

The Panel Interview - What to Expect

When invited to be interviewed at the Town of Oakville you will meet with at least two people and possibly more who will be part of the interview team.

They are the panelists and their job is to evaluate the competency of the candidates through asking questions related to the soft skills as well as the experience required for the position.

You will be told about the interview process.

Listen carefully to the process as it is your guide to the expectations of the panel.

The panel has an allotted time for your interview, so make sure you listen to the questions carefully and focus on the information required in your answer. If the panel wants more information than you have given they will ask follow up questions.

There are three kinds of questions that may be asked:

1. **behavioural** – demonstrate how the candidate has thought and behaved in the past
2. **situational** – show how a candidate analyses a situation
3. **informational** – measure candidate's education, experience / assess skills, abilities and aptitudes

The behavioural question involves you giving an actual example to demonstrate your answer to the question. These questions usually start with “*Tell us about a time when you...*” to prepare for this type of question think about experiences you had in the work place that demonstrate your skills in the competencies required for the job to which you are applying. Do not say what you would do in, you must give an example. This helps the panel judge how you react in work related problems. Be prepared to say what you learned from the experience or what you would do differently.

In the situational question you are asked what you would do if a certain issue arose. This shows your analytical thinking on how you would approach and handle the situation. The question might start with “*Tell us what you would do in the following situation...*”

Informational questions are looking for facts i.e. *was your degree 3 or 4 years?*

How to Prepare for a Panel Interview

When invited for interviews ask for the names of the people who will be on the panel and their job titles. Research what relationship they have to the job. The more research you do the more confident you will be in the interview.

Research the internet information and a newspaper article search on the town and on the position to which you've applied. It is good practice to print out the job posting when you apply as it will disappear from the internet site as soon as it closes.

When meeting the panel shake their hands (if you are comfortable doing so) you might find they offer their hand when introducing themselves.

When responding to questions on your experience give the information in a clear, concise manner. Also look at the posting to predict what questions may be asked and practice the answers out loud.

Do not ramble, if you do, stop and ask if you could start again and be concise when you do.

Do not be embarrassed to ask to have the question repeated if you are unclear or did not hear it all. You do not lose points for asking.

Be prepared to tell the panel why you would be the best candidate for the position.

Do not feel you have to ask questions at the end of the interview. If you do, ensure they are relevant.

It is wise not to ask about benefits, pension etc. those questions are best saved for when you are offered the position.

Shake hands (if you are comfortable doing so) and thank each panelist when you stand up to leave.