

# Interview Tips & Best Practices

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# Interview Tips

- Research first
  - Find out as much as you can about the company, the position, and with whom you are speaking
    - Review the company website, especially the “About” and “News/Press Releases” pages
    - Read through the job description and think of examples you can give of your relevant experience
    - Look up your interviewer on LinkedIn to learn more about their background
- Be prepared to explain why you are interested in the company and position for which you are interviewing
  - Companies want to hear you want **this** job, not just **a** job
  - Emphasize what you can offer them, rather than what they can offer you
- Prepare your environment and yourself appropriately using the following best practices

# Best Practices: Phone and In-Person Interviews

- Review your resume in detail. Make sure you are prepared to discuss all information you have listed on your resume, including technical aspects of your experience.
- Avoid distractions. For a phone interview, find a quiet place where you will be able to concentrate. For an in-person interview, be sure to arrive 10 - 15 minutes early, and are well rested and prepared. Turn off or silence your cell phone.
- Smile, make great eye contact, and give a warm greeting. Make a great first impression!
- Answer questions fully, but be aware of what the right amount of information is to give. If you find that you've been talking for over two minutes straight without the interviewer conversing, you are likely going into too much detail.
- Have a set of questions prepared. Ask different questions to different people. Asking questions shows that you have thought about the company and opportunity, and have genuine interest in both.
- Avoid negatives about current or past employers, managers, colleagues, or roles. There are ways to address difficult situations, but focus on what makes you a strong, qualified candidate for this role.
- Think of what concerns a potential employer might have about you as a candidate, and be ready to address them. For example, if you are interviewing for a role and have only some familiarity with the software being used in the position, be ready to discuss experience you have that would allow you to pick it up quickly, or plans to self-teach, etc.
- If you are not sure whether you should say something, don't! You can always discuss something later if it still seems important, but you cannot take it back once it has been said.
- Be prepared and professional, but also let your personality and enthusiasm shine through

# Best Practices: Video Interviews

- Test your internet connection, audio, and video beforehand as well as the interview platform
  - Conduct the interview from a location in which you have a strong internet connection, test your audio and video functions in advance, and do a test call with a friend or relative prior to your interview using the same platform on which the interview will be conducted.
- Eliminate distractions
  - Silence your phone, and close/mute any other programs running
  - Choose a location you are confident will remain quiet and undisturbed for the entirety of your interview
- Choose a location that is well-lit, with a distraction-free background
  - Ensure your lighting allows your face to be seen clearly, without too much shadow. Have light sources on each side of you, and one behind you.
  - Conduct the interview in front of a simple, clean background to keep the interviewer's focus on you alone
  - Frame yourself from the chest up, and sit an appropriate distance from the camera
  - Position the camera at your eye level, and keep your eyes on the camera as much as possible
- Dress as you would for an in-person interview
  - Choose colors that will not blend too much into your background
  - Don't wear anything fussy, loud, or sparkly
- Be aware of your body language
  - Keep any gestures within the frame, and maintain a pleasant facial expression from the moment the camera is turned on

# Common Interview Questions

- What does an actuary do?
- What's going on in the industry right now?
- What was your favorite and least favorite class in college and why?
- What was the most difficult actuarial concept you have learned? Can you please explain it.
- What do you know about our company?
- Why would you choose P&C over health (or life or pension) insurance?
- Describe a time when you have had to work with a particularly large data set.
- Explain a complicated mathematical concept in simple terms as if talking to your grandparents.
- What is your strategy when studying for exams?
- Questions based on technical skills listed on resume
- Based on your previous experiences, what did you learn at a previous job that would help you as an actuary?
- Explain data

★ More example questions can be found at:  
<https://www.ezrapenland.com/interviewquestions/>

# Great Questions to Ask (and *Why*)

## **What do you expect me to accomplish in the first 60 to 90 days?**

- Asking this shows you want to hit the ground running, and make an impact right away! It also gives you clear expectations as a potential new employee, and can help you both to envision you in the role.

## **What are the common attributes of your top performers?**

- This conveys that you want to be great long-term employee, and what is considered “great” varies within each organization (or even team). Asking this shows you not only want to be a fit but that you want to be a top performer, and gives you a chance to address exactly how you possess these qualities.

## **What are a few things that really drive results for the company?**

- This shows you understand that employees are investments, and every employee should generate a positive return on this investment.

## **What do employees do in their spare time?**

- Happy employees like what they do and the people with whom they work, and you can gauge their response to determine if both apply to this company.

## **How do you plan to deal with...?**

- Every business faces some major challenge (i.e. technological changes, economic trends, competitors entering the market, COVID). Great candidates will want to know how a company plans to overcome these challenges (and how they fit into these plans).

# Q & A

What questions can we answer?