

A photograph of a large, multi-story brick building with many windows, identified as Marshall Hall. The building has a central entrance with a pediment and the name 'MARSHALL HALL' inscribed above it. There are arched windows on the ground floor and rectangular windows on the upper floors. The image is slightly faded to serve as a background for the text.

THE INTERVIEW

Interviewing tips to make a great impression

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BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

In the days before your job interview

RESEARCH THE COMPANY & INTERVIEWERS

- Understanding key information about the company you're interviewing with can help you go into your interview with confidence.
- Using the company's website, social media posts and recent press releases will provide a solid understanding of the company's goals and how your background makes you a great fit.
- Check the "NEWS" section, to see if there is anything new you can talk about in the interview
- Read through the mission statement, this can help you frame your questions in the interview

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University Mission Statement

As a Christ-centered institution, East Texas Baptist University educates students by integrating biblical faith and learning to develop mind, body, and soul through community engagement to prepare graduates to be Christian servant leaders in their calling to God and humanity.

Purpose of Resident Life

- Our mission is to assist students in developing intellectually, socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually, enabling them to become effective citizens, leaders, and personal ambassadors for Christ and His kingdom.
- Connect people, build relationships

Purpose of RAs

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- Serve the student body - Be available
 - Be sociable to the student body
 - Build relationships!!! - Get to know students
 - Be an example as you Lead your peers

What are they looking for

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- Committed to their faith in Jesus
 - Excited about ETBU
 - Engaged in the campus community
 - Desiring to serve their peers
 - Relational & intentional (conflict)
 - Professional
 - A team player
 - Desiring to grow: socially, spiritually, academically, etc!
 - Willing to learn
 - Commitment (time)

REREAD THE JOB DESCRIPTION

You may want to print it out and begin underlining specific skills the employer is looking for. Think about examples from your past and current work that align with these requirements.

RA Job Description

➤ Community Development

- Know your residents and be able to assist them as necessary
- Provide support to your residents

➤ Community Involvement

- Be involved and engaged with the ETBU community
- Plan and implement programs/activities that enhance the community

➤ Community Leadership

- Be a role model, display professionalism, be a team player
- Provide peer counseling and aid in conflict mediation

➤ Community Facilitation

- Assist with communication to residents, administrative tasks, and upholding student standards

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PRACTICE YOUR ANSWERS TO COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Prepare your answer to the common question: *“Tell me about yourself, and why are you interested in this role with our company?”* The idea is to quickly communicate who you are and what value you will bring to the company and the role—it’s your elevator pitch.
- Research interview question on the internet
- See Strengths and weakness (next)

What are your greatest strengths?

In your answer to this question, share your most relevant technical and soft skills. While it may feel uncomfortable to speak highly of yourself, remember that this is your opportunity to tell your interviewers what makes you a great candidate. To answer, follow the formula below:

- **Share one to a few positive qualities and personal attributes:** *"I've always been a natural leader..."*
- **Back them up with examples:** *"...I've exceeded my KPIs every quarter and have been promoted twice in the past five years. I look back at those successes and know that I wouldn't have reached them if I hadn't built and led teams composed of highly skilled and diverse individuals. I'm proud of my ability to get cross-functional groups on the same page..."*
- **Relate them back to the role for which you're interviewing:** *"...I've also regularly honed my management skills through 360 reviews and candid sessions with my team, and I know continuing to build my leadership skills is something I want from my next role."*

What are your greatest weaknesses?

It can feel awkward to discuss your weaknesses in an environment where you're expected to focus on your accomplishments. However, when answered correctly, sharing your weaknesses shows that you are self-aware with an interest in continued growth and learning—traits that are extremely attractive to many employers. Consider using this formula for your response:

- **Select an actual weakness (not a strength) that's honest but professionally relevant:** *"I'm naturally shy..."*
- **Add context:** *"...From high school and into my early professional interactions, it sometimes prevented me from speaking up..."*
- **Provide a specific example:** *"...After being a part of a workgroup that didn't meet our strategic goals two quarters in a row, I knew I owed it to my team and myself to confidently share my ideas..."*
- **Explain how you overcame or are working to overcome it:** *"...I joined an improv acting class. It's fun and has really helped me overcome my shyness. I learned practical skills around leading discussions and sharing diverse perspectives. Now, in group settings, I always start conversations with the quieter folks. I know exactly how they feel, and people can be amazing once they start communicating."*

Use the STAR method in answering questions

Prepare to be asked about times in the past when you used a specific skill and use the STAR method to tell stories with a clear Situation, Task, Action and Result.

➤ Situation

- What is the context of your story? In setting the situation, you are telling your listener when or where this event took place. For example, *"We were working on a six-month contract for a high-value client when our agency merged with another, larger firm..."*

➤ Task

- What was your role in this situation? For example, *"It was my role to lead the transition for my group while also communicating with our client to keep the project on track."*

➤ Action

- What did you do? For example, *"I set up weekly check-ins with the client to update them on the progress of the merger. This cemented an important level of trust between us. I also had regular one-on-ones with each person on the team, both to assess how they were handling the change and to make sure we would meet our deadlines."*

➤ Result

- What did your actions lead to? For example, *"We ended up completing the project on time, meeting all of their specifications. It was incredibly rewarding to navigate a lot of change and succeed under pressure."*

Recruit a friend to practice answering questions

Practicing your answers out loud is an incredibly effective way to prepare. Say them to yourself or ask a friend to help run through questions and answers. You'll find you gain confidence as you get used to saying the words.

Be prepared with examples of your work

During the interview, you will likely be asked about specific work you've completed in relation to the position. After reviewing the job description, think of work you've done in past jobs, clubs or volunteer positions that show you have experience and success doing the work they require.

Prepare smart questions for you interviewers

Interviews are a two-way street. Employers expect you to ask questions: they want to know that you're thinking seriously about what it would be like to work there.

Here are some questions you may want to consider asking your interviewers:

How would you describe the characteristics of someone who would succeed in this role?

Can you explain some of the day-to-day responsibilities this job entails?

If I were in this position, how would my performance be measured? How often?

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INTERVIEW DAY

Ways to Succeed in the Interview

Plan your interview attire the night before

You always want to dress to make the best impression, but the outfit you choose depends on whether you're interviewing at a company with a formal dress code, at a casual startup, or for an informal summer job or internship. If you're speaking to a recruiter before the interview, you can ask them about the dress code in the workplace and choose your outfit accordingly.

- To dress appropriately for a job interview, follow the employer's dress code.
- If the job interview calls for business attire, wear a suit, a sweater and button-down shirt, or a professional-looking dress or skirt.
- Startup jobs may call for more casual interview attire but be sure to dress professionally.
- Choose accessories carefully to ensure that they don't distract the interviewer.
- Dressing appropriately is important because the first judgment an interviewer makes is going to be based on how you look and what you are wearing.
- If unsure, always overdress for an interview

Bring resume copies, a notebook and a pen

Take five copies of your printed resume on clean paper in case of multiple interviewers. Highlight specific accomplishments on your copy that you can easily refer to and discuss. Bring a pen and a small notebook. Prepare to take notes, but not on your smartphone or another electronic device. Write information down so that you can refer to these details in your follow-up thank-you notes. Maintain eye contact as much as possible.

Plan your schedule to arrive 10 - 15 minutes early

Map out your route to the interview location so you can be sure to arrive on time. Consider doing a practice run. If you're taking public transportation, identify a backup plan if there are delays or closures.

Tip: When you arrive early, use the extra minutes to observe workplace dynamics.

Make a great first impression

Don't forget the little things—shine your shoes, make sure your nails are clean and tidy, and check your clothes for holes, stains, pet hair and loose threads. And remember to smile.

Treat everyone you encounter with respect

This includes people on the road and in the parking lot, security personnel and front desk staff. Treat everyone you don't know as though they're the hiring manager. Even if they aren't, your potential employer might ask for their feedback.

Practice good manners and body language

Practice confident, accessible body language from the moment you enter the building. Before the interview, take a deep breath and exhale slowly to manage feelings of anxiety and encourage self-confidence. Maintain eye contact and smile.

Win them over with authenticity and positivity

Being genuine during interview conversations can help employers easily relate to you. Showing positivity with a smile and upbeat attitude can help keep the interview light and constructive.

Respond truthfully to the questions asked

While it can seem tempting to embellish your skills and accomplishments, interviewers find honesty refreshing and respectable. Focus on your key strengths and why your background makes you uniquely qualified for the position.

Tie your answers to your skills and accomplishments

With any question you answer, you must tie your background to the job by providing examples of solutions and results you've achieved. Use every opportunity to address the requirements listed in the job description.

Do not speak negatively about previous employers

Companies want to hire problem solvers who overcome tough situations. If you're feeling discouraged about your current job, focus on talking about what you've gained from that experience and what you want to do next.

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AFTER THE INTERVIEW

**Giving yourself the Best Chances of
Moving Forward**

Ask about next steps

After your interview:

- It is appropriate to ask either your interviewer, hiring manager or recruiter about what you should expect next.
- This will likely be a follow-up email with results from your interview and additional requirements like an assignment or reference list or another interview.

Send a thank you letter after the interview

- Ask for the business card of each person you speak with during the interview process so that you can follow up individually with a separate thank you email.
- If you interviewed in the morning, send your follow-up emails the same day.
- If you interviewed in the afternoon, the next morning is fine.
- Make certain that each email is distinct from the others, using the notes you took during the conversations.

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QUESTIONS

Send Resumes to be Reviewed to:
bmayper@etbu.edu
(see Career Services page for appointment)