

4 Tips for Acing Your Internship Interview

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Landing an internship during school is no longer a luxury but essential if you want to land a full-time role after graduation. An internship gives you hands-on experience, offers you networking opportunities, and gives you a lot to talk about when you're looking for your first job post-college. But before you can enjoy all the perks of an internship, you need to first ace your internship interview. To help you do that, here are four tips for impressing any employer and landing yourself a top internship.

1. Show off your knowledge and enthusiasm

When interviewing candidates for an internship, employers aren't necessarily looking for tons of work experience—after all, you're still a student. Instead, employers look for passion and a sincere interest in their industry. Use the interview to show off your knowledge and enthusiasm for the industry in question: discuss current events relating to the industry, use specific terms relating to the work or your position, and show keen enthusiasm for the internship itself. At the same time, beware of going off on long tangents. Instead of waxing lyrical about your passion or enthusiasm for 10 minutes, try to make your answers as concise as possible. And find ways to bring up your knowledge of your industry when asked typical interview questions, rather than taking the lead yourself.

2. Demonstrate your flexibility and adaptability

While an internship may often serve as a gateway position to a full-time role, don't be afraid to show off your enthusiasm and readiness for performing all sorts of work, including admin work if necessary. After all, everybody starts somewhere, and you're likely to make a better impression if you demonstrate that you're ready to aid the team in any way possible, rather than simply using the position as a leg-up for yourself. To do this, you might discuss former work experience in retail, hospitality, or restaurant work. And you might emphasize flexibility and adaptability as two of your core skills. Interns often perform a wide range of tasks, so it's good to demonstrate that you can take on anything thrown your way

3. Arrive adequately prepared

Fail to prepare, prepare to fail! It's extremely important to prepare adequately for the interview—this means being prepared to answer basic behavioral interview questions, and basic questions about your education and work experience. Internships are highly competitive, especially for popular roles in PR, HR, marketing, tech, finance, and consulting. So, to ensure that you make a good impression and stand out among other candidates, practice typical interview questions at home in front of a mirror, observing your body language and working on keeping your responses concise. Being prepared also means dressing appropriately for the occasion—always dress formally for an internship interview, even if the internship is in a creative industry and even if it's a virtual interview.

4. Consider bringing work examples

In some industries, it can help to bring to your interview examples of your work to demonstrate your knowledge and skills in your chosen field. For example, if you're interviewing for an editorial internship with a news website, bringing examples of your published articles from your college newspaper would be impressive. Likewise, if you're interviewing for a graphic design internship, bringing examples of your design work could help your candidacy. Of course, you don't want to just hand over such examples without asking first. Instead, at the end of your interview, you might tell your interviewer that you brought along some samples of your work, then ask if it's okay to leave them behind.

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