

INTERVIEW PREPARATION GUIDE

Office for Career Success

Interviewing is a skill that improves with practice and preparation. This guide covers two key areas that will help you make a strong, professional impression: answering questions using the STAR method and managing your nonverbal communication.

THE STAR METHOD: TELL YOUR STORY WITH STRUCTURE

The STAR method helps you answer behavioral interview questions (like "Tell me about a time when...") in a clear, compelling way. It keeps your answers focused and shows employers how you think and problem-solve.

S - Situation: Briefly describe the context or challenge you faced

T - Task: Explain what your goal or responsibility was

A - Action: Detail the specific steps you took to address the situation

R - Result: Share the positive outcome—quantify when possible (saved time, increased efficiency, solved a problem)

EXAMPLE:

"Our department was handling reports manually, which was very time-consuming (Situation). I wanted to save time and reduce errors (Task). I developed a spreadsheet template with automated calculations that streamlined the process (Action). As a result, we cut our report workload in half, freeing up time for new projects (Result)."

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION: WHAT YOUR BODY LANGUAGE SAYS

Your words matter, but so does how you present yourself. Nonverbal cues—tone, posture, eye contact, facial expressions—shape how interviewers perceive your confidence, engagement, and professionalism.

Tone of Voice: Aim for a warm, confident tone. Avoid sounding monotone or disengaged—your voice should convey interest and energy.

Eye Contact: Maintain comfortable eye contact to show confidence and connection. Avoid staring or looking away too often.

Facial Expressions: Show you are engaged. Nod when appropriate, smile naturally, and react authentically to what the interviewer says.

Posture: Sit up straight but stay relaxed. Lean slightly forward to show interest. Avoid slouching, crossing your arms, or appearing tense.

Gestures: Use natural, open gestures to emphasize points. Avoid fidgeting, nervous movements, or overly animated gestures that distract.

Presence: Be fully present. Avoid checking your phone, looking around the room, or seeming distracted.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW: PREPARATION CHECKLIST

- Research the organization—review their website, recent news, and social media
- Review the job description and prepare examples that match their requirements
- Practice answering common interview questions using the STAR method
- Prepare 3-5 thoughtful questions to ask the interviewer
- Plan your outfit (professional and appropriate for the industry)
- Test your technology if interviewing virtually (camera, microphone, lighting)
- Bring extra copies of your resume, a notebook, and a pen
- Arrive 10-15 minutes early (or log in 5 minutes early for virtual interviews)

Want to practice? Schedule a mock interview at careers@spalding.edu or book directly through mySpalding Student Success scheduling portal.