

# Co-op Programs Office

The purpose of an interview is to determine the “fit” of the candidate’s skills, experiences and qualities with the organization. An interview also provides the candidate with the opportunity to learn about the organization and demonstrate the value they can add to it.

## Included in this tip sheet

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Remember: Your success in the interview depends significantly on the amount of time you spend preparing for it.

## Types of Interviews

**Screening Interviews** are geared to reviewing your resume, and matching your skills to the position through a phone call or email.

**Selection Interviews** are intended to match the candidate to a specific position in the organization. They are generally conducted face-to-face.

## Questions & Answers

**Direct:** Requires a structured, definite and concrete answer.

*Example:*

*“What services do we offer in our marketing department?”*

**Indirect:** Open-ended questions.

*Examples:*

*“What is your greatest strength?”*

*“Why do you want to work here?”*

*“Tell me about yourself”*

**Tip:** Review the job description and do a search for similar job descriptions. Mention your extracurricular involvement and describe who you are and what you will bring to the organization. Sum yourself up at the end of your answer, and make sure to answer this question differently in every interview; your response should be tailored to the position to which you are applying.

**Situational:** A scenario-based question to assess how you might perform in a particular situation.

*Example:*

*“A customer approaches you and asks a question for which you do not know the answer. What do you do?”*

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**Your overall impression matters most:**

**85% of the interview’s verbal content will be forgotten within an hour of the candidate’s departure.**

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## INTERVIEW TIPS

**Behavioural:** A “story” that describes how you demonstrated one of your key skills that is sought by the organization.

*Examples:*

*“Provide an example of a time when you used effective written communication skills to present information or provide feedback”*

*“Tell me about a time when you had to use persuasion in order to sell a product or service”*

**Behavioural questions** are based on the theory that past behaviour is a good indicator of future behaviour. Successful answers to this type of question typically follow the **STAR model**:

**S – Situation:** (20% of your answer)

Introduce your story, provide necessary background information

**T – Task:** (10% of your answer)

Restate the skill you were asked about, and its relevance to your story

**A – Action:** (50% of your answer)

Describe the specific steps you took in the situation and address how you used the skill effectively

**R – Result:** (20% of your answer)

Describe the outcome/result. What happened?

**Sample interview questions and answers can be found on the Co-op Programs website:**

Go to: [www.brocku.ca/co-op](http://www.brocku.ca/co-op) and log in with your student number

Select: “Online Job and Career Planning Tools” and click on “Interview Preparation”

Before the Interview	During the Interview	After the Interview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do your research!</li><li>• Review the job description/posting</li><li>• Understand how your skills relate to the employer’s needs</li><li>• Prepare examples of how you have demonstrated your skills</li><li>• Dress professionally</li><li>• Arrive early (10 minutes)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Firm Handshake</li><li>• Maintain positive body language</li><li>• Provide clear answers to questions</li><li>• Use the STAR method</li><li>• Have questions prepared for the employer</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Know the next steps: when to expect an offer, etc.</li><li>• Thank the interviewers for their time</li><li>• Follow-up with a thank you letter</li></ul>

### General Guidelines:

- Be prepared with success stories that demonstrate skills which are relevant to the job.
- Appropriate Attire: business attire is recommended for interviews.
- Be yourself – smile, show your enthusiasm for the job and the company
- A thank you letter should be sent within 24 hours of your interview – your thank you letter should be brief and should simply thank the employer for meeting with you about the position. You are also encouraged to highlight something that you learned about the job/company during the interview.