

THE SECOND INTERVIEW

After a successful on-campus interview, you may be invited for a second interview at an organization. This onsite interview is typically the final step in the interview process before a job offer is made. At this time, you may be interviewing with three or more people at different levels in the organization. You may participate in a half-day or full day of interviews and your visit may include a meal and/or a site tour. You also may be required to complete one or more tests.

The onsite interview provides an additional opportunity for you to evaluate the organization and gain a better understanding of the work environment. You will see the inside of the organization and meet with key people – possibly some of the people with whom you will be working.

Your Sponsor

The recruiter who initially interviewed you has a vested interest in your success at the onsite interview. This person, who may have been a screener, is now your “sponsor.” Because she/he recommended you, your sponsor’s professional reputation is on the line when you are invited to the company site. Prepare for your onsite interview by asking your sponsor questions prior to the interview. Examples:

- With whom will I be meeting?
- What will they be looking for?
- Can you provide additional information about your company?
- What types of activities will be scheduled during the day?
- What are their job titles and descriptions?
- How can I best prepare myself?

What to Expect and What to Do

The content of the interview and the day’s activities will depend on the type of position for which you are interviewing. For technical positions, interviewers will assess your technical expertise. Positions that require supervisory activities will include questions about your supervisory experience and style. A second interview, therefore, is an opportunity for you to exchange specific information about the job and your ability to fulfill that role.

- Preparation should include in-depth research on the organization, beyond their website. Check the Internet to learn what has been written recently about the company.
- Prepare questions for the supervisor and your prospective co-workers.
- Several people may ask you the same questions as the day proceeds. Be consistent with your answers so that when the interviewers convene to discuss your qualifications, they have the same information about your strengths and qualifications.
- Be as enthusiastic in the late afternoon as you were when the interview began.
- Be observant and assess what the physical and social environment is like. Do people seem to enjoy their work and can you envision yourself being happy there?
- Be nice to everyone – many people may influence the hiring decision.
- Collect business cards from all interviewers and send individual thank you notes immediately after the interview.
- A meal may be included in the day’s activities. Demonstrate excellent dining etiquette. Follow your host’s lead when ordering food and selecting conversation topics.
- Salary discussions or negotiations may occur – generally at the end of the day. Do not be surprised if salary and benefit information isn’t broached until an offer is made, often several days later. Know the salary range for comparable positions.

Over →

Travel Expenses

Employers typically reimburse candidates for normal travel and lodging expenses. Some will make all the travel arrangements for you. Know an employer's travel policies and their reimbursement procedures before you agree to a second interview out of town. Demonstrate your good business sense by keeping careful records, documented with receipts, of all reasonable expenses.

Unreasonable expenses include flying first class, expensive restaurants, and entertainment not arranged by the employer. Use the hotel restaurant whenever it is the most reasonable choice; charge the meal to your room to simplify reporting your expenses.

Company Site Exams and Testing

Be prepared for the possibility of taking one or more tests. Following are the five basic types of tests you may encounter:

Intelligence/Mental Ability Tests: These tests are designed to assess your critical thinking skills, including problem solving, mathematical aptitude, and memory. They are typically structured in a format similar to the SAT and ACT.

Work Simulation Tests: These tests provide you with sample work scenarios or problems which you must work through to a satisfactory result.

Specific Skills Tests: For many highly specialized professions, employers will test your skills in specific areas. These tests are often tied into certification. A subset of these certification tests is the specific skills test. These tests are designed to ask questions at a detail level. They are very specific and you are more likely to encounter these tests in technical professions, such as engineering or computer science.

Personality Tests: These tests are sometimes used to try to predict employee success.

Honesty Tests: These tests are usually reserved for jobs in high security areas or where there will be access to trade secrets, merchandise, or cash.

While these tests are an attempt at standardization and greater objectivity, they are not foolproof. They still have a subjective element. Keep in mind that the purpose of such tests is to further qualify you for the position. Do your best and do not show discouragement during or after a test.