

Myste

Interviewing – Preprofessional Tips

Your professional school interview is an opportunity for you to demonstrate to the interviewer(s) that you have the motivation, experience, interpersonal qualities, professional skills, and maturity to be successful in their program. The overall impression you create is at least as important as what is actually said during the interview. The following ten tips will help you present your "best self."

1) Be Prepared

Preparation is the key to a successful job interview. Follow the [suggestions for interview preparation](#) on this website. Come to the interview prepared with items such as a notebook (professional looking), pen, comb, watch, umbrella, money, map, and anything else you might need.

2) Dress Appropriately

Be well-groomed and dress in neat, clean, traditional-style clothing. Appropriate dress for men is typically a navy or dark gray business suit, white shirt with collar (not button down), an "updated" tie (stay away from theme ties), high fitting dark socks, and business-style leather shoes (avoid tassels). Appropriate dress for women is typically a dark colored suit (skirt should be just below the knee in length), white or off-white blouse (with a conservative neckline), skin-colored hosiery, closed-toe low to medium heel leather shoes, and understated makeup. Long hair should be pulled back in a neat, simple style. Both men and women should wear only minimal jewelry and should use cologne or perfume sparingly (if at all). Make sure to straighten your hair and use a breath mint before greeting the interviewer. Remember, if you are unsure about what constitutes appropriate dress, *err on the conservative side*. Assume that the interviewer will be older and more conservative than you.

3) Allow Extra Time

Plan to arrive in the building about 15 minutes before any scheduled activity during the campus visit. Check in with the interviewer or the interviewer's secretary five minutes before your scheduled appointment. Use your waiting time to relax, check your appearance, practice interview questions in your head, and observe the environment. If you are delayed by circumstance beyond your control, notify the interviewer immediately.

4) Know the Name and Title of the Interviewer

Greet the interviewer by his/her last name and title (e.g. "Dr.") in a friendly but professional manner. Don't use the interviewer's first name unless specifically advised to do so.

5) Relax and Be Yourself

Try to appear relaxed and comfortable. Avoid unnecessary verbal and nonverbal distractions (e.g. bouncing knee, fidgety hands, etc). Be confident with who you are and what you have to offer. Always be *straightforward and honest*. Be your "best self," but be yourself.

6) Establish a Friendly Rapport

Try to enjoy the interview. Create a *friendly, conversational atmosphere*. Be Fun! Display some humor.

7) Listen Attentively and Maintain Good Eye Contact

Don't be so preoccupied with your own presentation that you forget to listen carefully to the interviewer. Keep note taking during the interview to a minimum. Maintain good eye contact but avoid "staring down" the interviewer.

8) Keep Your Answers Brief, Relevant and Concise

An interview should be a dialogue, not a monologue. Limit your answers to 1 1/2 - 2 minutes per question. Speak clearly and effectively (avoid terms such as "okay," "you know," and "uh"). Pause before answering important questions. Avoid sounding rehearsed.

9) Give Proof

Set yourself apart from other candidates by being a proof-giver, not just a claimer (Richard Bolles, 1997, *What Color Is Your Parachute*). Be prepared with specific examples that illustrate your strengths and abilities.

10) Be Positive and Enthusiastic

Present an attitude and appearance that will allow the interviewer to be proud to present you to fellow colleagues. Introduce yourself with a confident manner. Be positive and enthusiastic about your chosen field. Never speak negatively of past associates or experiences. Avoid controversial subjects. If you are asked tough questions, do not take them personally. Never contradict or argue with your interviewer.

