

Interviewing Excellence

Welcome to the Department of Defense Career Decision Toolkit, Interviewing Excellence.

Goal

The goal for this course is to provide you with the tools and teach you the techniques you need to practice for and excel in a job interview.

Plan

This course contains three modules.

Module 1: Interview Preparation (pages 6 through 27)

In this module, you will learn how to prepare for an interview, discover the types of interviews you may encounter, translate your military experience to civilian terms and learn to dress for success.

Module 2: Interview Performance (pages 28 through 31)

In this module, you will learn about the interview process. You will learn about standard interview formats, appropriate body language, common interview mistakes and how to sell your skills in an interview.

Module 3: Interview Closing and Follow up (pages 32 through 33)

In this module, you will learn to close your interview, follow up with the interviewer and prepare for subsequent interviews with the same company.

Succeed

You can download the Interviewing Excellence Checklist for Success for this course on the main access page. Use it as a guide through the course topics.

Glossary: There is a course glossary on pages 35 through 38.

Self-Assessment: This course begins with a 10-question self-assessment to help you determine how ready you are to conduct a job-winning interview. The assessment begins on the next page.

Interviewing Excellence Self Assessment

This activity will help you measure your current knowledge of interviewing skills, and give you a preview of what you'll learn in this course.

1. True or False: Wearing a conservative business suit is always the safest "dress for success" attire.

Answer: True

Feedback: While there have been many companies and industries that have become known for their informality, it is still safer to dress on the side of conservatism than informality. Remember that first impressions are quite important and a positive first impression can get the interview off to a good start. If you are still unsure, check with someone who works for the company or with the human resources department.

2. Multiple choice: The STAR technique is a method used in answering interview questions. It refers to:
 - A. Setting, Timing, Asking, Reviewing
 - B. Situation, Task, Action, Result
 - C. Symptoms, Technique, Action, Response
 - D. Simple, To-the-point, Accurate, Relevant

Answer: B. Situation, Task, Action, Result

Feedback: STAR stands for Situation-Task-Action-Result. It is a tool that helps you organize and plan your responses to questions such as, "Tell me about a challenge you faced and how you handled it," or, "What is your biggest weakness?"

3. True or False: Greeting the receptionist/assistants when you arrive, and treating them with respect is an important key to your success.

Answer: True

Feedback: This gesture is so small, yet candidates showing this behavior are starting out on the right foot. Receptionists and assistants are key people within organizations and many employers will ask them about the manners of the candidates, so make sure you introduce yourself in a professional and friendly manner.

4. Multiple choice: What is the best response to this interview question: "Why do you want to work for our company?"
- A. "You've been the market leader for the past five years because of your product reputation and customer satisfaction, and I would like to contribute my services to help continue these successes."
 - B. "You've been the market leader for the past five years, and I think it would be really great for my career to work for your organization."
 - C. "I love the fact that I can dress in jeans every day and that the office is only a five-minute bike ride from the beach."
 - D. "I'm really attracted by the great salary and benefits your company offers."

Correct Answer: A. "You've been the market leader for the past five years because of your product reputation and customer satisfaction, and I would like to contribute my services to help continue these successes."

Feedback: This question is another one you should anticipate, because it gives you the opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge of the company. You might discuss the company's reputation, strength of products, respected management, recent growth or acquisitions, or other positive information you have gathered during your research. Avoid answers that focus on the benefits to you of working for the company and, instead, focus on what you can do for the company.

5. Multiple choice: It's best to arrive how early before an interview?
- A. One hour
 - B. 30 minutes
 - C. 10 minutes
 - D. One minute

Answer: C. 10 minutes

Feedback: You should plan to arrive about 10 minutes before the start of the interview. This gives you a little slack time for unexpected events (such as the elevators not working) and time to complete an employment application or other paperwork before the interview.

Also, plan ahead! Make sure you know the exact location of the interview - and even take a practice run if you're not sure about it.

6. Multiple choice: The best thing to do in an interview when you get a question that stumps you is:
- A. Sit there and stare at the interviewer.
 - B. Keep saying, "Good question, good question."
 - C. Respond with, "I just really can't answer that."
 - D. Paraphrase the question while giving yourself time to think.

Correct Answer: D. Paraphrase the question while giving yourself time to think.

Feedback: Responses A, B and C may show that you are unprepared for the question - and perhaps the entire interview. You need to respond, and you need to do so in a positive and constructive manner. Even the most experienced interviewees get stumped, but they have a strategy to gain a little more time to compose an answer. Pause and breathe, and rephrase the question to allow yourself more time. A little silence is ok, so take a minute to gather your thoughts.

7. True or false: If you are asked to discuss your current boss, whom you dislike, you should state how you feel about him.

Answer: False

Feedback: It is never a good idea to criticize a current or former boss or company. A potential employer/manager is much more likely to identify with your former boss than they are to identify with you as a subordinate. When you complain about a former employer/boss, the interviewer is not "on your side" of the story (although most candidates assume they are). They may even project your response to themselves, feeling that you would be equally likely to criticize them if in a similar situation. Speak positively about your current and former employers.

8. True or false: No matter what, you should always ask a question when the interviewer asks if you have any questions about the job or the company.

Answer: True

Feedback: Employers may use this question to make one quick judgment about a candidate: Someone with no questions may not really be interested in working for the company. Even if you think all of your questions have been answered, have a few special questions in reserve - ones that can also show off your knowledge of the company - such as, "How will the new distribution center you're building in Florida affect your Southeast deliveries?"

9. True or false: At the end of the interview, you should always ask about the next step of the process.

Answer: True

Feedback: You might say something such as, "Ms. Jones, I feel very positive about the fit between your needs and my abilities to do the job. Can you tell me what the next steps in the hiring process would be if I were considered?" As with all aspects of job-hunting, be proactive and show initiative.

10. Multiple choice: As soon as you get back from the interview, you should:

- A. Put your feet up and relax, knowing you had a great interview.
- B. Spend hours kicking yourself for some poor answers you gave.
- C. Immediately fire off thank you letters to each person who interviewed you.
- D. Quit your current job in anticipation of a new job offer.

Correct Answer: C. Immediately fire off thank you letters to each person who interviewed you.

Feedback: It is a simple gesture of courtesy and respect, but one that will give you an extra little edge over the other candidates - especially the ones who do not send thank you letters. Thank you letters also give you an opportunity to do a number of other things, such as restate your interest in and enthusiasm for the job; express your fit with the qualifications for the position; send additional materials requested by the employer; stress the rapport you felt with the interviewer; and much more.

Module 1: Interview Preparation

In this module you will have the opportunity to learn and practice the skills you need to prepare for an interview. You'll learn about the different types of interviews, interview questions and how to answer them, suggestions for translating your military experience into terms a civilian interviewer will understand and how to dress for an interview.

Types of Interviews

Interviews come in many formats ... they might be conducted over the phone or in person. They could be between you and one person, you and a panel of interviewers, or even you with a group of applicants. Read on to learn about the different types of interviews you might encounter during your job search. Keep in mind that it is possible you'll run into a combination of interview types as well. And by the way, if your prospective employer doesn't tell you what type of interview you'll be having, it's ok to ask so you can be prepared.

One-on-One

This is the most traditional interview: a meeting between the interviewer and interviewee only.

Phone

Many initial interviews are conducted by phone, especially if the job is in another location. These interviews may range from 10 minutes to two hours; it is perfectly acceptable to ask the person scheduling the interview how long the interview is expected to last.

Panel

Panel interviews are more common in certain industries, but can be used anywhere. In this interview type, one interviewee meets with several interviewers at the same time. This kind of interview is often combined with the meal, case study and demonstration interview.

Group

Occasionally, a group of candidates are interviewed together. In this case, you may be competing with some of the people you interview with, and you may also be interviewing with future co-workers. Teamwork is more important than competition in these kinds of interviews, although you should do what you can to stand out from the other candidates.

Breakfast or Lunch

Interviews are often conducted over a meal. These interviews tend to feel less formal, but don't be fooled. You are being evaluated on everything - including your table manners.

Case Study

In this interview type, you are given a case study to work on and then must present your answers to the interviewer(s). This is rarely done on a first interview; it is used more often in subsequent interviews. It is usually done to test your thinking process.

Demonstration

In this kind of interview, you are asked to demonstrate certain skills. For example, teachers and trainers are often asked to teach a group of people something. Others may be asked to demonstrate skills required for the specific job you applied for.

Interview Preparation

Even though you may not know exactly what an employer will ask you, you can still do some solid preparation for an interview. Because so few job seekers adequately prepare for interviews, those who do will gain a real edge over their competition. Research indicates that preparing and practicing interview responses in advance improves interview performance.

There are two course handouts that will help you prepare for interview questions. The “Sample Interview Questions” handout is an extensive listing of typical job interview questions. You'll learn more about these on the next section of this module. The “Personal Strengths” worksheet is for you to use in developing written responses to behavioral interview questions.

Writing responses to potential interview questions helps you to concentrate and decide what the most relevant answer is before you are in the high-pressure situation of an interview. It helps you provide a thorough response with enough detail to support your answer. When you know what you want to say, you can concentrate more on the delivery of the response, so you can get to point without rambling.

The intention of preparing and practicing interview responses is not for you to memorize your answers, which can make your responses sound canned, or even false. The purpose is to help you feel more relaxed and more confident when you walk through the interview door.

Types of Interview Questions

There is no limit to the questions you could be asked in an interview, but interview questions generally fall into two categories: traditional and behavioral. Traditional questions are general, tried-and-true questions that get to the heart of who you are: your skills, your personality, your qualities, your strengths and weaknesses, and how you get along with others. Examples include:

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why do you want to work for this company?
- What do you consider to be your strengths and/or weaknesses?
- Why should I hire you?
- Can you explain this gap in your employment history?

- What do you think you'll be doing five years from now?
- How well do you work with people?
- What do you know about our competitors?

Sometimes traditional interview questions are used to build a rapport with you and may not even be phrased as a question. Success or failure with these questions tends to hinge on how well you can communicate your answers, so a thorough and confident response will go a long way.

Behavioral, or situational, questions may also address each of those things, but they are framed in such a way that the job seeker is forced to provide a specific example from their past experience to answer the question. Examples include:

- Describe a situation in which you were able to persuade someone to do something.
- Tell me about a time you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.
- Give me a specific example of a time you had to conform to a policy you did not agree with.
- What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.
- Tell me about a difficult decision you have made in the past year.
- Give me an example of a time when you showed initiative and took the lead.
- Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.
- Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.

The idea behind behavioral interviewing is that the candidate's past performance is often the best predictor of future performance. In fact, behavioral interviewing is said to be 55 percent predictive of future on-the-job performance, compared with traditional interviewing techniques that are only 10 percent predictive (Refer to the article at http://www.quintcareers.com/behavioral_interviewing.html).

That is not to say that behavioral-based questions have replaced traditional ones. You will probably find that many employers use a combination of both. However, since an increasing number of employers use behavior-based methods to screen job candidates, understanding how to excel in this line of questioning is becoming a crucial job-hunting skill.

Common Interview Questions

Most interviews will include some common interview questions. When you have a specific interview lined up, you can customize your answers to the specific employer you will be speaking with. Here is a list of common questions along with guidance on possible responses.

Why should I hire you?

Give the interviewer a one- to two-sentence synopsis of who you are, your biggest strength, and the major benefit the company will get from this strength. Target your answer to the specific job and don't ramble. Focus on how your skills and experience meet and exceed the job requirements. Demonstrate what makes you an outstanding choice, without belittling any other candidates.

Tell me about yourself.

Give the interviewer a three- to five-sentence snapshot of your skills or professional experience.

What did you like least about your last job?

Avoid speaking negatively about your previous company, co-workers or supervisors. Instead, focus on what you want and how you believe your talents can be used in the position for which you are interviewing. Expressing a desire for growth, challenge and opportunities are good ways to turn this question from a negative into a positive statement.

Describe a difficult work situation or project and how you overcame it.

Use the STAR method (explained on page 10) to describe your story and give it a happy ending. Include the situation or task, what action(s) you took and the results. Listen carefully to the question and tailor your response to exactly what the interviewer is looking for. Keep your answer positive and specific. Use the course handout for guidance in crafting responses using the STAR method.

Tell me about a time when ...

Use the STAR method to describe the situation or task, what action(s) you took and the results. Listen carefully to the question and tailor your response to exactly what the interviewer is looking for. If you don't have a professional example, use one from your personal life, but keep it neutral (don't mention anything that could rule you out, like religion, politics, age, etc.) and focus on how your actions would apply in a work situation.

Links

If you would like to explore more sample questions and answers, try these sites:

- About.com <http://search.about.com/?q=interview+questions>
- Quintcareers.com <http://www.quintcareers.com/>
- Monster.com <http://www.monster.com>
- Military.com <http://www.military.com>
- Turbotap.org <http://www.turbotap.org/>

Answering Interview Questions: The STAR Method

How do you go about responding to interview questions? Where do you start, and when should you stop? How much information is enough? You will be able to respond successfully to many interview questions, traditional or behavioral, using the STAR method.

The method involves a four-step process that explains:

- The situation or context of the example you are going to give;
- The specific task that was before you;
- The action that you took; and
- The results of your behavior.

You will be far more successful if you use this method to provide the interviewer with specific situations that demonstrate your skills and abilities than by responding in vague or general terms.

Consider how we can use the STAR method to answer the following behavioral question:

“Give me an example of a time when you met a deadline.”

Situation

The first step in the four-part STAR method is to provide the interviewer with a little context to your story. Your job is to describe briefly the surrounding circumstances. What was the situation? Give the employer some background information about where your example took place, in what role were you functioning, and who else was involved. Consider this response:

Situation: During my last semester at business school ...

Remember that you can use any relevant example from any area of your life to answer a behavioral interview question unless specifically told otherwise. Here, the job seeker has chosen to take an example from an educational setting. He placed the situation in context without going into excessive detail.

Task

What was the problem or the challenge before you? What was the task you were assigned? In addition to knowing the situation, the main thing on which the employer will focus is the skill.

Situation: During my last semester at business school ...

Task: I was responsible for completing a business plan as part of a group project.

In this task statement, the job seeker has explained specifically what he was tasked with doing.

Action

The next step is telling the interviewer what specific action you took. While others may be involved in the situation, the key here is to keep the focus on your actions. The interviewer is looking to pull apart your response and look for a specific skill or ability, so it is important that you give them one.

Situation: During my last semester at business school ...

Task: I was responsible for completing a business plan as part of a group project.

Action: Based on the six weeks I had to complete my portion of the project, I established weekly goals to keep me on schedule.

In this action statement, the candidate was specific about what he did without shifting the spotlight to any of the other players involved. Had he ended his response right here, it probably would have met the minimum criteria of what the employer was seeking. But for a response to outshine the competition there is one last step.

Result

To really ensure that the interviewer knows the value of what you did, clearly describe what happened or the result. Give your story a happy ending. Explain to the listener how your action helped, what you learned, and how the situation was better as a result of whatever you did. Show the net result, and quantify the results when you can. If you increased or decreased something, specify by how much or by what percentage. When dealing with money, use a number to describe the amount. When dealing with people, specify how many. When dealing with things, specify how many or how often. Consider this completed example:

Situation: During my last semester at business school ...

Task: I was responsible for completing a business plan as part of a group project.

Action: Based on the six weeks I had to complete my portion of the project, I established weekly goals to keep me on schedule.

Result: By breaking the project into smaller parts, I was able to meet my weekly goals and keep the project running on schedule. I was able to complete my portion three days ahead of schedule, which allowed my teammates to have extra time for their portion.

By detailing the results of his actions, the candidate was able to show how his actions benefited not only himself but also the rest of his team. By quantifying his responses using phrases such as “weekly goals” and “three days ahead of schedule,” the candidate is putting his accomplishment in perspective for the employer.

Using the STAR Method

When asking questions about your past experiences, employers are not going to limit themselves only to things that went well for you. They are going to probe into negative experiences too, including problems, challenges, difficult colleagues and even personal

weaknesses. As part of your preparation, you need to construct responses that deal with positive and negative situations.

When dealing with negative experiences, end your response (or your story) on a positive note.

Your responses should consist not only of the problem, challenge or difficulty, but also what you did to overcome, defeat or cope with the difficulty that was faced.

The Personal Strengths, Achievements and Personality Traits worksheet will help you draft your interview “stories” using the STAR method. Be sure to spend some time completing the worksheet as part of this course.

Test Your Knowledge of the STAR Method

Three interview questions follow. For each question, determine the correct parts of the STAR method used.

1. For the following interview question, indicate which parts of the interviewee response are the “Situation” and “Task” portions of the STAR method:

Interview Question: Tell me about a time when you had to solve a problem.

Interviewee Response (there are four parts):

- a. At my last job I was responsible for patient appointments at a small branch clinic.
- b. I noticed that we were getting an increasing number of no-shows for appointments, and it was having a negative effect on our daily schedule.
- c. I made a suggestion to my supervisor that we put a better system in place to help patients remember their appointments. I developed a system in which patients received a reminder card when they made their next appointment and then received a follow-up call the day before their appointment.
- d. We cut our no-show rate by almost 30 percent, and we were able to get more patients in for same-day appointments.

Answer: Parts a. and b. are the “Situation” and “Task” parts of the STAR method.

2. For the following interview question, indicate which part of the interviewee response is the “Action” portion of the STAR method:

Interview Question: Tell me about how you set goals for a project.

Interviewee Response (there are three parts):

- a. While completing my last tour in the Army, I was responsible for completing a logistics reorganization plan for my command as part of a group project.
- b. Based on the six weeks I had to complete my portion of the project, I established weekly goals to keep me on schedule.
- c. By breaking the project up into smaller parts, I was able to meet my weekly goals and keep the project running on schedule. I was able to complete my portion three days ahead of schedule, which allowed my teammates to have extra time for their portion.

Answer: Part b is the “Action” part of the STAR method.

3. For the following interview question, indicate which part of the interviewee response are the “Result” portion of the STAR method:

Interview Question: Have you ever worked on a team before?

Interviewee Response (there are three parts):

- a. Yes. A good example would be at my last reserve unit, where I was working on a software training program with a team of six to develop a new technical training module for our unit members. The project was critical as launch dates had been set with a lot of attention from senior leadership, and training and travel schedules were riding on the product being ready. However the project was behind schedule, when our team leader unfortunately got a surprise transfer to another unit.
- b. I had been sports coach at a community college, where I loved the challenge and responsibility of leadership, so I volunteered to stand in. By using my technical analysis skills, I spotted a few small mistakes made in the initial software design that was slowing us down. I then negotiated with our project director a small incentive for the team so

we could pull a couple of late night shifts to correct the design and catch up with the critical project landmarks.

- c. Although this took us 1.5% over budget, the training was delivered on time with a better than target fault tolerance. The project was considered a great success as the additional project cost was minimal compared to the costs of delaying the launch, and the negative effect on expectations for future projects. The team were delighted with the incentive, and I was asked to be an official team leader as a result.

Answer: Part c is the “Result” part of the STAR method.

Answering Inappropriate Interview Questions

Not all questions are appropriate in an interview. In fact, some questions can be outright illegal. Some are just difficult for you to respond, but require an honest answer. If a potential employer asks some of these questions (sometimes because they are unaware they shouldn't ask it), you want to know how to answer so you don't eliminate yourself from consideration for the job. Take this quiz to learn how to best answer difficult, inappropriate or illegal interview questions. For each multiple choice question, choose the best interview response. Feedback for each possible response will follow the best answer.

1. What is your native language?
 - a. We always spoke Spanish in my house growing up.
 - b. I'd rather not answer that question
 - c. I can speak, read, and write English and Spanish fluently.
 - d. Why do you want to know?

The best answer: c.

Feedback:

- We always spoke Spanish in my house growing up: It is best not to give the interviewer any reason to rule you out as a candidate. Although it would be illegal to rule you out on the basis of your native language, it can happen. It is best to get to the bottom of what the interviewer wants to know: What languages can you speak/read/write?

- I'd rather not answer that question: While it is your right not to answer this question, because it is inappropriate/illegal, such an answer might rule you out as a candidate. It is best to get to the bottom of what the interviewer wants to know: What languages can you speak/read/write?
- I can speak, read, and write English and Spanish fluently: Excellent choice. It is not rude and still gets to the bottom of what the interviewer wants to know: What languages can you speak/read/write?
- Why do you want to know: This is not a bad choice, but it is not the best choice. If you have an idea why the interviewer might be asking the question, go ahead and answer it as if it had been asked appropriately. If you don't know why the interviewer asked the question, it is acceptable for you to ask why he or she wants to know, and then answer politely and succinctly.

2. What religious holidays do you observe?

- a. I am able to work the required schedule.
- b. I'd rather not answer that question.
- c. That's not really any of your business.
- d. I am a Muslim and do not work on Thursdays or Fridays, but can work Saturdays and Sundays instead.

The best answer: a.

Feedback:

- I am able to work the required schedule: Excellent choice. It isn't rude and still gets to the bottom of what the interviewer wants to know: Can you work their normally scheduled work hours?
- I'd rather not answer that question: While it is your right not to answer this question because it is inappropriate/illegal, an answer like this might rule you out as a candidate.

It is best to get to the bottom of what the interviewer wants to know: If you can work their required hours.

- That's not really any of your business: While you are correct, and it is your right not to answer this question because it is inappropriate/illegal, an answer like this might rule you out as a candidate. It is best to get to the bottom of what the interviewer wants to know: If you can work their required hours.
- I am a Muslim and do not work on Thursdays or Fridays, but can work Saturdays and Sundays instead: It is best not to give the interviewer any reason to rule you out as a candidate. Although it would be illegal to rule you out on the basis of your religion, it can happen. It is best to get to the bottom of what the interviewer wants to know: If you can work their required hours.

3. How much longer do you plan to work before you retire?

- a. I will be working until they haul me out of here in a box.
- b. I'm hoping to continue working here, in positions of greater challenge and authority, for many years to come.
- c. You are asking me an illegal question.
- d. I hope to be here until I qualify for Medicaid.

The best answer: b.

Feedback:

- I will be working until they haul me out of here in a box: While you basically answered the question the interviewer was trying to get at (how long will you be here?), this answer is probably not the best choice. It is flippant and may cause the interviewer to think you are old and/or desperate, neither of which is an ideal impression.
- I'm hoping to continue working here, in positions of greater challenge and authority, for many years to come: Excellent choice. It isn't rude, and still gets to the bottom of what

the interviewer wants to know: That you are committed to working at their company and won't be leaving any time soon.

- You are asking me an illegal question: While you are correct, and it is your right not to answer this question because it is inappropriate/illegal, an answer like this might rule you out as a candidate. It is best to get to the bottom of what the interviewer wants to know: How long will you be working here?
- I hope to be here until I qualify for Medicaid: This is a poor choice. An answer like this will leave the interviewer feeling like you are a short-timer and not worth the investment.

4. Do you have or plan to have children?

- a. No, I don't like children.
- b. I already have five, and they're quite a handful!
- c. Why do you ask?
- d. I have an established child care plan already in place.

The best answer: d.

Feedback:

- No, I don't like children: Probably not the best choice. What if the interviewer adores children? You may have just blown your chances at this job!
- I already have five, and they're quite a handful: This may or may not be a good choice. You do not need to tell a company if you have children. There is generally an ulterior motive for this question: They want to know if you will be flexible and able to work overtime or travel (particularly on short notice). It is best to answer the question they really want to know and leave your children (or lack thereof) out of the answer.
- Why do you ask: This is not a bad choice, but it is not the best choice. If you have an idea why the interviewer might be asking the question, go ahead and answer it as if it had been asked appropriately. If you don't know why the interviewer asked the question, it

is acceptable for you to ask why he or she wants to know, and then answer politely and succinctly.

- I have an established child care plan already in place: Excellent choice. It isn't rude and still gets to the bottom of what the interviewer wants to know: You won't be missing work every time your child has a day off from school or if your child is sick.
5. If you get pregnant, will you continue to work, and will you come back after maternity leave?
- a. I am a dedicated professional and hope to be working here for many years to come, in positions of greater challenge and authority.
 - b. I don't have to answer that question.
 - c. I don't know at this point what my future holds.
 - d. Do you have maternity leave?

The best answer: a.

Feedback:

- I am a dedicated professional, and hope to be working here for many years to come, in positions of greater challenge and authority: Excellent choice. It isn't rude, and still gets to the bottom of what the interviewer wants to know: If you are committed to working for the company over the long haul.
- I don't have to answer that question: While you are correct, and it is your right not to answer this question because inappropriate/illegal, an answer like this might rule you out as a candidate. It is best to get to the bottom of what the interviewer wants to know: If you are committed to working for the company over the long haul.
- I don't know at this point what my future holds: While you should always be honest in an interview, this kind of honesty is not required. Don't give them the impression you don't have solid five- and 10-year plans for your future. It is best to get to the bottom of

what the interviewer wants to know: if you are committed to working for the company over the long haul.

- Do you have maternity leave: This is not the best choice. You should avoid asking about benefits until after the first interview. In addition, this answer might lead the interviewer to assume you will quickly go on leave after getting hired. It's best to get to the bottom of what the interviewer wants to know: If you are committed to working for the company over the long haul.

6. Do you take drugs?

- a. Whenever I can!
- b. I do not take any illegal drugs.
- c. That's not really any of your business.
- d. I take Prevacid, Aricept, Prozac, Valium and Viagra.

The best answer: b.

Feedback:

- Whenever I can: This is not a good choice. Whether you assume the interviewer is asking about legal or illegal drugs, telling them you take drugs whenever you can is a huge red flag for employers and is almost guaranteed to earn you a rejection letter.
- I do not take any illegal drugs: Excellent choice. It isn't rude and still gets to the bottom of what the interviewer really wants to know.
- That's not really any of your business: While you are correct, and it is your right not to answer this question because it is inappropriate/illegal, an answer like this might rule you out as a candidate.
- I take Prevacid, Aricept, Prozac, Valium and Viagra: Whoa! Too much information! The interviewer most likely meant illegal drugs, because they have no right to ask you what prescription medications you are taking. It is best to answer the question the interviewer meant to ask: Do you take illegal drugs?

7. I see from your resume you were in the Iraq War. Do you have any disabilities?

- a. I suffer from PTSD and traumatic brain injury.

- b. Yes, would you like to see my prosthesis?
- c. None that were the result of my military service.
- d. I am able to perform all of the essential duties of this position with reasonable accommodations.

The best answer: d.

Feedback:

- I suffer from PTSD and traumatic brain injury: It is best not to give the interviewer any reason to rule you out as a candidate. Although it could be illegal to rule you out on the basis of your medical conditions (depending on the essential duties of the job and your physical abilities), it is best not to prejudice the interviewer. After an offer is made, you can request reasonable accommodations related to your medical condition(s), but generally not during a first interview. It is best to get to the bottom of what the interviewer wants to know: Can you do the job?
- Yes, would you like to see my prosthesis: While you should always be honest in an interview, this kind of candor is not required. It is best to get to the bottom of what the interviewer wants to know: Can you do the job?
- None that were the result of my military service: This is probably not the best choice. It is best to get to the bottom of what the interviewer wants to know: Can you do the job?
- I am able to perform all of the essential duties of this position with reasonable accommodations: Good choice. The interviewer really just needs to know if you can do the job. There is no need to say any more than this during the first interview.

8. Have you ever been convicted of a crime?
- a. Not recently.
 - b. I have never been convicted of any crimes.
 - c. Yes, but it wasn't my fault. I was set up.
 - d. Did you see my picture on the Post Office wall?

The best answer: b.

Feedback:

- Not recently: This is probably not the best choice. It's best to get to the bottom of what the interviewer wants to know: if you have ever been convicted of any crimes (in particular crimes that might be related to the position you are applying for).
- I have never been convicted of any crimes: Excellent choice, if true. This question will often appear in print, so there will be a written record of your response. You only have to report whether you have been convicted of a crime, not whether you have been accused or arrested for a crime. If convicted, you must disclose if asked. If you have never been convicted, simply state that.
- Yes, but it wasn't my fault. I was set up: This is not a good choice. The answer may prejudice the interviewer, and it looks like you are unable or unwilling to take personal responsibility for your actions. It is best to get to the bottom of what the interviewer wants to know: If you have ever been convicted of any crimes (in particular, crimes that might be related to the position you are applying for).
- Did you see my picture on the Post Office wall: This is probably not the best choice, unless you have established a very good rapport with your interviewer and the interviewer that you are joking. It is best to get to the bottom of what the interviewer wants to know: If you have ever been convicted of any crimes (in particular crimes that might be related to the position you are applying for).

9. Were you honorably discharged from the military?

- a. I had a wonderful experience in the military, and my experience as a [job] will be a tremendous benefit to this company.
- b. Yes, I was honorably discharged.
- c. I could have, but my last commander took an immediate dislike to me and ruined my chances for an honorable discharge.
- d. I don't have to answer that question.

The best answer: b.

Feedback:

- I had a wonderful experience in the military, and my experience as a [job] will be a tremendous benefit to this company: This does not answer what the interviewer has asked. You must answer the question honestly.

- Yes, I was honorably discharged: If you were honorably discharged, simply state so. However, this question is a lot like the question about crime convictions. If you were not honorably discharged, you must state so. Honorable is anything but dishonorable.
- I could have, but my last commander took an immediate dislike to me and ruined my chances for an honorable discharge: This is not a good choice. You must answer the question honestly. Also, never talk negatively about a previous employer, supervisor or co-worker.
- I don't have to answer that question: You do have to answer this question if asked, so answer it honestly.

10. Are you a member of the National Guard or Reserves?

- a. Yes, and I could be called up at any time.
- b. I don't understand how that applies to this position.
- c. I am, but I don't have any upcoming events that will require me to be away from work for any extended period of time.
- d. Why do you ask?

The best answer: c.

Feedback:

- Yes, and I could be called up at any time: This is not the best choice. Employers are concerned about the disruption caused by losing an employee to military service, but they cannot discriminate based on this. Reassure the interviewer you have no upcoming events that will require extensive time away from work.
- I don't understand how that applies to this position: This response can be interpreted as disrespectful or insensitive to the needs of the company. The interviewer wants to be reassured that you will be around to perform the job.
- I am, but I don't have any upcoming events that will require me to be away from work for any extended period of time: Nice choice. This answers the interviewer's real reason for asking the question: To be reassured you will be around to perform the job.
- Why do you ask: This is not a bad choice, but it is not the best choice. If you have an idea why the interviewer might be asking the question, go ahead and answer it as if it had

been asked appropriately. If you don't know why the interviewer asked the question, it is acceptable for you to ask why he or she wants to know, and then answer politely and succinctly, without giving any additional information that might prejudice the interviewer.

Interviewing Tips for the Wounded, Ill or Injured Warriors

If you are a wounded, ill or injured warrior, you have some unique issues that should be addressed during an interview. You also have certain rights, and you need to know what those rights are and what the limitations of those rights are.

It is the candidates' responsibility to let the interviewer know if you need accommodations during the interview. These accommodations include:

- If you are in a wheelchair.
- If you have hearing or vision loss that requires any accommodations such as needing a sign language interpreter or large-print documentation.
- If you are bringing a service animal.
- If you need extra time during assessments.

Be prepared to educate the interviewer on what you need. It is safest to assume they want to help, but don't know how. Therefore, it's your responsibility to let the interviewer know if you will need reasonable accommodations to do the job if hired.

There are important rules to follow for both an interviewer and an interviewee when dealing with disabilities. By law some questions cannot be asked in a pre-offer interview, and others can and should be answered.

For example, an interviewer can ask, "Can you perform the essential functions (or duties) of this job with or without reasonable accommodations?" Your answer at the pre-offer stage can be "yes," and doesn't need to include the details of the accommodations.

However, you need to know how "essential duties and functions" and "reasonable accommodations" are defined. We'll discuss these next. Also, to help with this we have included several handouts for you to download and read. The "Interviewing with a Disability" and "Facts about the Americans with Disabilities Act" handouts can be downloaded from the main access page. Also, be sure to read the information included in the Glossary at the end of the course on issues of importance to wounded, ill and injured personnel.

Essential Duties and Functions and Reasonable Accommodations

So what are "essential duties and functions" and "reasonable accommodations" for individuals with disabilities in the work force?

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or EEOC, defines “essential duties” or “essential functions” as the fundamental duties of a position. These are functions that must be done as a part of the job.

“Reasonable accommodation” is defined as any change in the work environment or in the way things are customarily done that enables an individual with a disability to enjoy equal employment opportunities. “Reasonable accommodations do not cause undue hardship on an employer. This means they cannot cause significant difficulty, disruption, or expense to create the accommodations, or something that would fundamentally alter the nature of the business

There are three kinds of reasonable accommodations:

1. Modifications or adjustments to a job application process. These enable a qualified applicant with a disability to be considered for the position.
2. Modifications or adjustments to the work environment, or to the manner or circumstances under which the position held or desired is customarily performed. These enable a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of that position.
3. Modifications or adjustments that enable a covered entity's employee with a disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment as are enjoyed by its other similarly situated employees without disabilities.

Examples of reasonable accommodations include making facilities accessible (e.g. providing wheelchair ramps to all areas of the building); acquiring or modifying equipment (e.g., left-handed keyboard for those without a right hand); changing tests, training materials or policies (e.g. providing large print, reading the test to the candidate); providing qualified readers or interpreters (e.g. providing a screen reading software for someone who is visually impaired); and part-time or modified work schedules (e.g. allowing individuals to work part-time while undergoing physical therapy).

Your knowing about interview issues for the disabled, essential duties and functions, and reasonable accommodations will help you through both the interview process and adjusting to the new job. Be sure to read more in the course handouts, and visit the recommended websites to learn as much as you can.

Wild Card Questions

Every so often, an interviewer will throw you a curve ball and ask a completely unexpected question. Often these are asked so the potential employer can determine how you do under pressure, and how you think on your feet. For these types of “wild card” questions, there really is no right answer. The employer is interested in how you try to answer the questions. Examples of wild card questions include:

- How many quarters would you need to stack them as high as the Eiffel Tower?

- What's the last book you read, and why?
- If you could be one animal, what would it be and why?
- What would you do if you won the lottery?

When the wild card question pops up in an interview, stay calm, smile, and keep breathing! Give an honest answer, and if possible make it job-related. You can also ask the interviewer to return to the question later in the interview if you need a little time to think about it. Take a few moments now to try to formulate an answer to the sample wild card questions above.

What to Do When It Is Your Turn to Talk

Did you know that you get to ask questions in an interview, too? Make your interview a two-way conversation by having questions ready for the people who are interviewing you. The course handouts include a listing of great questions to consider asking. But before you do, consider these tips:

- Make sure your questions focus on the job, the duties, and the company – this is your chance to find out what they are looking for and how you fit their requirements.
- Ask questions to help you decide if you would enjoy working at this company – questions like “Can you tell me about the company culture here?” or, “What do you like about working for this company?”
- Some questions are inappropriate at this level of the job hunt, so stay away from questions about salary and benefits during a first interview.
- You'll also want to make sure you don't ask questions that could have been answered if you had researched their company first (things like their mission statement, number of employees and company history are often found online, so make sure and do your company research before the interview!) If anything, you want to highlight your company knowledge by looking for opportunities to show the interviewer that you have done your homework.

Translating from Military to Civilian

You've got a lot going for you as a military member transitioning to the civilian world. You bring a vast amount of experience and skills to the interviewing table. Just remember, you may be interviewing with someone who is not familiar with the military, and doesn't understand some of the language you use. The following activity will lead you to a great tool to help you make the translation from military to civilian for people you interview with. Answer these next two questions to determine how well you can avoid getting “lost in translation.”

1. Multiple choice: The interviewer asks about your military experience. How should you answer?
 - a. Refer him to your resume.

- b. Tell the interviewer about your experience, impressing him with your use of as many acronyms as possible.
- c. Answer by putting your military experience into civilian terms and job functions he will understand.

Answer: c

Feedback: Make sure you can put your military experience into civilian terms and job functions that your interviewer will understand. Although they should have your resume, take the opportunity to put your experience into context for them during your conversation. Even if your interviewer is prior military, shy away from using acronyms. Instead, spend some time before the interview finding equivalent civilian terms for your experience.

- 2. Multiple choice: The interviewer asks why you think the company should hire a former military person. How will you respond?
 - a. Respond by reminding the interviewer it is the company's patriotic duty to hire a veteran.
 - b. Respond by talking to the interviewer about the non-technical advantages of hiring a veteran, such as leadership and communication skills.
 - c. Reiterate your technical expertise to make sure they understand your skills.

Answer: b

Feedback: Telling the interviewer it is their patriotic duty may offend him or her. Take the time to highlight the value of military experience, focusing on discipline, trust, initiative, health and well-being, and leadership and communication skills. Although you could focus on specific technical expertise you bring to the table, with a question like this the interviewer is most likely looking for a broader, more general answer.

Read more about this at the military to civilian skills converter (<http://www.military.com/skills-translator/mos-translator>)

Dress for Success

When interviewing for a job, it is important to look the part. The last thing you want is for someone to look at you and say, "you're wearing that?!"

You might not like to think that appearances matter, but when it comes to interview dress, they do. If you've been wearing uniforms for the last five, 10 or 20 years, you might benefit from some tips on how to dress for interview success. You are more likely to command respect and get what you want if you're dressed appropriately for your interviews.

- You can call the company you will be interviewing with and ask them what their dress code is ... and then dress at or above that level.
- In general, dress in a conservative suit, whether you are a man or a woman. Slacks and a sport coat may be appropriate, and women can wear a conservative skirt and blouse.
- Be clean and well-groomed, and wear minimal jewelry and cologne. Men, you may want to remove your earrings.
- Think about toning down your style if you are dynamic in your dress. Interview time isn't the time to express your wild side or your crazy personality. Your interviewer may decide you just aren't a serious candidate.
- Both men and women may want to cover up tattoos.
- Closed-toe shoes are always appropriate, and make sure your clothing is clean and pressed. And once you're dressed, pressed and ready, make sure your breath is minty fresh.

This concludes Module 1. Module 2 will begin on the next page.

Module 2: Interview Performance

The goal of this module is to help you learn and practice the skills you need to conduct an interview and sell yourself as the ideal candidate. You will learn about standard interview formats, good interview body language, mistakes to avoid and how to sell yourself so you can ensure interview success.

Standard Interview Format

Most interviews follow a typical format from arrival of the applicant to the closing.

Arrival

Arrive at the interview location about 10 minutes early. Being too early or too late sends negative messages to interviewers.

At Reception

Never treat anyone you meet at the interview location rudely. You don't know who has the formal or informal power in the organization yet; treat everyone as though they had the power to hire you on-the-spot.

Small Talk

Be prepared to participate in short, polite conversation at the beginning of the interview. This is usually done to put you at ease and to help the interviewer learn more about you. Look around the interviewer's office to get clues about what to talk about (e.g., awards, pictures of family, artwork, books, etc.) Avoid anything controversial, such as politics or religion. However, if the interviewer is "all business," reflect that attitude and don't attempt to engage in small talk. Take your cues from the interviewer.

About the Job

Often, the interviewer will begin with a brief description of the position. Listen carefully; they will often highlight the things they think are most important. Ask questions if you are unclear on anything, but don't interrupt the interviewer.

Interviewer Questions

This is the part of the interview people are most familiar with - when the interviewer asks questions of the candidate. Be prepared by reviewing the job description, company research, listening to the interviewer and being intimately familiar with your accomplishments and skills.

Candidate Questions

Toward the end of the interview, most interviewers will give you an opportunity to ask questions. You should always have some intelligent questions prepared, ones that demonstrate

your understanding of the company and the position. However, be respectful of time restrictions; if the interview is only scheduled for one hour and you are given five minutes for questions, do not go over your time limit.

Closing

Take this opportunity to sell yourself one more time; identify how your qualifications match those required for the job, and explicitly state how you can help the company. Then follow up by finding out what the next steps are. Offer to contact the company if they don't give you a specific date when they will get back with you. Be gracious, thank the interviewer for his or her time, and enthusiastically state (or re-state) your interest in the position.

First Impressions

You only get one chance to make a first impression, so make it a good one! Interviewers can take about 30 seconds to decide if they don't want to hire you; it may take much longer to decide if they do. Don't give them a reason to rule you out immediately by leaving a bad impression with weak, irritating or distracting body language. Keep these tips in mind:

- Be mindful of your facial expressions ... smile and look enthusiastic. But don't fake it, just be natural.
- Make sure your handshake is firm, one-handed, and consists of two or three pumps. Practice if you need to, and make sure it is neither bone-crushing nor limp as a dead fish. If you have sweaty palms, subtly wipe them before shaking,
- When you sit down, maintain good posture in the chair. Sit up straight and slightly forward on the edge of your chair. This shows interest in the person you are talking with.
- Eye contact should be appropriate, and this is something you may need to practice as well. You need just enough eye contact, but not too much or too intense. Look at the person you are talking with for a few moments, and then look away. If you are interviewing with multiple people, take the time to look at everyone while talking. Also, keep your hand gestures to a minimum, keeping them small and contained. If you think your hands might shake, hold a pen.
- When you're practicing good body language for your interview, be on the lookout for these things to avoid: Finger tapping or drumming, fidgeting in your seat or swiveling in your chair, fiddling with your hand, hair or anything else you touch. Keep leg shaking and foot tapping down, and if you are a profuse sweater, come prepared with a dark overcoat and a handkerchief.

- Beware of verbal tics, those little words we use as fillers, like “umm”, “uh,” “like” and “you know.” You’ll conquer these when you practice your interview questions.
- If you think you’ll be nervous in an interview situation, practicing good body language will help ease your mind. A little bit of nerves can actually be a good thing, but practicing will give you the confident edge you need.

Selling Yourself in an Interview

Many military members find it difficult to toot their own horn in an interview; it just isn't something they're used to doing. If this is you, now's the time to prepare to sell yourself in an interview. If you don't tell them how great you are, who will? Follow these tips to prepare for and execute the sale of the century.

Pre-Interview Preparation

Research the company and the position. Use that information, along with your accomplishments, to illustrate your potential contribution and value to the employer. Tell them exactly what you can do for them; quantify previous accomplishments, describe how you solved problems, saved money or increased revenue.

Finding and Using the Interviewer's Hot Buttons

- Listen to how interviewers describe the position, its duties, the work environment, etc., to pick up on cues about what they think are important.
- Two questions to help uncover what the interviewer thinks are important:
 - What do you think is the greatest challenge for this position?
 - What qualities do you consider to be most important for this position?
- Use the answers to frame your responses to future questions. Show how you can solve the greatest challenges and how you possess the qualities they seek.

Closing

Convey the following in the descriptions of your character and ability:

- Motivation
- Energy and drive (especially important for older candidates)
- Confidence
- Determination
- Attitude
- Reliability
- Honesty and integrity
- Listening skills
- Analytical skills/critical-thinking skills
- Dedication

This concludes Module 2. Module 3 begins on the next page.

Module 3: Interview Closing and Follow-up

In this module, you will learn what to do to close and follow-up on your interview, including what to say as you leave, writing thank you letters and making suggestions for subsequent interviews with the potential employer.

Closing the Interview

Just as there is an art to preparing and conducting your interview, there is a method for closing it out in good form.

Start by discussing any of your relevant skills or experience that did not come up in the interview process.

Once you've covered everything, take some time to ask the interviewer any final questions you may have. These would include, "What do you like best about your job?" or "Can you describe what a typical day is like?"

Ask the potential employer about the next steps in the process, if you may follow up with them, and when. This should give you some insight into where they are in their decision-making process, and when they think they'll have a final decision.

Finally, summarize why you believe you are the best candidate for the job and how your skills and experience can add value to the company. Be respectful of the interviewer's time, because there may be another interview or meeting scheduled immediately after yours, but try to fit in that one final plug for yourself, if at all possible.

Thank-you Letters

Be sure to follow up on your interview with a proper thank you letter or e-mail. This will distinguish you from the competition and remind the interviewer of your skills and abilities. A well-written thank you note also demonstrates good manners, dedication and enthusiasm.

Although it is easy and efficient to send a thank you via e-mail, a handwritten note can help your candidacy. You can write the letter on a computer, print it and mail it or hand-write it and mail it. Either way, avoid e-mail unless time is of the essence. Use high-quality paper with a neutral pattern or design.

The format of your letter is simple: Thank the interviewer for their time, remind them about what you interviewed for and when, write about what you enjoyed and how you can help, and restate what the next steps will be. Sign your letter, and include contact information. Refer to the course attachment on "Writing the Perfect Thank You Letter" for additional guidance.

Second Interviews

If you're asked back for a second or subsequent interview, you can expect it to be different from the first, and so you'll want to prepare differently. Start by patting yourself on the back for landing a second interview, that's a great sign that you're a top candidate.

First, expect that you will meet more people, perhaps in a panel interview format, or perhaps as you're brought around the company to meet folks. Work to remember names, and ask them about what work they do.

You may be given a tour of the workplace and invited for a meal. Once again, you'll want to wear appropriate clothing, and be ready to make small and large talk with the people you are spending time with. Get to know them, and help them get to know you with relevant, interesting information.

If you have been requested to demonstrate a skill or do some hands-on work, be prepared. Dress appropriately and have everything that you need with you. Once again, you have a chance to shine here, so practice before the interview.

Finally, this is the time and place to be discussing salary and benefits, so go in prepared. Make sure to work through the "Financial Planning for Transition" course of this Toolkit so you will know what you can reasonably expect for both salary and benefits, given the location of the job, the state of the industry, and the skills and experience that you bring to the table.

Remember, take these follow-on interviews as seriously as you took the initial one: prepare, and follow up with appropriate thank-you notes to all involved.

You have now completed Module 3.

Course Conclusion

Congratulations and thank you for taking the time to learn about interviewing excellence. We hope you have found this information helpful. The course checklist for success can be found on the main toolkit accessibility page, along with the other course handouts. Check out the resource section of TurboTAP.org (<http://www.turbotap.org>) for additional important resources that help you ensure a successful transition.

The course glossary begins on the following page.

Glossary

Americans with Disabilities Act

Prohibits employers from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities in job-application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, job training and more.

http://www.ada.gov/servicemembers_adainfo.html

Behavioral (Situational) Interview Questions

In a behavioral interview, applicants are asked to respond to a situation they may experience while on the job. These questions gauge how you handle short-term and long-term problems, and they are intended to show your analytical and problem-solving skills. They focus on seeking examples of how you have handled specific situations in the past. These types of questions are based on the belief that past performance is the best indicator of future performance.

Employment Protection Regulations

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

A law that prohibits employers from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities in job-application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, job training, and more. http://www.ada.gov/servicemembers_adainfo.html

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

The agency in charge of preventing and enforcing anti-discrimination policies related to employment. Covers race, color, sex, religion, national origin, birthplace, age, disability, and marital/family status. <http://www.eeoc.gov/>

Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994

Protects persons who serve or have served in the armed forces, Reserves, National Guard or other uniformed services by ensuring they:

- Are not disadvantaged in their civilian careers because of their service.
- Are promptly re-employed in their civilian jobs upon their return from duty.
- Are not discriminated against in employment based on past, present or future military service.

<http://www.dol.gov/compliance/laws/comp-userra.htm>

Essential Duties and Functions

“Essential duties” or “essential functions” are fundamental duties of the position; they must be done as a part of the job, either with or without reasonable accommodations. The Americans with Disabilities Act defines a reasonable accommodation as any change in the work environment or in the way things are customarily done that enables an individual with a disability to enjoy equal employment opportunities.

Illegal and Inappropriate Interview Question Topics

According to U.S. laws and regulations, it is illegal to ask about any of the following in an interview:

- Race
- Color
- Sex
- Religion
- National origin
- Birthplace
- Age
- Disability
- Marital/family status

It is even considered unethical and possibly illegal to ask questions that will lead to answers that could be grounds for discrimination. For example, asking if someone has child care arrangements to find out if a candidate has children. Read this excellent article on illegal and inappropriate interview questions: <http://www.hrworld.com/features/30-interview-questions-111507/>

If you think you may be a victim of discrimination based on one of the above areas, go to the "Employment Protection Regulations" entry in this glossary for resources.

Interview

A formal, face-to-face meeting between a job applicant and a representative of the prospective employer. The prospective employer asks questions of the job candidate to determine whether they qualify for the job and whether they would fit in at the workplace.

Military to Civilian Skills Translators

Websites that will help you put your military experience into terms that a potential civilian employer will understand.

Resources:

- Translate Military Experience into Civilian Terms: <http://www.gijobs.com/military-experience-to-civilian-terms.aspx>

- O*Net Online, "Military Crosswalk Search": <http://www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/MOC>
- Job-hunt.org: <http://www.job-hunt.org/veterans-job-search/translating-military-experience.shtml>

Reasonable Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations do not cause undue hardship on the employer. This means they cannot cause significant difficulty, disruption, or expense to create the accommodations, or something that would fundamentally alter the nature of the business

There are three kinds of reasonable accommodations:

1. Modifications or adjustments to a job application process that enable a qualified applicant with a disability to be considered for the position.
2. Modifications or adjustments to the work environment, or to the manner or circumstances under which the position held or desired is customarily performed, that enable a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of that position.
3. Modifications or adjustments that enable a covered entity's employee with a disability to enjoy the same benefits and privileges of employment as employees without disabilities.

Refer to the following resources for more information and regulations:

- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: Reasonable Accommodation and Job Applicants: <http://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/accommodation.html#reasonable>
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: General Principles of Reasonable Accommodation: <http://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/accommodation.html#general>

STAR Method

A four-step process that explains a Situation and Task, the Action you took and the Results of your action. In interviews, it provides prospective employers with concrete examples of your skills and abilities as an employee.

Traditional Interview Questions

Questions asked about you, your qualities, and your strengths and weaknesses.

Types of Interviews

Phone

Many initial interviews are conducted by phone, especially if the job is in another location. These interviews may range in length from 10 minutes to two hours; it is perfectly acceptable to ask the person scheduling the interview how long it is expected to last.

Breakfast/lunch/dinner

Often interviews are conducted over a meal. These interviews tend to feel less formal, but don't be fooled. You are being evaluated on everything - including your table manners.

Group

Occasionally, a group of candidates are interviewed together. In this case, you may be competing with some of the people you interview with, and you may also be interviewing with future co-workers. Teamwork is more important than competition in these kinds of interviews, although you should do what you can to stand out from other candidates.

Case study

In this interview type, you are given a case study to work on, and you will present your answers to the interviewer(s). This is rarely done on a first interview; it is used more often in subsequent interviews. It is usually done to test your thinking process.

Demonstration

In this kind of interview, you are asked to demonstrate certain skills. For example, teachers and trainers are often asked to teach a group of people something. Others may be asked to demonstrate job skills required for the specific job you applied for.

Traditional

One-on-one: This is the most traditional interview, a meeting between the interviewer and interviewee only.

Panel

Panel interviews are more common in certain industries, but can be used anywhere. In this interview type, one interviewee meets with several interviewers at the same time. This kind of interview is often combined with the meal, case study and demonstration interview.

Wild Card Questions

In these unexpected interview questions for which there is no right or wrong answer, the interviewer is trying to determine how you think on your feet. Examples of these types of questions include: What is the last book you read? What would you do if you won the lottery? If you could be one animal, what would it be, and why?