Description

Just came out of an interview and thought to yourself—“I could have answered that question better.” or ‘I shouldn’t have done that!”. Well, you are certainly not alone!

Securing academic positions have become so competitive that people with years of experience and impeccable skill sets also fall prey to interview mistakes. While you can’t guarantee what happens at the interview, you can always avoid some common interview mistakes and increase your chances of getting hired. Furthermore, not following interview etiquettes can blow your opportunity of getting your dream position despite academic achievements.

Importance of Knowing Common Interview Mistakes

Generally, universities do not provide candidate descriptions as there isn’t one ideal person for the role. Moreover, they value diversity and look for candidates with more than just *straight A’s*.

The interview is often your last chance to prove your candidature suitable for the position. Therefore, understanding the importance of these common interview mistakes help candidates to prepare for interviews and stand out from the crowd with similar or even more qualifications than them. Being aware of these mistakes help candidates to strategize their interview plan and act appropriately in a professional setting as such. Furthermore, knowing what not to do in an interview is just as important as having an impressive CV and strong references.

How to Avoid Most Common Academic Job Interview Mistakes?

Although unknowingly, most experienced people make these mistakes and many are more common than you may think. Therefore, it is necessary to prepare and avoid these common interview mistakes rather than stressing about them.

Despite the commonness of these mistakes, they are most certainly avoidable. In order to leave the interviewer’s cabin with a good impression, here are 10 most common academic job interview mistakes and practical advices on how to avoid them.

Copyright: Enago Academy under the CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0 license

1. Being Unprepared

One of the easiest way to blow your interview is going for one with lack of preparation. It's a given that you'll be asked about your personal statement, previous research, etc. If you can't remember what you actually wrote or did, you are probably not "good enough" to do well and take up new responsibilities of the position. Furthermore, being unaware of the program details and talking about a subject that's not on the program is unlikely to go down well with your interviewers. There are no excuses for confusing the particulars of one program with another.

How to Avoid:

- Re-read your personal statement and be familiar with books and references mentioned in it.
- Do some additional literature reading based on your research to contribute to any academic discussion during the interview. Abreast yourself with topical research in your field that could align with your work.
- Think about the potential questions that you'll be asked and create a logical flow of responses.
- In addition, researching the university and the interviewer is the best way to alter your answers while responding to the panel. Note down the important aspects of the course that got you interested and why.

2. Not Being Punctual

Being late or even too early to an interview isn't the first impression you are looking to leave behind. This displays your time management skills. Consequently, poor organizational skills lead to tardiness.

How to Avoid:

- Figure out the estimated time of arrival to the interview the day before so you know when you need to be ready to leave.
- Do not reach more than 10 minutes before the actual interview time.

3. Displaying Doubts About the Position

Being unaware and displaying doubts about the provisions of the program is most likely to get you off the list immediately.

How to Avoid:

- Never ask your interviewers if you'll be able to switch to another program in the middle of semesters.
- You must not show that a particular program is a second-choice or a back-up plan for you.
- Moreover, you must be able to convince them that you are here to stay!
- Be positive and enthusiastic throughout the interviewing process.

4. Being Overconfident of Your Academic Achievements

If you were to be hired only based on your academic achievements, there wouldn't be a need to

Copyright: Enago Academy under the CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0 license

conduct interviews, after all. Hence, relying on what your academic feats say about you will not do the work. The interviewer is there to look beyond what is shown to them on the application form or that impressive CV you created.

How to Avoid:

- Do not boast about your achievements. Instead, focus on speaking about your motivations and opinions.
- Discuss how you plan to approach academic problems.
- Demonstrate your intelligence by engaging in an academic discussion.

5. Being Too Honest or Dishonest

As important as it is to not lie on your personal statement, neither must you lie in an interview. The interviewer is most likely to spot your dishonesty. While that's true, it is also important to not be too honest as well. An interview isn't a sworn testimony. By sharing too much information with the interviewer there's a risk of boring them or saying something you shouldn't.

How to Avoid:

- Do not boast about things you aren't sure of only to impress the interviewer.
- There's no harm in accepting that you do not know something, rather than pretending to be a "know-it-all" and fall in the pit you dug yourself.
- However, it is also important to maintain professionalism and only respond to questions directed to you. Do not convolute your responses and bore the interviewer.

6. Being Overly Personal

While a few pleasantries at the beginning and towards the end of the interview are a good way to display your confidence, you should avoid being informal and over-familiar with the interviewer. However affable your interviewer may seem, your concerns about the university's party scene can take a back seat here.

How to Avoid:

- Maintain professionalism throughout the process.
- Treat your interviewer with utmost respect.
- Ask only appropriate program and position related questions.
- Don't be arrogant or give sarcastic answers.

7. Being Uninterested

You can't expect the interviewers to be interested in interviewing you, let alone appoint you for the applied position if you seem uninterested or lack enthusiasm. How will you work diligently, if you are uninterested in the interview? Apparent boredom can be taken as a sign that you are not interested in the position you've applied for.

Copyright: Enago Academy under the CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0 license

How to Avoid:

- Do not show that you are not interested in a particular topic of conversation.
- Avoid checking your phone incessantly. Make sure that your phone is on silent (not vibrate) and leave it in your bag throughout the interview.
- Pay attention to what the interviewer is saying. Do not allow your mind to drift.
- Before leaving, ask your interviewer what the next steps are and what their timeline is.

8. Being Negative

The slightest of hint of negativity may come across as lack of interest in what you're being interviewed for. All the good things you may have done in the interview will be over-shadowed if you're negative for even a single moment. Your interviewer may only remember you for that. Negativity spreads as wild fire. Consequently, the interviewers fear that you could be someone who could bring down the mood of a class or team.

How to Avoid:

- Adopt a positive and enthusiastic demeanor throughout the interview.
- If you want to give a negative reaction, either do not say it or turn it into a positive.
- Maintain a polite tone while responding.
- Do not sit with a poker or a frowned face. A slight smile can induce positive vibes. However, do not go overboard and put a broad smile flashing your teeth.

9. Poor Body Language

Your body language says a lot about the ambience you create in a room. You'd only be demonstrating your vocal skills when asked to speak. However, your body language reveals your ability to cope under pressure and strenuous situations.

How to Avoid:

- Make frequent eye contacts to avoid coming across as shy and unconfident.
- Walk upright with shoulders apart.
- Do not hunch your back whilst seated.
- Do not get distracted by external factors in or around the place of interview.
- Avoid fidgeting with things in your hands such as pencils, pens, files, etc.

10. Being Inappropriately Dressed

While a three-piece suit isn't what interviewers are looking at, showing up to an interview dressed casually in T-shirts, jeans, trainers, pajamas, etc. is a huge mistake. This implies that you are not serious about this opportunity and don't respect the institution.

How to Avoid:

- Plan your outfit in advance and keep it ready for the day.

Copyright: Enago Academy under the CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0 license

- Focus on dressing smart than dressing expensive.
- Don’t neglect your shoes. Wear formal shoes, rather than trainers or flip-flops.

Should you be petrified with the thought of making these interview mistakes?—definitely, not! So the next time you prepare for an interview there won’t be space for these mistakes. How do you plan to cope with interview fright? Have these tips been helpful to you? Let us know in the comments section below! You can also visit our Q&A forum for frequently asked questions related to different aspects of research writing and publishing answered by our team that comprises subject-matter experts, eminent researchers, and publication experts.

Category

1. Career Corner
2. PhDs & Postdocs

Date Created
2021/07/14
Author
uttkarshabhosale

Copyright: Enago Academy under the CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0 license