



Career Development Faculty Facilitator Guide



Interviews

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The information contained here represents the common guidance that Career Development coaches share with students and alumni when assisting with interview preparation.

EMPLOYERS ARE LOOKING TO ANSWER 4 KEY QUESTIONS

1. Why are you here?

Examples of interview questions that may be asked include:

- Why are you interested in working for this company?
- Why are you leaving your current position?

2. Can you do the job?

Examples of interview questions that may be asked include:

- If you were the candidate selected, what three tasks would you complete first?
- Based on your knowledge of us, what challenges do you see for us in the future?

3. Can you work well with our team?

Examples of interview questions that may be asked include:

- Tell me about a time when you had a conflict and how you resolved the situation.
- What kinds of roles have you played on various teams? What role do you prefer?

4. Why should we hire you?

Examples of interview questions that may be asked include:

- Why do you want to work in the _____ field?
- What experiences do you have that separate you from others with similar training?

TYPES OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

There are four main types of interview questions that you may be asked during an interview:

- **Open ended questions** are used to determine how well you think on your feet and how quickly you can focus on the topic at hand. Stay focused on your skills and how they will benefit the employer.
- **Behavioural questions** are used to gather examples of your past behaviour to predict your future behaviour as their employee. Use the job posting to try to determine what skills the employer will ask about.
- **Situational questions** are potential scenarios used by employers to see how you would handle real-world problems.
- **Stress questions** happen when the interviewer tries to see how you well you react under pressure with questions that are rarely related to the job posting qualifications.

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

SAMPLE QUESTIONS AND TIPS:

1. Tell me about yourself.

- Focus on your professional achievements, not personal ones, and summarize your education, why you chose this field, your work experience, and give some insight to your personality.

2. What are your short-term goals? What about 2, 5, 10 years from now?

- The employer wants to know that you are actively thinking about your career and that you are interested in their company and are enthusiastic about the current position.

3. What have been your most satisfying / disappointing experiences?

- The employer wants you to demonstrate self-awareness. Use examples from school, work, sport or volunteer positions.

4. What courses did you like best / least? Why?

- The employer could be looking to discover your areas of strength, and how you handled negative situations. Talk about how and what you learned from the situation.

5. What did you learn from your field placement / part-time / summer experiences?

- The employer wants you to relate your practical experience to the position.
- Be positive and discuss how your practical experience enhances the concepts you learned in the classroom.

6. Why are your grades low?

- Discuss the factors that may have affected your grades such as working while completing your program.

7. With what kind of people do you find it difficult to work?

- Employers want to see how well you know yourself, and how you handle working with others. This includes both customers / clients as well as colleagues.

BEHAVIOURAL QUESTIONS

The STAR / SPAR strategy is a useful tool to prepare for and effectively answer behavioural questions:

Situation	Task / Problem	Action	Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the background of a job or project so that the interviewer(s) can understand the situation. • Ensure you are specific, not general, in your answer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the task you had to complete, or the problem you had to deal with? • Be specific and provide details on how the problem began. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the action you took to deal with the problem. • Describe your role in handling and / or resolving the problem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adding in the result is one of the most important pieces. • How did the situation end? If the outcome was negative, let the employer know how you would handle it differently in the future. • What did you learn?
60% of your response time		25% of your response time	15% of your response time

SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

1. Tell me about a time you disagreed with your boss. How did you handle it?
2. Give an example of your most creative project. How did it turn out?
3. Describe a time when you lacked a skill to accomplish a job. What did you do about it?
4. Give me an example of when there was a problem at work that was caused by a lack of communication. What steps did you take to resolve it?
5. Tell me about a situation when your technical skills were needed to solve a problem
6. Tell about a time when you built rapport quickly with someone under difficult conditions.
7. Describe a situation where you felt you had not communicated well. How did you correct the situation?
8. Tell me about the most difficult or frustrating individual that you've ever had to work with, and how you managed to work with them.
9. Give an example of a time when you made a mistake because you did not listen well to what someone had to say.
10. Tell about a time when you influenced the outcome of a project by taking a leadership role.
11. Describe a team experience you found rewarding.
12. Tell me about a time in which you had to use your written communication skills in order to get an important point across.

SITUATIONAL QUESTIONS

Similar to a case study, the interviewer provides a potential situation and asks you to describe how you **would** respond. Occasionally, you may be asked to role-play the scenario with the interviewer. Think like the employer, and try to figure out what he or she is attempting to discover about your skills or judgment.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

1. How would you resolve a conflict with an upset customer?
2. You feel a fellow co-worker is not “pulling their weight”. How would you handle this?
3. You are working in a very busy office. The phones are ringing constantly, and there is a long line-up of customers waiting for your help. How would you handle this situation?

TIPS:

- Use common sense and talk about how you **would** handle the problem.
- Employers are looking to explore your logical problem solving skills, and whether you refer to company policies and procedures to help deal with the situation.

STRESS QUESTIONS

SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

- Staring at you and saying nothing for the first few minutes of the interview.
- Playing “good cop, bad cop” with another interviewer when you respond to a question.
- Asking questions like “If you could be a fruit, what fruit would you be and why?”
- Stating “You have 2 minutes to impress me. Go.”
- Asking a question like “If you could choose three people to have lunch with, living or dead, who would you choose? Why?”

TIPS:

Do not get angry or upset as the interviewer is intentionally trying to stress you out. Stay calm while thinking of your answer.

ILLEGAL QUESTIONS

In Canada, interviewers are not allowed to ask questions about:

- Age
- Place of origin
- Marital status
- Sex, including pregnancy and breastfeeding
- Ancestry, colour, race
- Creed (religion)
- Gender identity, gender expression
- Sexual orientation
- Citizenship
- Disability
- Record of criminal offences
- Ethnic origin
- Family status
- Receipt of public assistance (in housing only)

To learn how to handle these questions if they are asked, we recommend booking an interview techniques appointment with a Career Development coach.

“DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR ME?”

Most interviews end with the opportunity to ask questions. You should always seize this opportunity and ask questions that should focus on the job itself, the company, management and feedback, and next steps in the hiring process. It is not appropriate to discuss salary at this point unless the interviewer brings it up first.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

1. What would a typical day be like?
2. If I were to get this job, what are the most important tasks I would be working on right away?
3. Where would I be working and who would be my supervisor?
4. Can you tell me about the team I will be working with?
5. Is there a training manual or any resource material that I could read before starting?
6. What are the common characteristics of your most successful employees?
7. What industry trends do you anticipate affecting this position in the next year?
8. What additional courses or training do employees in this role tend to benefit from taking?
9. Is there a dress code? Is personal protective equipment provided?
10. When will you be contacting me regarding the outcome of this interview?

ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR CLASSROOM

Creating questions

- Look at <http://www.da.ks.gov/ps/subject/bei/> to generate potential behavioural interview questions by specific skill. The site also provides sample answers and sample follow-up questions to elicit more detailed responses.
- Have students find a job posting that is specific to their program / preferred industry. After teaching them the different types of interview questions, require students to create interview questions that might be used in an interview for that position. Consider using those questions in the activities listed below and / or as part of your evaluation.

General interview activities

- Ask for 3-5 volunteers to come to the front of the room. Each volunteer chooses 2 pre-written questions on slips of paper from an envelope. Each student takes a turn asking another volunteer to answer one of the selected questions in front of the class. The class should then be prompted to give constructive feedback to the participant. Each student will take a turn asking a question and answering a question.
- Provide each student with a question, and ask them to turn to the person closest to them and read the question that they chose. They will need to work together to decide what type of question it is, what information or skills the employer is looking for by asking the question, and what type of information should be included in an answer. The faculty could then ask for volunteers to read out 1 question they discussed and provide their response to the class.

Individual mock interview activity

- Faculty schedule mock interviews between themselves and individual students to take place within scheduled class time. Each interview could be in increments of 10 to 15 minutes with immediate feedback incorporated within that timeframe.

Group mock interview activities

- Arrange students into small groups and within class time, allow all students to participate in answering questions created by faculty and provided to each group. Choose different types of questions to provide variety and have students within groups ask one member to answer the question, while the remainder of the group listens then provides feedback on their peers' answers.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

What we do

The Career Development office has a team of coaches ready to assist, guide and encourage Durham College students and graduates to:

- Explore their potential career paths, assess their personal traits, skill sets and values
- Discover what employers are looking for in new recruits, and the art of networking and building industry relationships
- Learn to translate their academic experiences into resumes and professional letters
- Prepare for job interviews and achieve success in the workplace

What we offer students

- One-to-one appointments for job search guidance, cover letter and resumé coaching, interview techniques, and mock interviews
- Career coaching, including assessments and access to Career Cruising for students who are unsure about their career options, or wanting to reaffirm their goals
- Employer recruitment events such as job fairs and information sessions
- Access to Career Development in-person and online via DC's Hired site.
 - By using their MyCampus credentials students can log on to Hired to research career resources, book appointments, view the event calendar, register for events
 - Students enjoy exclusive access to job postings for full-time, part-time, summer, volunteer and on-campus opportunities. New job postings can automatically be emailed to students once a job alert has been created

What we offer faculty

- A variety of career development workshops delivered by Career Development coaches in your classroom
- The ability to book all your career development workshops online through the Hired site
- Assistance in hosting employer panels and industry events upon request
- Access to our extensive online career resources detailing industry information specific to DC post-secondary programs
- A place to refer students questioning their program choices or looking for career information

What we ask of faculty

Let students know about us early and encourage them to meet with a Career Development coach to begin working on their career success plan. Students who have a career goal are more inclined to persist and succeed in their programs. If students have questions or even doubts about a career path, our coaches can assist by helping students clarify their career options.



CAREER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

Booking information is available on [DC's Hired site](http://hired.durhamcollege.ca) – <http://hired.durhamcollege.ca>

Get Hired - Introduction to Career Development

This workshop showcases the benefits of using the services of Career Development and the Hired site.

Resumés - The employers' perspective

This workshop will provide added value by helping students view their resumé from the employers' perspective. Students are invited to actively participate; ideally, students should have a basic understanding of how to create a resumé and come prepared with an industry-specific job posting and a copy of their resumé.

Cover letters – From applicant to potential candidate

This workshop will provide added value by helping students view their cover letter from the employers' perspective. Students are invited to actively participate; ideally, students should have a basic understanding of how to create a cover letter and come prepared with an industry-specific job posting and a copy of their cover letter.

Networking – Communicate your brand

This workshop will introduce networking as an important practice in the workplace.

LinkedIn

This workshop will familiarize students with LinkedIn as an effective job search and networking tool.

Tough interview questions – How to answer them

This workshop will provide added value by helping students with tough interview questions often asked by employers. Students are invited to actively participate; ideally, should have a basic understanding of interview formats and expectations.

CONTACT US

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