.

Prepare Questions to Ask

- Remember, the interview is also an opportunity for YOU to evaluate the company and position.
- Ask meaningful questions.
- You can write them down ahead of time in your portfolio.

Sample Questions for the Interviewer

- Describe a typical day or week on the job?
- What are the day to day work responsibilities?
- Are there special projects or cross-team collaboration?
- How do you define success as it relates to this position?
- What is the organizational structure and how does this position fit into the organization?
- Who would evaluate my work? What is the management style of my supervisor?
- What is the work environment/corporate culture like?
- What are the next steps in the interview process?

Interview Don'ts

- Be on Time (10 minutes early is preferable).



- Don't use your cell phone!
Leave it in the car!!



- Don't chew gum



- Don't wear offensive perfume or wear too much jewelry.



- Don't slouch or show disinterest.



Interview Do's

- Firm handshake



- Smile & show enthusiasm



- Small amounts of silence ok



- Maintain your professional image



Get a Business card from each interviewer.

After the Interview: Write a Thank YOU

- Write thank you notes to all of your interviewers.
- Send via email within 24 hours.
- Include something that really stood out about the interview
- Reiterate your enthusiasm and interest for the position and company

Example:

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to interview for the Financial Analyst position. I really enjoyed meeting you and learning more about the position and your company. As a result of the interview, I am even more interested in joining your team. In particular, I was very impressed to learn that mentors are assigned to all new college hires and that training is provided for 6 weeks prior to the start of the position.

Thank you again for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you next week.

Best Regards,

After the Interview

- **Get feedback** – if you interviewed on campus, there may be feedback available, from the recruiter, about your interview performance. Stop by the Amica Career Center to inquire.
- **Take notes** – if you have many interviews lined up, it may be hard to remember one interview from the other. Keep a spreadsheet noting your contacts, timeline and any important notes.
- **Follow up** – During the interview you asked about next steps in the interview process, so you know when to expect a response. If you don't hear within the expected timeframe, follow up via phone or email. Don't expect a negative outcome. You never know what's causing a hiring delay and you want to appear interested.

Final Recommendations

- TAKE THE TIME TO PREPARE.
- Research the company.
- Prepare for interview questions BEFOREHAND
- PRACTICE!
- Dress for Success. Your professional image is critical.
- Ask great questions.
- Understand the next steps in the interview process.
- Write thank you notes.
- Follow up.
- Utilize the Amica Center for Career Education for campus recruiting, mock interviews, interview questions and more...

Resources

Interview Guides

- [Sample Interview Questions](#)
- [The Traditional Interview](#)
- [Acing the Phone Interview](#)
- [Mastering Behavioral Interviewing](#)
- [Panel and Group Interviews](#)
- [Acing the Case Interview](#)
- [Interviewing Over a Meal](#)
- [Acing the Skype Interview](#)
- [Test or Task Interviews](#)

Interview Videos

- [7 Tips for Researching Companies](#)
- [First Impressions](#)
- [Interview Research](#)
- [Know the Interviewer](#)
- [Behavioral Interviewing](#)
- [The Interview](#)
- [Online Video Interviews](#)
- [Top 10 Interview Mistakes](#)
- [Ask Tough Questions](#)
- [2nd Interviews](#)
- [Art of Saying Thank You](#)
- [Interview Follow UP](#)

For Questions Contact:

Amica Center for Career Education

Located in the Unistructure, next to Salmanson Dining Hall

Phone: (401) 232-6090

Email: careers@bryant.edu

Website: <http://career.bryant.edu/>

- [Bryant Career Connection \(BCC\)](#)
- [Events Calendar](#)

Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30AM - 4:30PM

