

# Interviews

*An employment interview is simply a meeting between you and a potential employer to discuss your qualifications and see if there is a fit.*



## Construct Your Own 60-Second Commercial

Interviewers will likely ask you to “tell me about yourself.”

A 60-second commercial is a professional summary of your experience, skills and strengths that explains why you are a good fit. Do not give personal information, such as number of children, marital status and political or religious affiliation.

*Step 1:* Briefly describe any experience that is related to the position you are interviewing for.

*Step 2:* Identify the skills, qualities and accomplishments you have to offer the employer.

*Step 3:* Close with the greatest strength you bring to the employer and why you are a good fit for the company.

Write a paragraph using the information from Steps 1, 2 and 3. Read through each sentence and add relevant detail. Edit your 60-second commercial and say it out loud until it sounds conversational and natural. You want to appear confident, enthusiastic and professional.

Refer to our **SmartStart** guide for more information.



UTAH DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE SERVICES

## An Opportunity to “Sell” Your Qualifications

An interview is an opportunity for an employer to see if you are a good fit with the position, department and company; it is also your opportunity to see if the employer is a good fit for you. The employer wants to verify what they know about you and to talk about your qualifications. When you have been called for an interview, be confident that the employer already knows that you are qualified for the position. Your goal in the interview is to show that you can fill the employer’s need and add value to their bottom line.

Most employers form their first impression within the first seven seconds of the interview. Interviews can be stressful and the key to feeling confident is to be well prepared. Preparation will help win the interview and improve interview success. Generally, interviews last from 30–60 minutes. Find out as much as possible about the interviewing process of a particular company before you go.

Begin by gathering all important information and documents. Bring extra copies of your resumé, a list of references and letter(s) of recommendation. You may also want to bring school transcripts, licenses and certifications. Work samples are powerful tools (designs, drawings, writings). Organize your information and documents in a portfolio, binder or folder to keep clean and accessible during the interview. Bring a pen and pad of paper for taking notes.

## Do Your Research

The more you know about the job, the employer and the industry, the better prepared you will be to target your qualifications. You may want to ask a question or two at the interview to show the employer that you know about their business. There are many source of information: ask the employer’s human resources department for a more detailed position description; research employer profiles on company websites, at any Chamber of Commerce or at a local library and network with anyone you know who works for the company or for a related company.

**Preparation** is key in securing and completing a successful job interview.

# Common Questions in an Interview

## 1. What is your greatest strength?

Discuss attributes that qualify you for the job. Share a specific example.

*Example:*

“When I’m working on a project, I don’t want just to meet deadlines. I prefer to complete the project well ahead of schedule.”

## 2. What is your greatest weakness?

Avoid repeating the word “weakness.” Describe a weakness that you have professionally, not personally, and focus on what you are doing to improve.

*Example:*

“I found recently that there were aspects of Excel that I didn’t feel comfortable using. I have been working on that by taking an advanced course in Excel and by taking on projects where I can use my newly gained knowledge.”

## 3. What did you like least about your last employer or supervisor?

Stay positive and don’t bash your prior employer.

*Example:*

“My last supervisor and I had different ideas about who to include on projects. However, when I focused on the expertise she brought to other aspects of project management, I began to appreciate her much more. It made it easier for me to work with her on projects.”

## 4. Why did you leave your last job?

This is not an opportunity to badmouth your former boss or company. Be upfront but positive.

*Example:*

“I would like to be upfront. I found myself looking for more challenges. I am a dedicated employee and didn’t want my lack of satisfaction to impact my work for the employer.”

## 5. Explain the gaps in your work history.

Be honest, but come prepared with an answer about what you have been doing, whether community service or obtaining more education.

*Example:*

“I have been volunteering for a literacy program in my community where I have learned skills in training, preparation and mentoring.”

## 6. Where do you see yourself in five years?

Connect your answer to the job you’re applying for.

*Example:*

“My long-term goals involve growing with a company where I can learn and produce quality home products for its customers.”

## 7. What do you know about this company?

Use your research to answer this question.

## 8. Why do you want this job?

This is another opportunity to talk about what you can for the company.

*Example:*

“Your company is one of the top in its field. You have several new products that you are ready to market and release soon, and I want to be a part of helping your company be successful.”

## 9. What do you think is reasonable pay for this position?

This is another place to show you have done your homework.

*Example:*

“Based on my research, people in this position with my level of expertise earn between \_\_\_ and \_\_\_. I would be willing to negotiate in that range.”

## 10. Do you have any questions?

Interview etiquette requires that you allow the interviewer to direct and control the first part of the interview. They take the lead in asking the questions; however, at some point the interviewer will ask if you have any questions. Be ready with questions that demonstrate your business judgment and maturity:

## SmartStart Tips

- Dress appropriately for the position—one step above what you would wear on the job.
- Shake hands and offer your resumé to each interviewer.
- Maintain good eye contact.
- Be aware of distracting behaviors like pen clicking, fidgeting and fiddling with objects.
- Use the interviewers’ names.
- Research the company and prepare questions.
- Be yourself; share positive, honest and skill-based answers.
- Practice role-playing in-person and on the phone.

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### Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities by calling 801-526-9240. Individuals with speech or hearing impairments may call the Relay Utah by dialing 711. Spanish Relay Utah: 1-888-346-3162.