

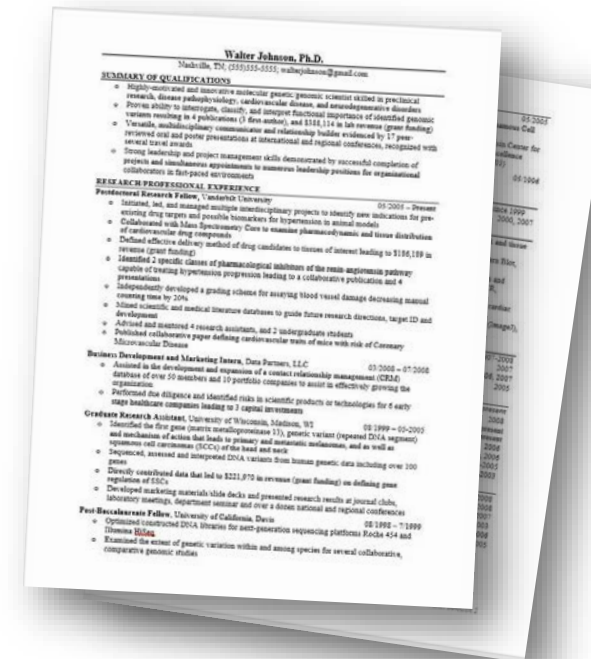
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Interviewing 101

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Faculty Interviews

- <https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/career-development/faculty-career-and-job-search-workshop/>

ASPIRE Workshop on Preparing for a Faculty Career and Job Search



Preparing for a Faculty Career and Job Search

August 19th and August 22nd, 2022

For postdoctoral fellows and late stage graduate students interested in faculty careers

Event Description

Registration

Session Descriptions

Schedule At-A-Glance

Helpful Resources

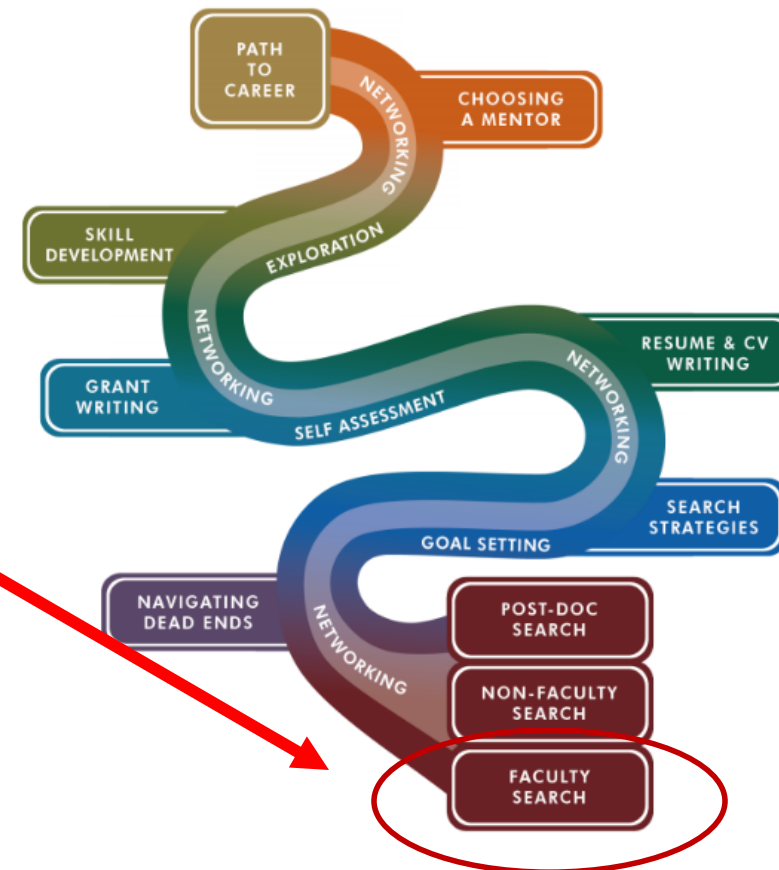
More Resources:

<https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/career-development/path-to-career/>

(click on “Faculty Search”)

Path to Career

Careers are rarely linear but the resources below can help you progress through your Ph.D. and postdoctoral training. Click on the 'goalposts' along the path to view articles that pertain to each stage of Ph.D. and postdoctoral training. Don't forget the foundational skills (pictured in the center) which are critical at all stages of development: networking, career exploration, self-assessment, and goal-setting! Scroll below the image if you prefer to see these resources in list format.





Purpose of an Interview

- Do you have the skills you say you do and can you do the job?
- Assess whether your personality and values fit the organization



Interviewer's Perspective

- Interviewing is time consuming and expensive
- They want to find the best person with the fewest interviews necessary
- If they are interviewing you, it's because they would like to hire you. They want you to be successful!
- Trying to “sell” you on the company/position

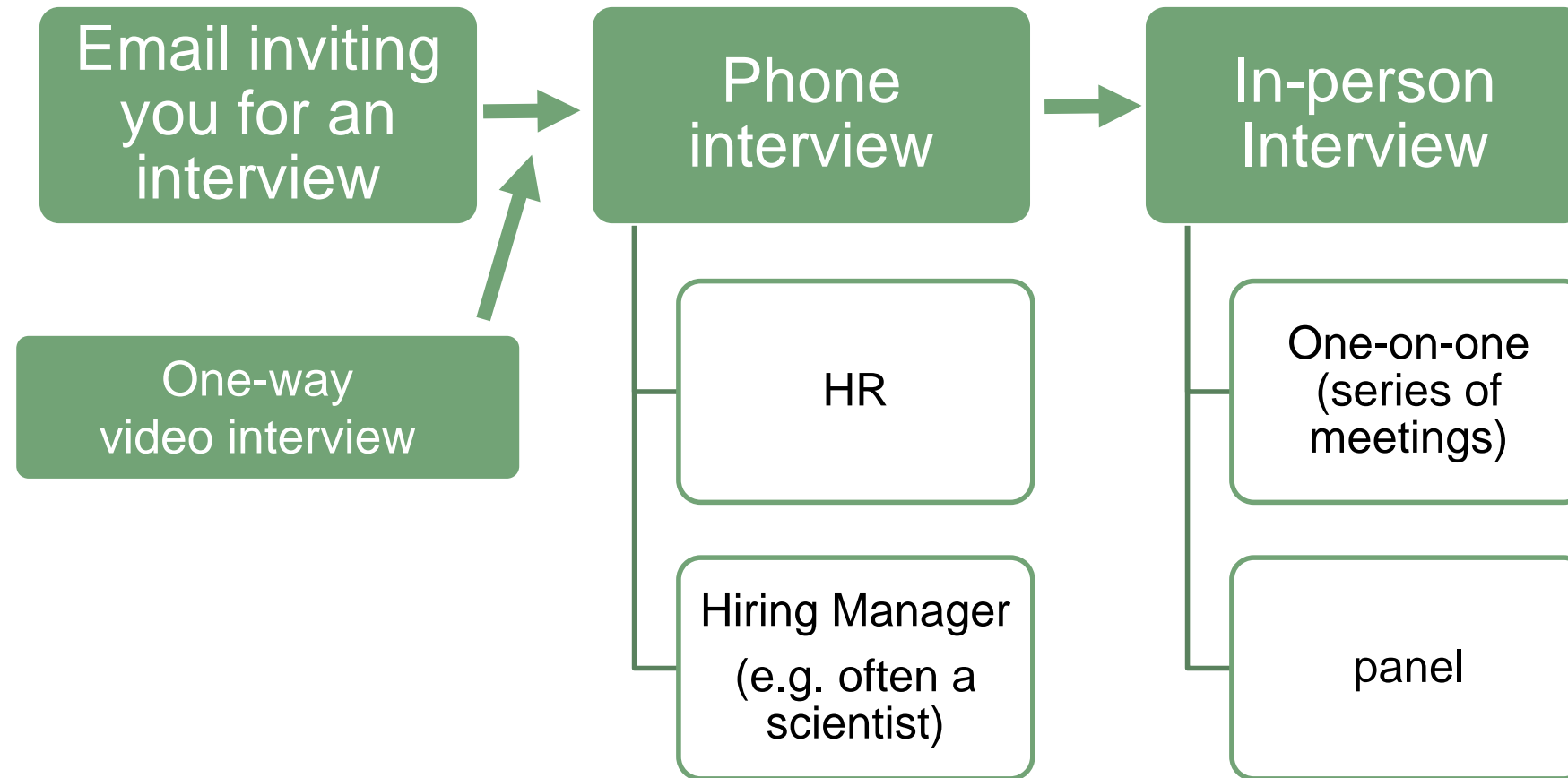
Interviewee's Perspective

- Main job is to be well prepared
- Make it clear why you are the best person for the job
- Make sure you WANT the job

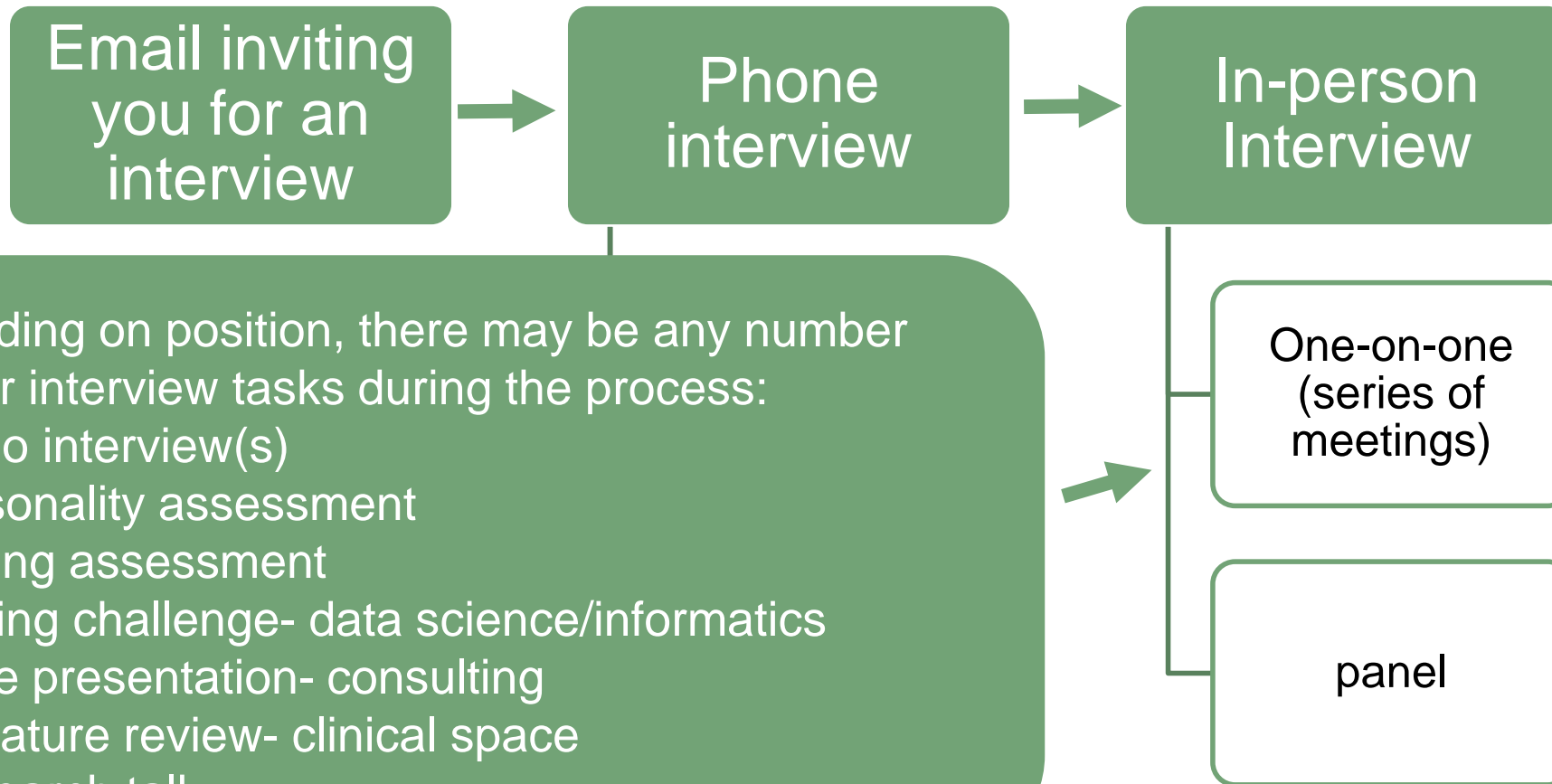
Learn to interview
well by practicing



Process Once you submit an application you may hear back from someone very quickly, or it may be several weeks (to months!)



Process Once you submit an application you may hear back from someone very quickly, or it may be several weeks (to months!)



Preparation Timeline

Now
(months to a year+)

- Build your CV/Resume/update LinkedIn profile
- Practice top 10-20 common questions
- Do informational interviews
- Gather resources: interviewing, video and phone interviewing, behavioral interviewing, questions you should ask

Actively Applying
(3-4 months)

- Take notes on org while tailoring cover letter and resume
- Keep track of applications and timelines
- Assess wardrobe

Interview Scheduled
(3 to 10 days)

- Fine tune responses
- Research interviewers and organization in detail
- Prep for interview (logistics and specific questions)

Phone Interview

- Initial screening to narrow the candidate pool
 - (maybe 10-12 → to narrow to 3-5 for in-person)
- Usually 30-45 min
- Can be an HR person or the Hiring Manager-ask to make sure you know ahead
- HR- don't assume they are a generalist
- Challenge: lack of non-verbal cues
- Plan to be somewhere quiet-use headphones
- Print out relevant docs/cheat sheet
- Talk slowly, and pause. Don't talk over interviewer



<https://www.themuse.com/advice/phone-interview-tips-preparation>

In-Person Interview

- Ask who you will be interviewing with ahead of time and prepare accordingly
- Will you also be giving a presentation?
- Practice finding location (same time of day) to make sure you aren't late (check virtual tools)
- Bring a pen and paper to take notes
- Bring copies of your resume
- Turn off you phone (and silence other electronics)
- Dress for the position and be comfortable and confident



Interview Format

One-on-One

- Likely several in a row
- Easier to build rapport
- You can build off your interactions/
information learned



Panel

- Tend to be more formal with set questions
- Can be more stressful
- Opportunity to see team working together



Virtual interviewing



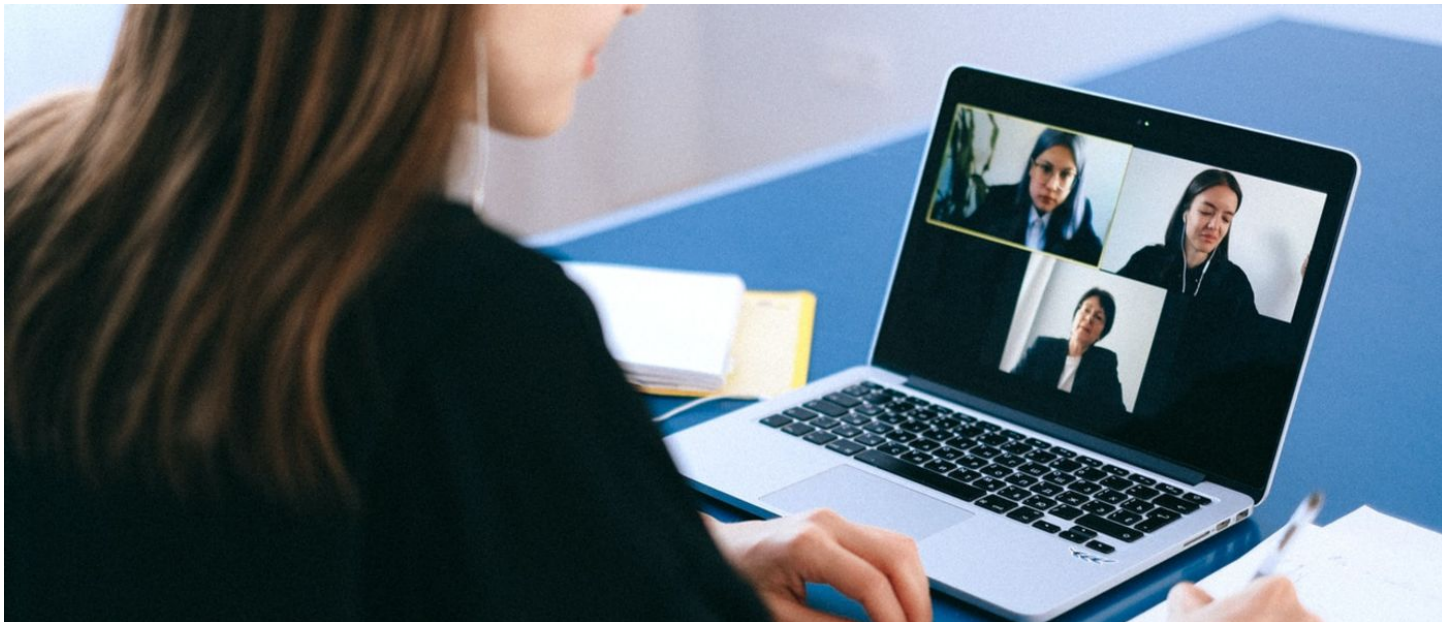
From the Company's Perspective:

- Can be organized and attended quickly
- No travel required
- Saves company money
- Can interview more candidates

As more companies offer remote position, they aren't all in the office in one place to conduct interviews and some may not even have a physical location!

Prior to the video interview:

- Confirm the time zone
- Get a phone number for back-up
- Test all your equipment
- May want to have a back-up platform ready



Virtual Interview Checklist

- ✓ Shut down other programs on your computer to minimize chimes or pop-ups and optimize operating speed
- ✓ Limit other distractions- pets, family members, roommates
- ✓ Dress as for an in-person interview
- ✓ Slow down and pause before you speak
- ✓ Be online 5 min early
- ✓ Display your full name
- ✓ Keep water/snacks close by
- ✓ Have paper and pen nearby



Lessons learned from those before you--

"It was a full day of back-to-back zoom interviews"

"1x1 and mix of several people"

"None of the people in my research talk turned on their cameras"

"Hard to answer questions when you can't see their face or hear well"

"They put me in a breakout room with employees to chat between meetings"

"Ask for clarification on questions you can't understand"

"Had a 'chaperone' (HR person-muted/ video off) in background"

****Talk to your friends and colleagues who have done this recently**

Research the Organization/Interviewer

- Location(s)
- Position location
- Divisions
- History
- Products/Services
- Typical Customers
- Financial Status
- Management Team
- Person or persons you will interview with
- Format of interview
- Type of interview
- Agenda for the day
- Dress code
- Salary range (Glassdoor)

Answering Questions

- Answers should be concise (appx 30 sec to 2 min)
- Be honest if you don't know the answer- don't try to bluff; display "intellectual humility" <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/02/01/how-google-ceos-brilliant-answer-in-a-job-interview-helped-him-get-hired.html>
- Practice answering some of the most common questions; will help you adapt on the fly to answer anything asked
- Be prepared to explain ANYTHING you have included on your resume
- Include competencies from job description
- Don't say it, show it with an example
- Try to structure your responses:
 - "I have 2 main strengths..."
 - When I have multiple tasks and a short time frame, I use a 3 step approach"

I have all the skills, isn't that sufficient?

- If you have been invited to interview, usually your skills (at least on paper) meet the necessary requirements
- The interview is often to help differentiate between several candidates who have comparable skills and backgrounds- this often comes down to “fit” and soft skills



Technical skills aren't the full picture

Fit

- Will your goals align with those of the organization?
- Will you be challenged enough to stay with them?
- Do your skills complement those of the rest of the team well?

May be out of your control

Soft Skills

- Will others want to work with you?
- Will you respond well to feedback?
- Can you communicate well-written and verbal?
- Are you excited about the position/organization?

You can work on this

Questions you should ask the interviewer

- About the job
- About training and professional development opps
- Your performance— how will you be evaluated?
- About the interviewer's background
- About the company— structure, future goals or how it got started
- About the team- who you will be working with, do they anticipate growing more?
- About the culture
- About next steps

****Always be
prepared to ask
questions**

Resources for you: BRET Career Dev Website

Interviewing

- ➡ [How to Answer the 31 Most Common Interview Questions](#) from The Daily Muse
- [Can you hear me now? Phone Interviews](#) by the OITE Careers Blog for NIH Office of Intramural Training and Education
- [Nashville's Most Admired CEOs' favorite job-interview questions](#) from the *Nashville Business Journal*
- [Two Part Series on Industry Interviews](#) by Dave Jensen
- [Job Talk Jitters](#) by Dave Jensen for ScienceCareers.org
- ➡ [How to Look Good in a Skype Interview](#) via YouTube NTD Training Videos
- ➡ [51 Interview Questions You Should be Asking](#) from The Daily Muse
- ➡ [30 Behavioral Interview Questions You Should be Ready to Answer](#) The Daily Muse
- [Using the STAR Technique to Shine at Job Interviews: A How to Guide](#) from Guardian Careers
- [How to Prepare for a Video Assessment](#) from The Muse
- [How to Ace your Online Video Job Interview](#) from Quintessential Careers
- [Video Interview Tutorials](#) (Specifically See Ch 6) from SparkHire
- [Are you Ready for Video Interviews?](#) NIH Office of Intramural Training & Education (OITE)
- [30 Behavioral Interview Questions to Identify High-Potential Candidates](#) LinkedIn Talent Solutions
- ['Can you work with less-qualified people?' and 19 other curveball questions to navigate at industry interviews](#) by Tina Pearson for *Nature*

<https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/career-development/path-to-career/non-faculty-search/>

Ending the Interview



Questions to Ask:

- What is the next step in the interview process?
- When should I expect to hear back from you?
- What is the timeline/process for a decision
- Can I answer any final questions for you

Assure the interviewer you are excited about the position (too often candidates just leave the interview and recruiters/hiring managers are not sure if the candidate is interested or not)

Things to Avoid

- Telling them “what they want to hear”
- Respond in a defensive/aggressive way
- Appearing overly confident or arrogant
- Speaking negatively
 - Don’t want to appear as if they may be your next “victim”
 - Especially regarding your experience in academia- don’t want to look naïve about how industry works
- Saying too much/ too little
- Doing the interview “just for practice”



Illegal questions

Inquiry Area	Illegal Question	Legal Question
Age	What is your age, DOB?	Do you meet the minimum age requirements
National Origin/Citizenship	Are you a US citizen? Where were you born?	Are you authorized to work in the US?
Race	All questions about a person's race	None
Religion	Any question regarding a person's religious beliefs, including observed holidays	After hiring, may inquire about religious accommodations
Marital/Family status	Are you married? Do you plan to have a family? What are your childcare arrangements?	Would you be willing to relocate if necessary? Would you be able and willing to work overtime?
Disabilities	Do you have any disabilities? Please complete this medical history	Are you able to perform the essential job functions?
Arrest record	Have you ever been arrested?	Have you ever been convicted of XXX?

Options for Answering Illegal Questions

Three Options for Answering Illegal Questions

<https://ocs.yale.edu/channels/illegal-interview-questions/>

1. Answer it. If you think the interviewer was simply trying to get to know you, and naively asked the question, you can choose to answer. Consider the intent of the question. For example, was the interviewer asking about your birthplace because he or she grew up in the same area and is trying to get to know you? If you are comfortable answering, then it's fine to do so.
2. Side-step it. You could discretely refuse to answer the question but address the concerns that they raise. For example, if your interviewer asks you whether or not you have children, he or she might really be getting at whether your family responsibilities would interfere with the frequent travel that the job requires. You could respond by saying something like "I can assure you that my personal life will not interfere with my professional responsibilities."
3. Question the relevance. You can ask your interviewer how the question relates to the position you're interviewing for. This may alert them to the inappropriate nature of their question. If you feel that they are asking an inappropriate or discriminatory question, you can refuse to answer their question and either try changing the subject, or you could choose to excuse yourself from the interview.

Dreaded salary questions

- What are your salary requirements?
 - Trying to make sure your expectations are in line with the position
- Always do your homework (e.g. Glassdoor, others..)
- Offer a range where possible
- Delay or deflect giving a number if possible
 - “Before discussing any salary, I’d really like to learn more about what this role entails.”
 - “I’ve done a lot of research on [Company] and I am certain if it’s the right fit, we’ll be able to agree on a number that’s fair and competitive to both parties.”
 - “Before I can answer that, I would need to see the entire offer/package”
- Now illegal in some states and cities to ask salary history
 - New York City; Louisville, North Carolina; California; Massachusetts

<https://www.businessinsider.com/places-where-salary-question-banned-us-2017-10>

Running list: <https://www.hrdiver.com/news/salary-history-ban-states-list/516662/>



More on this in Negotiating Your Job Offer session on January 9, 2025

Recruiting Scams

A Warning About Recruiting Scams

Thank you for your interest in Twist Bioscience.

Twist is among several companies recently made aware of a phishing scam where con-artists are posing as recruiters or hiring managers for prominent companies using email, text messages and social media to access personal information of potential applicants.

In this scam, fake recruiters are creating misleading email addresses, conducting remote interviews and extending fraudulent job offers to collect personal and financial information. This type of fraud is normally carried out through online services such as fake websites or through fake email addresses claiming to be from the company. We have reported this illegal activity to the FTC and Internet Crime Complaint Center.

Here's what you should know to help protect your information from scammers:

- Authentic Twist email addresses have an @twistbioscience.com domain.
- Always take precautions when sharing personal information
- Twist will never require personal banking information in the recruiting/interview process
- Twist will never require an application processing fee or require other payment for recruiting services.

We encourage you to apply for open roles directly through our site.

THANK YOU!

Ashley.brady@vanderbilt.edu

Additional Information/Resources

Making a good first impression

- You are being assessed as soon as you step on site. Be pleasant and aware of your behavior
- Plan to arrive earlier, but let them know you are there 10 min before the scheduled interview
- Smile at everyone you meet
- Give a good, firm handshake
- Let them tell you where and when to sit



Presenting yourself during the interview

- Maintain good eye contact with the interviewer
- Be aware of posture and body language- be comfortable, approachable, and confident.
- Leaning into the conversation can make you appear engaged and interested
- Listen carefully
- Rephrase the question if you need to clarify or ask the interviewer to repeat it
- Monitor nervous habits: foot tapping, playing with hair, pens, buttons etc..., clearing your throat.
- Show enthusiasm and be yourself



Openers (to connect with interviewer and build rapport)



- Hi. I'm.....
- **Remark on something in the environment:**
 - “Wow. That’s a really interesting *sculpture, photo panel,*” etc...
- **Express interest and gratitude:**
 - “I’ve really been looking forward to talking with you today because...”
- **Mention a connection:**
 - “So nice to meet you. I think you may know....”

Exiting the Interview

- Remind the interviewer you are interested in the position (too often candidates just leave the interview and recruiters/hiring managers are not sure if they are interested or not)
- **Get the contact information of the interviewer**
- Firm handshake, exit gracefully
- Thank others in the office as you exit, smile!
- Follow-up with Thank yous! The sooner the better



References

- Think about this ahead of time, and be prepared to provide to your reference:
 - A copy of the job description
 - The CV/resume you used to apply
 - An explanation of why you want the position and what you feel they can speak to regarding their relationship with you (give them bullets)
 - Make it easy on them



Tell me a little about yourself

What they are asking for: *Convince me that you can help me achieve my goals and would be enjoyable to work with on a team*

- Don't give your complete employment (or personal) history. Instead give a pitch—one that's concise and compelling and that shows exactly why you're the right fit for the job.
 - Talk a little bit about your current role (including the scope and perhaps one big accomplishment),
 - Give some background as to how you got there and experience you have that's relevant.
 - Segue into why you want—and would be perfect for—this role.

Tell me about yourself

1) Practicing

- I was born in NY
- My PhD is in Biochemistry from Duke University and I will be finishing my degree in February

2) I have been thinking about this job

- My PhD is in Biochemistry from Duke
- I am a team player
- I'm looking to transition into

3) I know I want this job

- Ever since I was young... science.... Led to pursuing a PhD
- Liked X but did Y and discovered....
- From here I look forward to.....

What do you know about our organization?

Are you interested enough to have researched our org and figured out what makes us special?

“I’m really excited to translate my background in neuroscience to more directly impacting the lives of patients. I learned about your company last year when I heard a feature on NPR interviewing your Chief Science Officer about the clinical trial for NS2019– this is such a new way to approach treating epilepsy and I was really excited about her vision for the future of therapeutics in this area, and her passion for thinking outside the box. I’m thrilled to be considered for this position within your company!”

Why do you want this job?

Have you done your research to understand what we do, what makes us special, and how you can contribute to our success, and are you passionate about the role?

1) Identify a couple of key factors that make the role a great fit for you.

“I love customer support because I love the constant human interaction and the satisfaction that comes from helping someone solve a problem”

2) Then share why you love the organization

“I’ve always been passionate about education, and I think you’re doing great things, so I want to be a part of it”

Do you have any questions for us?

1) Practicing

- No, thanks, I think you answered everything
- What other research is being done here?

2) I have been thinking about this job

- When would you like this person to start?
- What do you like best about working here?

3) I know I want this job

- As I mentioned, X is important. Can you talk a bit about....
- You mentioned the company is growing- in what areas do you....?

Questions to ask about culture (remote)

- How does your team maintain strong bonds, even when working remotely?
- How has your company culture changed with some or all of your team working remotely?
- What was the biggest hurdle you had to overcome when team members started working remotely?
- What tools do you use to keep communication streamlined between your in-office and remote teams?

General culture questions: <https://www.themuse.com/advice/the-best-interview-questions-to-ask-if-you-want-the-truth-about-company-culture>

How to Learn about Company Culture Virtually

- Glean as much as you can from their website, social media, employee reviews (Glassdoor)
- Connect with current (or former) employees (ask hiring manager or use LinkedIn to find them)
- Pay attention to clues from those you interview with: Are they happy? Are they respectful of others?
- Pay attention to the hiring process: is their process organized and streamlined? Is communication clear?

<https://www.themuse.com/advice/evaluate-company-culture-remote-hiring-process>

Follow-up after the interview

1) Practicing

- Thanks for meeting with me this week. Keep in touch!

2) I have been thinking about this job

- I enjoyed our meeting on Jan 8th
- I believe my x skills will be an asset to the y dept.
- I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you!

3) I know I want this job

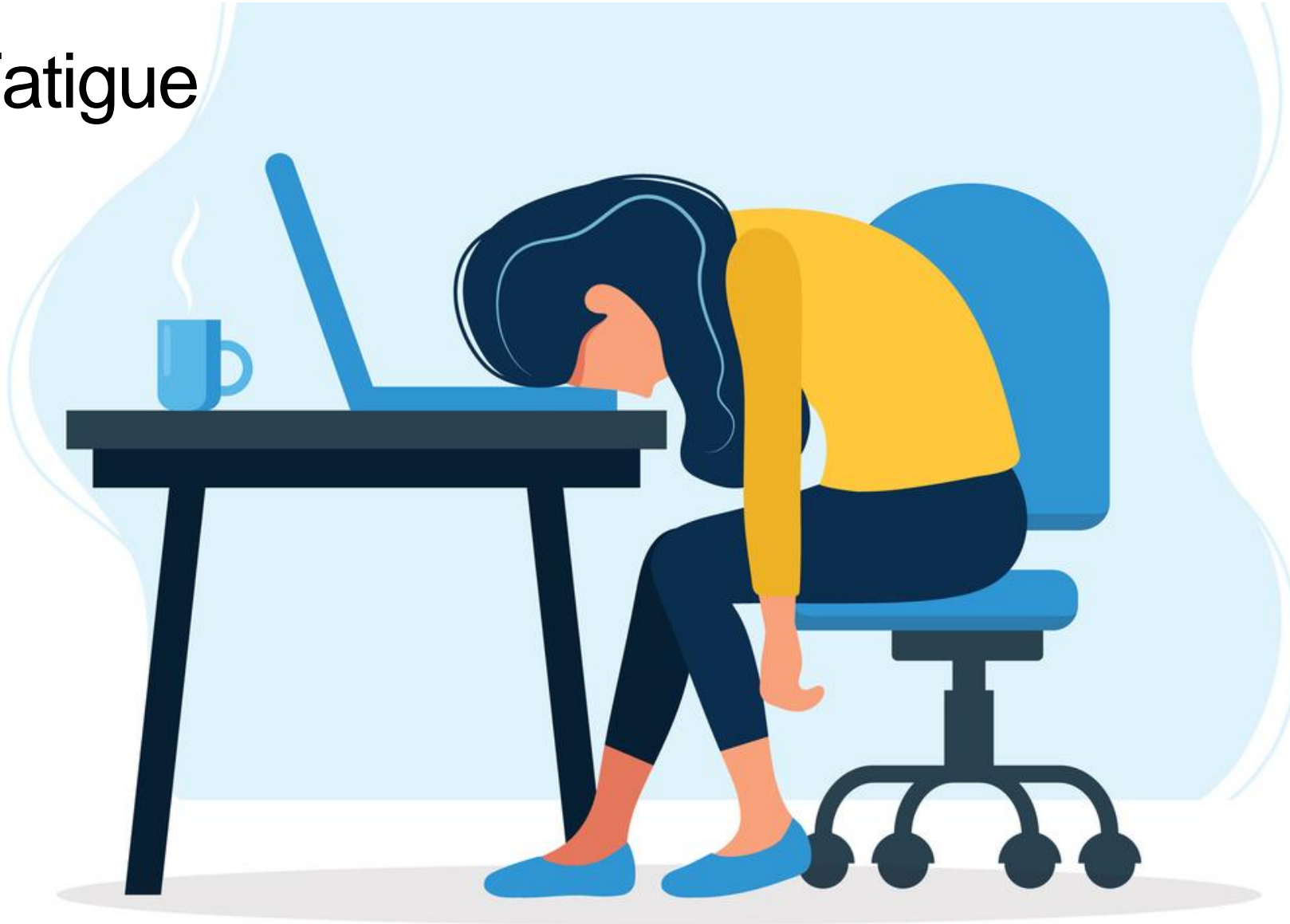
- Thank you for meeting on Jan 8th, I enjoyed ...
- I especially appreciated hearing x as I am interested in...
- I look forward to ..., in the meantime, I would love to connect on LinkedIn

Resources Continued...

- Illegal Questions

- <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/how-to-respond-to-illegal-interview-questions-2072017>
- <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/illegal-interview-questions-2071487>
- <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/how-to-answer-inappropriate-interview-questions-2061334>

Zoom Fatigue



Zoom Fatigue- how to combat?

- Excessive amounts of close-up eye-contact
 - Take zoom out of full screen mode
- Seeing yourself during video chats is exhausting
 - Hide-self view option
- Reduced Mobility
 - Take breaks or stand, assess your set up
- Cognitive Load is higher in video chats where it's harder to send and receive non-verbal communication
 - Take an audio only break (not possible in an interview)

<https://news.stanford.edu/2021/02/23/four-causes-zoom-fatigue-solutions/>

Negotiation considerations



<https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/career-development/path-to-career/non-faculty-search/>

Salary Negotiation

- [The Salary Discussion: Walk Away a Winner with the Right Preparation](#) by Dave Jensen for Sciencemag.org
- [Employment and Salary Survey](#) from the American Chemical Society
- [Ladies, Let's Negotiate](#) by Melissa Dalglish for Chronicle Vitae