

# Interview Guide

## Informal Interviews

An informal interview is a **conversation** between a candidate and an interviewer, typically held in a **relaxed setting** such as a coffee shop or over lunch. Unlike **formal interviews**, which are **structured and focused on specific questions**, **informal interviews** allow for **open-ended discussions** that can reveal more about the **candidate's personality, values, and fit within the company culture**. However, make no mistake... you are still **INTERVIEWING** during this time and should **keep conversations professional** (as should your interviewer!), no matter how "informal" things feel!

### How To Prepare

- Verify Meeting Details:** Confirm the time, location, and format (in-person or virtual) of the meeting.
- Research the Interviewer:** Understand their role in the company and any common interests you may share.
- Know the Company:** Familiarize yourself with the company's mission, values, recent news, and industry trends.
- Give An Introduction to You:** Prepare a brief introduction that highlights your background, skills, and what you're looking for in your career and how that aligns with the company's direction.
- Prepare for Open-ended Questions:** Expect questions that encourage dialogue rather than strict answers:
  - "Tell me about yourself."*
  - "What motivates you?"*
  - "What achievements are you most proud of?"*
  - "Where do you see yourself in five years?"*
- Ask questions:** Prepare thoughtful questions about the company culture, team dynamics, or future projects.
- Listen actively:** Pay attention to what your interviewer says, this will help you respond appropriately and keep the conversation flowing.
- Dress Appropriately:** While it's an informal setting, dressing appropriately is crucial. Aim for business casual attire.



### What to Bring:

*A notepad and pen for taking notes.  
Copies of your resume if applicable.  
Business cards if you have them.*



### Follow-up:

Send a thank-you note expressing gratitude for their time and reiterating your interest in potential opportunities.

[Click here for a thank you note guide.](#)

### Understand Outcomes:

An informal interview does not guarantee a job offer but can lead to future opportunities if both parties find mutual interest.

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## Formal Interviews

### Preparation is Key

Research the company, its culture, and the role you are applying for. Understand the company's mission, values, and recent developments to tailor your responses effectively. Familiarize yourself with common interview questions and practice your answers.

Here are some common interview questions and a guide to answering them.



### Dress Appropriately

Business formal or business casual depending on the industry norms.\*  
visit: [mtsac.edu/basic-needs](https://mtsac.edu/basic-needs) for assistance with interview clothing

[Click here for a clothing guide.](#)



### Arrive Early

Plan to arrive at least 10-15 minutes early to demonstrate punctuality and respect for the interviewer's time. This also allows you to settle in and mentally prepare before the interview begins. If possible, scope out the interview location a few days prior to your interview during off hours, to ensure you are familiar with where you are going.

### Utilize the STAR Method for Responses

When answering behavioral questions, utilize the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result). Describe a specific situation you faced, outline the task at hand, explain the actions you took to address it, and conclude with the results of those actions.

### Showcase Your Skills and Experiences

Be prepared to discuss your skills and experiences in relation to the job description. Highlight relevant achievements that demonstrate your qualifications for the role. Use concrete examples to illustrate how you have successfully applied these skills in past positions.

### Ask Insightful Questions

Prepare thoughtful questions about the company or role to ask at the end of the interview. This shows genuine interest in both the position and organization while also providing an opportunity for you to assess if it's a good fit for you.

### Follow Up After the Interview

Send a thank-you email within 24 hours.  
[Click here for a thank you note guide.](#)

