



**HUMBER**

School of Applied Technology

Hello Students in WORK 120

**RE: The Employment Interview**

As part of our commitment to your job search success, we want to ensure you are prepared for the “employment interview”. As you know from the Amended Workshop Schedule for WORK 120, Fall 2017, in lieu of the Interview Skills workshop, we are providing you with individual mock interviews.

The **Mock Interview service is available to students who have completed the WORK 120 Workshop**. Here’s the process:

1. You must have attended the Workshop first.
2. Read through this entire document especially the sections on preparing for typical interview questions (behavioural questions, awkward or difficult questions, and the “tell me about yourself”).
3. Take the time to prepare some responses to the common interview questions. The more prepared you are, the more you will get out of the mock interview.
4. Contact us to set up an appointment for your mock interview (see below). Allow for 30 minutes.
5. Bring your resume. It would be helpful if you also bring an ad or posting of a typical job you are interested in.

Contact Us:

The Work Placement Services Team

School of Applied Technology

**Drop by: Room NX-302**

**Tel: 416-675-6622 x 5517**

**Email: [WorkAppliedTechnology@humber.ca](mailto:WorkAppliedTechnology@humber.ca)**

[appliedtechnology.humber.ca/work-placement](http://appliedtechnology.humber.ca/work-placement)



# The Employment Interview

The purpose of the job interview is two-fold:

1. For the employer to determine if you have the skills, knowledge and experience required for a job, as well as the attitude and interpersonal skills that will “fit” their organization, and,
2. To allow you to determine if the position is right for you.

## Preparing for the Interview

Prepare in advance to help you feel more relaxed and confident the day of the actual interview:

- ✓ Review your **resume**. Ensure you are familiar with its contents.
- ✓ Anticipate and prepare for **commonly asked interview questions**.
- ✓ **Research** the company and look over the job description. Think of your skills, knowledge and experience, and make a list of your qualifications that best match what the employer is looking for. Prepare some questions you would like to ask.
- ✓ **Organize yourself** the night before the interview, so you are not rushed the day of the interview. Organize your clothes, shoes, items to bring (see list below). As a general rule, dress business-casual and as best as you can. Make sure your clothes are neat and that you are well-groomed.
- ✓ Plan your route so you can arrive at the interview location ahead of time. Download **directions or a map** to where you are going. Check the public transit guides.

## What to Bring to a Job Interview:

1. A pen and note pad
2. Two copies of your resume
3. A portfolio of your work – a design portfolio, or samples of your technical skills such as a technical project or lab report. Consider placing these on a laptop or tablet.
4. List of your references (bring a copy you can leave with the employer)
5. Your business card
6. A copy of the job posting or ad
7. A copy of your transcript and curriculum
8. A list of questions that you would like to ask.

### Don't be a No-Show!!

If for any reason you cannot attend a scheduled interview, or if you are running late, please contact the employer, or contact the Work Placement Services Office, so that we can contact the employer on your behalf. The worst thing you can do is not show up and not tell anyone!

Being a no-show makes you appear unprofessional, and may result in loss of access to the Student Job Portal and other work placement services. It is also disrespectful of the employer's time, and may impact the employer's interest in other Humber students. No matter what the situation, make sure you let someone know.

# Job Interview Types and Structure

## Telephone Interview

Sometimes employers will call you and ask some questions, before arranging an in-person interview. This technique is used by recruiters to check you out, and to determine if you meet the basic job requirements.

The better you do in the phone interview, the better your chances of getting to the next step – the in-person interview. Therefore, treat the telephone interview as if it were a face-to-face meeting. Ideally, arrange to speak to the company representative from a quiet place where you can concentrate. It's best to have a copy of the job posting and your resume in front of you, along with a pen and paper for notes.

Sometimes students are in class, in a noisy area, on a bus or driving when an employer calls. Often students feel it will hurt their chances if they do not speak to the employer immediately. It is acceptable to ask the employer to call you back at a later time, or offer to call them back.

When the employer calls you, turn down the tv or radio, or take the phone into another room, so the employer can focus on you, and not the distracting background noise. If you are in class, driving, or in any place where you cannot take notes or speak freely, politely explain this to the employer and arrange to be called back at another time.

## In-Person Interview

Most in-person interviews are with 1 or 2 company representatives. Panel interviews, involving typically 3 or more individuals from the company are less common. In all scenarios, being prepared ahead of time will help reduce anxiety and help you feel more confident and relaxed.

Maintain eye contact with the person who is asking you a question. When more than one person is present in the interview, look at all participants when responding. In-person interviews usually follow the following structure:

1. Introduction – employer will try to create a comfortable atmosphere
2. Your resume – you may be asked to clarify information
3. Evaluation of your technical skills and personal suitability
4. Your questions
5. Follow-up – the next step(s), when a decision will be made, etc.

## Sample Questions to Ask the Employer at the End of an Interview

When students ask questions, it shows interest and enthusiasm. Remember, the interview is also a time for you to gather information to ensure the job is right for you. Some sample questions are:

- How many people would I be working with? What are they like?
- What do you think are the most important qualities for someone to excel in this role?
- If I were hired, what would be a typical day?
- Would you please clarify the job duties?

## Day of Interview

Here are some additional tips to help you on the day of your interview.

### What to Wear

#### Business-Casual

Dress as best as you can, to look neat, clean and presentable:

- Dress pants for males/females; Skirts for females
- Cotton pants, golf shirts (no logos) for males
- Dress shirt, jacket, cardigan/sweater
- Closed Shoes

#### What NOT to Wear

- T-Shirts, hoodies
- Golf shirts with (other) company logos
- Low cut/revealing tops
- Jogging pants, jeans
- Running shoes, sandals
- Wildly distracting colours/patterns
- Excessive jewellery
- Heavy fragrances



### First Impressions Count!



- Smile!
- Introduce yourself clearly
- Offer a firm handshake
- Stay calm. Don't fidget
- Use eye contact
- Don't ask about \$, or negotiate rate
- Thank Interviewer(s) for their time

**Please read this note about....**

#### **Bringing Other People to an Interview**

Please do not bring a parent or friend to an interview. It's ok to get a ride from another person to the interview location, but employers are uncomfortable with parents or friends waiting in their waiting room!

## Common Interview Questions

Many questions that will be asked in an interview can be anticipated. Often recruiters use standard questions or variations of these. You want to be prepared, but you do not want your responses to sound overly “rehearsed” or “memorized”. Your goal is to answer the questions in a thoughtful and confident manner.

From the list of commonly asked interview questions (see the following page):

- ✓ Review the list and familiarize yourself with questions you could be asked.
- ✓ Think about how you would respond to the questions you can answer relatively easily.
- ✓ Focus on the questions you would have difficulty answering, and prepare a response.
- ✓ Practice your responses out loud, either to yourself or a friend.

### Yes or No Answer Questions

Employers may ask questions that illicit a **yes or no response** from you.

For example, *“Do you like school?”* When this occurs, don’t just answer “yes” or “no”. It is better to expand on your answer. Help the employer see something about you that will stand out.

For example, a better response would be, *“Yes, I really enjoy school because I learn something every day, and I’m really looking forward to applying what I have learned in the workplace, and see what I can do for an employer”.*

## Behavioural Interview Questions – Tell Your Story

Behavioural interviewing refers to an interview technique where the employer probes into how you handled a situation in the past. The premise is that your past behaviour is a good predictor of how you might behave in their workplace, in a similar situation.

To answer behavioral interview questions clearly and confidently, be prepared to tell a short story. Consider stories you could provide for the behavioural questions below.

1. The issue: Explain the problem or situation.
2. What did you do: Describe the actions you took to resolve the problem? What was your role?
3. What was the outcome: What happened? What were the results?

**Time Management/Deadlines:** Tell me about a time when you faced an impossible deadline.

**Problem Solving:** Describe a difficult problem you encountered <in a previous job or at school>. What was the problem? What did you do? What were the results?

**Leadership:** Describe a time when you had to assume a leadership role.

**Resolving Conflict:** Describe a situation when you had a disagreement with a fellow student or co-worker. Describe the situation. What did you do? What was the result?

**Customer Service:** Describe a technical or customer service problem you had to deal with. Describe the situation. What did you do? What was the outcome?

**Teamwork & Projects:** Tell me about a time when you were part of a team, and how you were specifically able to contribute to a project’s success. What was the project? What was your role? How did you organize your effort on this project? What were the results of the project?

## Commonly Asked Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself. (Be brief)
2. Why did you apply to this position? What do you know about our organization?
3. Why should I hire you? What are your strengths as they relate to this position?
4. Why did you take this program at Humber?
5. What is your favourite/least favourite subject? Why?
6. What skills do you enjoy using the most?
7. Why are you interested in going into this field?
8. How do you feel this position would fit with your career goals?
9. What does success mean to you?
10. Tell me about something you achieved, that you're very proud of.
11. What are the things that motivate you?
12. How do you spend your free time?
13. Rate your skills in <<name a specific computer software>>. Provide an example of what you can use this software to do.
14. What did you like the most/least at your last job?
15. In your last job (or school project), how much of the work did you do on your own, and how much as part of a team? Which do you enjoy more?
16. Did you ever make any suggestions to management? What happened?
17. What do you consider to be your top 3 strengths?
18. What do you consider to be your area of improvement? What are you doing about it?
19. How do you deal with pressure or frustration?
20. Describe your ideal work environment or the kind of environment where you would work best.
21. What was the most difficult work or school related decision you have made recently? What made it difficult?
22. How do you get along with your fellow students or co-workers?
23. What kind of people do you find most comfortable to work with? Most difficult?
24. Describe your ideal boss.
25. Everybody has pet peeves. What are yours?
26. What do you think people on your reference list would say about you?
27. Are you considering other positions at this time? How does this one compare to them?
28. How would you get to our location every day?
29. What hours are you available? Will you work overtime?
30. What are your salary expectations?

## Sample Behavioural Interview Responses

### **Example 1 - Interviewer Asks:**

Tell me about a time when you were part of a team and encountered a problem working together?

Construct your response:

1. **The issue: Explain the problem or situation.**  
*In my program at Humber we are often assigned group projects. This semester, a member of my group of five wasn't turning up for meetings or doing her share.*
2. **What did you do: Describe the actions you took to resolve the problem? What was your role?**  
*The group was feeling upset but didn't want to say anything, so I volunteered to speak to this other student.*
3. **What was the outcome: What happened? What were the results?**  
*After speaking to this student, I could see that she was having personal difficulties at home. So we talked about reassigning some of the work over the short term, and asked her to call in to our group meetings so she could be at home but not get behind. The rest of the group was also happy with this solution.*

### **How you would respond in the interview?**

*In my program at Humber we are often assigned group projects. This semester, a member of my group was not showing up for meetings or doing their share. The group was feeling upset, but we didn't want to say anything, so I volunteered to talk to the individual and see how we could help. After speaking to them, learned that they were going through a rough time, and needed some extra time to gather themselves. So we talked about reassigning some of the work over the short term, and asked them to call in to our group meetings so they could be at home, but not get behind. The rest of the group was also happy with this solution and it also showed that we worked together as a team.*

***This answer shows a willingness to address issues effectively and to seek a resolution that is acceptable to the team. It shows support and empathy for a member of the team experiencing difficulties while at the same time, making it clear that each student is expected to contribute to the team effort. By seeking a greater commitment from the other team members and yourself in order to get the project finished, you are demonstrating strong team and leadership skills within the group.***

### **Example 2 - Interviewer Asks:**

Tell us about a time when you had to deal with an irate customer.

Construct your response:

1. **The issue: Explain the problem or situation.**  
*I work part-time in a department store and a customer came to me demanding a refund for a faulty product without having a proof of purchase.*
2. **What did you do: Describe the actions you took to resolve the problem? What was your role?**  
*I listened carefully to the customer, addressed her concerns while empathizing with her frustration and explaining the company policy.*
3. **What was the outcome: What happened? What were the results?**  
*The customer understood the company policy and was no longer upset.*

**Example Continued...**

**How you would respond in the interview?**

*I work part-time in a department store and a customer came to me demanding a refund for a faulty product. However, the customer had no proof of purchase. In this case it's the store's policy to return the product to the manufacturer. When I explained this to the customer she became very irate. However, I could see that it was not personal and I applied the training I had been given such as listening to the customer, responding to her concerns, empathizing with her frustration, and then restating the company policy. In the end, the customer understood the policy and was not as upset. The situation ended successfully.*

***This response shows a good understanding of how important it is to understand that the issue was not a personal one. It also demonstrates your understanding of company policy, being confident in applying it, but also empathizing with the customer's frustration.***

**Tell me about yourself.**

Students often have difficulty with "Tell me about yourself".

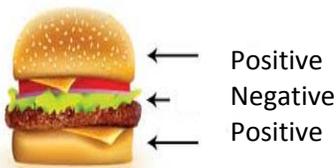
Your response is a modification of your Personal Introduction. Give a **brief** summary of your professional side (not your personal life). Summarize the program you are in, your strengths, why you took the program – it's ideal if you can link this to your career goals and/or why you applied to the company.

**Example:**

*I have just completed my second year in Mechanical Engineering, I have always had interest in this program since high school. I was part of the Mechanical Engineering club where a local company had invited us to participate and learn about their company and what they do. This is when I realized that I was really interested in working in manufacturing and making things. I believe with this career interest and the hands-on experience gained at Humber, this opportunity would help me further my skills and expand my future goals.*

**Difficult or Awkward Questions – Use the “Sandwich Method”**

Use this handy technique when dealing with an awkward or difficult question.



Your first response to a difficult question should be a positive statement.  
 “Sandwich” the less desirable statement next.  
 Close with another positive statement.

The key is to leave the interviewer with a positive impression of you, and demonstrate qualities such as your ability to overcome negativity, learn and change, etc.

## Difficult or Awkward Questions Continued....

### Example 1: Question About Your Weaknesses

**Interviewer Asks:** What would you say is one of your weaknesses?

**Construct your response:**

**Start with something POSITIVE:**

*I believe I am a people person*

**Sandwich in something “NEGATIVE”:**

*I get nervous when I speak in front of large groups*

**End with something POSITIVE (i.e. what are you doing about this weakness)**

*I am working on this by taking public speaking classes. This has already helped me and I feel much more comfortable doing class presentation. I know this will benefit your organization with the presentations that you mentioned.*

**Put the entire response together:**

*I believe I am a people person, however, I get nervous when I speak in front of large groups. So I am working on this by taking public speaking classes. This has already helped me and I feel much more comfortable doing class presentation. I know this will benefit your organization with the presentations that you mentioned.*

### Example 2: Question About a Skill You Don't Have

**Interviewer Asks:** Do you have experience using AutoCAD?

**Student Responds:**

*From my program at Humber I have learned both 2D and 3D software programs. Although I'm not familiar with AutoCAD, I know the basic functionality. I'm a quick learner, and I'm really good with SolidWorks and Revit.*