

Interview Preparation Strategies

Thank you for your interest in career possibilities at Baird. Putting our clients first requires attracting the most talented professionals in our industry. We hope that this information will help you prepare for the Baird Interview Process.

Be Prepared

To prepare for an in-person interview:

- Study the job description and ask the recruiter for clarification if you have any questions regarding the description.
- Learn as much as you can about the Baird Culture. Read about Baird on bairdcareers.com. Ask contacts you have about the culture.
- Plan on checking in at the designated reception desk 5–10 minutes before the interview. If you arrive at the building even earlier, take the time to freshen up and relax.
- See the Get Organized section for what to bring to your interview.

To prepare for a Montage Video Interview:

- Check out the [Video Interview Preparation Guide](#)

Practice, Practice, Practice

The more you practice, the less anxious you will be and the greater your chances for success.

- Think about how you want to present yourself (experience, education, skills, accomplishments, etc.).
- Review your resume to see what the interviewer might consider strengths or weaknesses and ensure there are no spelling or grammatical errors. Think about how you can answer difficult questions accurately and positively.
- Have a friend or family member ask practice questions.
- Conduct a mock interview and ask for constructive feedback on your performance.

Dress for Success

Make a great first impression—look professional! It is better to be overdressed than underdressed.

- Appropriate Attire for Women:
 - Suit (jacket and skirt or jacket and pants)
 - Dress
 - Sweater (professional) or blouse with skirt or dress pants
 - Moderate height shoes
- Appropriate Attire for Men:
 - Suit
 - Shirt and tie with dress pants
- Ensure your attire is clean, spot- and lint-free, and pressed.
- Make sure your hair is well-groomed and neat.
- Avoid wearing too much perfume or cologne.
- Avoid wearing too much makeup or jewelry.

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- Don't smoke prior to the interview—the cigarette smell could linger.
- Have a breath mint before your meeting.
- Do not chew gum during the interview.

Get Organized

There is nothing worse than looking unprepared!

- Carry a professional folder, portfolio or briefcase (make sure it's not too clumsy), and use it to store your resume, clean notepad, prepared questions and a pen.
- Bring clean copies of your resume, one for each individual you will be meeting during the interview, along with 1–2 additional copies just in case.
- Have a list of 5–10 prepared questions for each person you will be interviewing with to show your interest. (Sample questions can be found on page 4.)

Present Yourself

This is your chance to make a lasting impression and let the interviewer get to know you.

- Introduction
 - When greeting the interviewer, be certain to make eye contact and have a firm handshake.
 - Wait for the interviewer to signal you before you sit down.
 - Once seated, your body language is very important in conveying a positive impression. Find a comfortable position so that you don't appear tense. Lean forward slightly and maintain eye contact with the interviewer. This posture shows that you are interested in what is being said.
 - Smile naturally at appropriate times.
 - Show that you are open and receptive by keeping your arms uncrossed. Avoid keeping your briefcase or your handbag on your lap.
 - Pace your movements so that they are not too fast or too slow. Try to appear relaxed and confident.
 - Volunteer relevant information about yourself. Try to avoid information that would be regarded as too personal.
- Question and Answer
 - During this phase, you will be asked many questions about your work experience, skills, education, activities, accomplishments and interests. You are being assessed on how you will perform the job in relation to the department objectives. All of your responses should be concise, honest and sincere.
 - Use specific examples to illustrate your point whenever possible. Although your responses should be prepared in advance so that they are well-phrased and effective, be sure they do not sound rehearsed.
 - Be positive and NEVER say anything negative about past experiences or employers.
 - Display your enthusiasm in a professional manner.
 - Remember, the interview should be a two-way discussion – make sure you are participating.

Show Interest

The best way to show your interest is to ask questions!

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- You should come prepared with 5–10 questions for each person with whom you are interviewing. Having the questions written out prior to your meeting will show you have taken time to prepare and that you are genuinely interested in the position.
- See page 4 for sample questions to ask employers.

Don'ts

Avoid common mistakes that can make a great interview take a turn for the worse.

- DON'T bring up salary during the first interview. Try to find out the general salary level beforehand.
- DON'T try to control the entire interview.
- DON'T be too serious or too goofy during the interview.
- DON'T let your past discouragement show.
- DON'T make negative comments about anyone or anything.
- DON'T look at your watch.
- DON'T fidget.
- DON'T take notes so extensively that you can't concentrate on what is being said.
- DON'T share too much personal information with the interviewer.

Closing

Vocalize your interest and say “THANK YOU!”

- Ask the interviewers what the next steps are in the process.
- If you are interested in the position, let the interviewers know.
- Thank the interviewers for their time and consideration, and let them know that you will be looking forward to hearing from them.
- Remember to offer a firm handshake.

Follow-Up

- Always write a thank-you note to the interviewers within 48 hours of the interview, even if you are not interested in the job. It is important to let them know that you appreciate the time that was spent with you.
- Be brief and concise.
- Ensure you have a neutral party review the thank-you note before you send it. Spelling or grammatical errors can destroy your chances of getting a job, even after a stellar interview.
- Be careful not to overdue the follow-up. It may take a couple of weeks for the recruiter and hiring managers to meet with all of the candidates at that step in the process and to determine next steps. Calling or emailing more than once a week can appear too persistent.

Sample Questions to Ask the Interviewer

1. Tell me about the day-to-day responsibilities of this position.

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2. What are some of the skills and abilities necessary for someone to succeed in this position?
3. What is the work environment like?
4. How do you prefer to lead, communicate and assess your employees?
5. What is the most challenging aspect of this position? What is the most rewarding aspect of this position?
6. Ideally, what skills and attributes are you seeking?
7. How do my skills and qualifications match with what you are looking for?
8. What training occurs for this position? Is it formal or informal?
9. What are your expectations for newly hired employees?
10. What are the department's major goals and objectives?
11. What are the department's major projects for the coming year?
12. What are the department's strengths and weaknesses?
13. Is there anything else I should know about the position or department?
14. Is there anything else you'd like to know about my experience and qualifications?
15. What is the next step in the process?