Interview Preparation Guide

LCAD Career Services | A practical guide for recent alumni

An interview is a conversation about how your experience, skills, and goals connect with the role. You do not need to have every answer figured out. Prepare enough to speak clearly about what you can contribute, what you have learned, and what you are excited to keep developing.

1. Before the Interview

☐ **Research the organization**
Review its website, recent work, services, and the role. Know what they do and why the position interests you.

☐ **Read the job description carefully**
Highlight the skills and responsibilities that match your experience. Prepare examples that demonstrate those skills.

☐ **Prepare your introduction**
Practice a 30–60 second response to "Tell me about yourself." Include your LCAD background, relevant experience or strengths, and what you are looking for next.

☐ **Prepare 3–5 examples**
Use examples from school, internships, freelance work, jobs, student projects, volunteer work, or personal projects that show problem-solving, teamwork, communication, reliability, or learning.

☐ **Practice common questions**
Say your answers out loud. You do not need to memorize a script; aim to sound prepared and natural.

☐ **Prepare your own questions**
Bring at least 3 questions. Interviews are also an opportunity for you to learn about the role, team, and workplace.

☐ **Plan the logistics**
Confirm the time, location or video link, interview format, contact name, and expected length. Test technology for virtual interviews.

☐ **Prepare what you need**
Have your resume, notes, relevant links, and a way to take notes. For in-person interviews, plan your route and arrive a few minutes early.

2. Common Interview Questions

Tell me about yourself.
Focus on your education, relevant experience, strengths, and what you are looking for now.

Why are you interested in this position?
Connect something specific about the role or organization to your interests and skills.

What are your strengths?
Choose 2–3 strengths and support each with a brief example.

What is an area you are working to improve?
Choose something genuine and explain what you are doing to improve it.

Tell me about a challenge you faced.
Use a specific example. Explain the situation, what you did, and what you learned.

Tell me about a time you worked with a team.
Highlight communication, collaboration, your role, and the outcome.

Why should we hire you?
Connect your relevant skills, attitude, experience, and willingness to learn to the needs of the role.

Where do you see yourself growing professionally?
Talk about skills and experiences you want to develop rather than needing your entire career mapped out.

3. Use the STAR Method

For behavioral questions ("Tell me about a time when..."), STAR can help you organize your answer:

S — Situation: Briefly explain the context.

T — Task: Describe what you needed to accomplish.

A — Action: Explain what YOU did. This is usually the most important part.

R — Result: Share the outcome and, when possible, what you learned.

4. During the Interview

☐ **Be yourself, professionally**
You do not need to sound perfect. Be prepared, friendly, curious, and honest.

☐ **Listen before answering**
It is okay to pause and think. If you are unsure what someone means, ask them to clarify.

☐ **Give specific examples**
Whenever possible, replace general statements with a short story or example.

☐ **Show how you learn**
For recent graduates, employers may value your ability to learn and adapt alongside your existing experience.

☐ **Ask thoughtful questions**
Use your questions to understand expectations, team culture, communication, growth, and what success looks like.

☐ **Take notes when appropriate**
Brief notes can help you remember details for your follow-up.

5. Questions You Can Ask the Employer

- What would success look like in this role during the first 3–6 months?
- What does a typical day or week look like?
- How does the team typically communicate and collaborate?
- What qualities help someone succeed on this team?
- What would be the first project or responsibility for the person in this role?
- How do you support learning and professional growth?
- What are the next steps in the interview process?

6. After the Interview

☐ **Send a thank-you message**
Send a brief thank-you within 24 hours. Mention something specific from the conversation and reaffirm your interest.

☐ **Reflect while it is fresh**
Write down what you learned, what went well, and what you would answer differently next time.

☐ **Follow the stated timeline**
If the employer gave you a timeframe, follow it. If no timeline was given, a polite follow-up after about a week is generally reasonable.

☐ **Keep networking**
An interview can be valuable even if you do not receive an offer. Stay connected with people you met and continue building professional relationships.

7. Virtual Interview Checklist

☐ **Test your camera, microphone, internet connection, and interview platform.**

☐ **Choose a quiet, well-lit space with a clean, professional background.**

☐ **Close unrelated tabs and silence notifications.**

☐ **Keep your resume and notes nearby, but avoid reading from them.**

☐ **Look toward the camera when speaking when possible.**

☐ **Join the meeting a few minutes early.**

8. Final 10-Minute Checklist

☐ **I know the name and role of the person interviewing me.**

☐ **I can explain why I am interested in this role.**

☐ **I can briefly describe my background and what I am looking for next.**

☐ **I have 2–3 examples ready that demonstrate my skills.**

☐ **I have at least 3 questions prepared.**

☐ **I have my resume and relevant links ready.**

☐ **I know how and when I will follow up.**

LCAD Career Services Reminder

You do not have to know everything yet. As a recent graduate, you are entering a professional environment where learning is part of the process. Focus on communicating what you know, demonstrating how you approach challenges, and showing that you are ready to learn and contribute.