



# The Second Interview

## Ready Reference ♦ G-11

College of Engineering, Architecture & Technology ♦ Career Services

The second, or on-site, interview is often the final step in the interview process before a job offer. An on-site interview can range from a half-day to a full day and is often made up of a site tour, as well as one-on-one, panel, lunch, or dinner interviews. The on-site interview is also the final opportunity for you to evaluate the company. You will be given the opportunity to see inside the company and meet some of your potential co-workers, while gaining a better understanding of the true work environment.

In the first interview, your skill sets and accomplishments are often explored. The second interview generally focuses more on your fit with the organization and your knowledge of the industry. Since the second interview tends to be more specific in nature, you should expect questions that are more technical and job-focused, as well as some traditional and behavioral questions (see *Ready References G-4, G-5, and G-7*). It is also likely that you may be asked some of the same questions that you answered in your initial interview.

### COMMON INTERVIEW TYPES

- **One-on-One** - Face-to-face interview with one company representative. Expect to have a series of one-on-one interviews with different people throughout the course of the day.
- **Panel/Committee** - Be sure to make eye contact with each interviewer not just the person asking the question. Come prepared with several “stories” to tell about your experiences and skills since you may be asked different versions of the same question. Obtain each interviewer’s contact information via business card, if possible.
- **Lunch/Dinner** - Interviewers observe your social skills as well as your competencies. Be sure to use proper dining etiquette. Choose foods that are easy to eat and avoid messy foods (spaghetti, BBQ, etc.). Take cues from the interviewer and follow their lead when ordering.

### TIPS FOR PREPARATION

- It is important to know as much as possible about the company and the position as possible prior to a second interview. It would also be helpful to have an understanding of the organization's corporate culture. Utilize the company website, printed materials, the *HIRE System*, *Vault.com*, etc. to compile information. Use this information to your advantage during the second interview.
- Be prepared to discuss salary. Research the average salary for someone with your education and qualifications. Give a salary range (i.e. \$60,000 to \$65,000) instead of an exact number (i.e. \$65,000). Resources such as *www.salary.com*, *www.homefair.com*, and the *CEAT Salary Survey* will help you create a salary range.
- Prepare a list of questions that demonstrate your interest in the company. Your questions will also help you make a better decision if you are offered a position.

- Consider this interview a preview of the company. Pay close attention to the organization's environment and culture. This will help you make your decision when an offer is made.
- Ask for an itinerary in advance. Not only do you want to know when you arrive and depart, but you also want to know your schedule for the day. This will also help you prepare your wardrobe for the interview and allow you to do more in-depth research about the company, community, etc.
- Clarify your travel arrangements. Stay in touch with the organization's contact person either via phone or email so you will be aware of any changes in your itinerary.
- Arrive at least 15 minutes prior to your interview. If you are renting a car, take time to explore the area and figure out how to get to the interview site the night before the interview.
- Take time to explore the community in your free time. This is your chance to find out which area you would like to live in, as well as a chance to get to know the community. You may also want to ask your company contact which areas they would recommend that you visit.
- Remember that the company has invested their time and money to bring you to the second interview. Be appreciative and don't forget that the second interview is just as important as the first.

**HOT TIP:** Be friendly to everyone you meet. You never know who is going to have a role in the employer's decision!

## COMPANY CULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

The second interview is your chance to find out more about the company's culture as well as the work environment. It is wise to examine both the company's physical surroundings and the attitudes of your potential co-workers. Paying close attention to the attitudes of every person you meet will definitely help you to make an informed decision about the company. Below are a few questions to ask yourself as you explore your fit with the company:

1. Do you feel comfortable in the facility? With the management style?
2. What is the overall attitude of the employees: happy, tense, overworked, bored, etc.?
3. Do you sense that the employees you meet are genuinely happy to meet you? Are they enthusiastic about what they do? Do you feel comfortable around them? Are they likable?
4. Do you feel that your questions are being answered wholeheartedly? Or are they being avoided? Are the responses conflicting or confusing to you?

## FOLLOW UP

As with any interview, you will want to follow-up with each interviewer. Send a thank you letter within 24 hours of your interview (see *Ready Reference F-7* for thank you letter tips and samples). Emphasize your interest in the position and stress the qualities you have to offer the company. Utilize your notes from the interview when writing your letter.

FREE thank you cards are available in 102 Engineering North. Be sure to pick up a few prior to leaving for your interview.