



The Meyer Partnership N.A. LLC

Interview Guide

Adapted from a presentation by Nicole Meyer, The Meyer Partnership

Congratulations on making it through to the interview stage! Your resume was impressive enough for the recruiter to want to find out more about you and your potential fit for the company. There are several different interview scenarios; the most common being:

- [Panel interview](#) (two or more interviewers at the same time).
- [Phone/video interview](#) (may be used prior to selection for an in-person interview).
- [One-to-One interview](#) (most common). Even if the recruiter begins with one of the above interview options, there is almost always a one-to-one interview before a vacancy is filled.

Whichever option the hiring company chooses, you need to be prepared. Here is guidance to help with one-to-one interviews, much of which also applies to the other interview types.

Pre-interview

- Before you applied for the job you would have done some basic research on the company. It could be three to four weeks after your resume submission before your interview date, so now is the time to make sure your knowledge about the firm is current.
 - Who is on the Executive Board?
 - Who is in charge of the Department you are applying to work in?
 - Who will you be meeting for the interview?
 - Research the company again the day before your interview to look for relevant news. Preparation will set you apart from the competition.
 - Look again at the job advertisement/job description and be familiar with what will be expected of the incumbent.
- Ensure you've been reading the news for 1-2 months so that you are current on the most recent financial news.
- **Don't wait until the interview day to figure out how to get there.**
 - Plan your route and make sure you know where you are going.



The Meyer Partnership N.A. LLC

- If the company has multiple offices in the same town, check the interview letter to ensure you go to the correct one.
- If you can, do a dry run in the days ahead, so you can calculate how long it will take (don't forget to calculate rush hour traffic).
- If there is no onsite parking, plan where to park and calculate how long it will take to walk to the interview address.

- Think about questions you may be asked and practice how to answer them but take care that your responses are natural and it doesn't sound like you're reciting a memorized text.
- In a notepad write down three to five questions to ask. Questions should be:
 - Open ended.
 - Non-generic and well thought out.
- The day before; set up a binder with extra copies of your resume, your notepad with questions and a working pen.

FMA student members can register for complimentary access to Wall Street Prep's [Ultimate Guide to the Technical Finance Interview](#) and [Technical Finance Interview Question Bank](#). Sign up [here](#).

Interview Day

It's normal to feel nervous on interview day, but preparation can help!

- Eat a balanced breakfast or lunch as normal ahead of your interview time; try not to overindulge on caffeine or sugary drinks as these can increase anxiety and make you jittery and restless. It's better to hydrate with water.
- Aim to arrive ten to fifteen minutes ahead of your scheduled interview time.
 - If delay is unavoidable, let someone know immediately; save the company phone number to your phone for this purpose. Don't forget to apologize when you arrive.
 - **Turn your cell phone off** before you enter the building; not to mute. Off.
 - Upon arrival take a quick bathroom break to check your reflection; tucked in shirt, straight tie, neat hair, etc.
 - While you are waiting look around the office for clues on the culture of the company or the person who will interview you.
 - Look at the literature on display.
- **Dress appropriately.** Look like you belong there.



The Meyer Partnership N.A. LLC

- Prepare your outfit in advance. Make sure all items are clean and pressed, no missing buttons or loose threads. Try everything on to ensure they fit well and are comfortable.
- Men should wear a suit and tie.
- Women should wear a dress suit, trouser suit, or a tailored skirt and blouse with an appropriate neckline.
- Professional attire will show how much importance you place on the meeting
 - One exception is fintech. Business casual is generally acceptable. If in doubt, call and ask about the attire.
- Jewelry should be limited to a watch, wedding band and small earrings for women. Less is more.
- Be conservative with the use of cologne/perfume.
- Shoes should be polished.

The Interview

- Your interview will start the moment you step onto the company premises.
 - Front desk staff are frequently asked to give their impression of candidates.
 - Be polite to everyone you encounter.
- Body language is important during an interview.
 - When you first meet your interviewer smile, shake hands and say something like “it’s very nice to meet you” or “it’s a pleasure to meet you”.
 - Maintain appropriate eye contact but don’t stare. Try to be aware of cultural differences. In some countries it is considered rude to have constant eye contact; this isn’t the case in America.
- Be conscious of your posture once seated.
 - Don’t slouch.
 - Don’t fidget; if you are prone to fidgeting keep your hands gently clasped in your lap or on the table. It’s OK to make small hand gestures while you are talking.
 - Don’t sit with your arms crossed or your hands in your pockets.
- Discard any gum or finish chewing a mint **before** you enter the building.
- If you have a bad cold or the flu, call the interviewer as soon as you can and see if it’s possible to reschedule to the following week.
 - Interviewers will appreciate not being exposed to your germs and you won’t be showing your best self if you’re under the weather.
- Show motivation and interest for the area your interviewer works in.
 - Be inquisitive. An interview is a two-way conversation.
- Be open minded.



The Meyer Partnership N.A. LLC

- Don't tell an interviewer from Accounting that you want to work in Finance before discussing the role.
- Be focused enough to demonstrate drive and commitment for the business area (while taking into account the previous point).
- Ensure you can identify key differences between the firm and major competitors.
 - You can also ask that question of the interviewer.
- Ensure you understand the main skills required for the role you have applied for and reflect these in your interview (and your resume).
- Ensure you can talk about industry developments relevant to the business area you have applied to.
 - Recruiters look for aptitude, interest, inquisitiveness, and transferable skills.
- Ask open ended questions and take notes on your notepad; this helps to show your interest and allows you to review what was said.
 - Take care not to ask questions from your list that have already been covered during the interview. This suggests you haven't been listening.
 - If you prefer to use a tablet over a note pad, let the interviewer know that you are using it for notes.
 - **Don't fill the vacuum.** If the interviewer doesn't answer straight away, don't leap in with another question. Give them time to think. Allow yourself pauses, too. Don't be panicked into thinking that every second needs to be filled with words. Pauses make you look more, rather than less, in control.
- **Don't interrupt unnecessarily.**
 - If you've asked a question, listen to the answer. Don't cut across it in order to get to the next question.
 - If someone is listing 3 or 4 points, let him/her get to the end of the list before responding.
- **Don't jump to conclusions.** Try not to make up your mind one way or the other before the interview is over.
- **Don't end the interview if you think there's something important which hasn't been brought up.**
 - Summarize what you've learned and get clarification where necessary.
- **Don't bad mouth your present employer** or anyone else.
 - This is considered extremely poor behavior and will hurt your chances for progressing in the process.

Some questions you can expect to be asked

- Why financial services?
- Why this firm?



The Meyer Partnership N.A. LLC

- Tell me about your background – have a one-minute elevator pitch ready. Conclude with what you can bring to this role or company.
- Why are you suitable for this position? Why do you think you would be good at this?
- Tell me about a time when you had to work to a tight deadline, how did you ensure you met the deadline?
- Tell me about a time that you failed to deliver.
- Also expect to be asked technical questions.
 - **Admit it if you don't know an answer.** Tell the interviewer that you need time to think about your answer. Don't be afraid to turn this to your advantage. If you cannot think of an answer tell the interviewer that you will get back to them. This is a good technique to use if you truly can't think of an answer because it gives you an opportunity to get back in touch with the interviewer.
- In some states it is illegal for an employer to ask about criminal history at the point of job application; however, they may be able to ask during an interview.
 - Arrests do not need to be disclosed.
 - Most companies now conduct background checks; if you have a conviction, acknowledge it.
 - If you are not specifically asked about any criminal history, when you are invited for questions you may want to make a statement early.
 - Don't over explain your criminal history; keep it brief and focus more on what you learned as a result. As soon as you can, move back to the job and why you are a good fit.
 - Make sure that criminal history isn't the last topic discussed; you want to end the interview with a focus on your qualifications and how you are a good fit for the job.

Don't forget to sign up for complimentary access to Wall Street Prep's [Ultimate Guide to the Technical Finance Interview](#) and [Technical Finance Interview Question Bank](#). Sign up [here](#).

As the Interview Draws to a Close

- **Thank the interviewer for their time.**
- Make sure you have the names and job titles of everyone who took part in the interview or ask if they have a business card.
 - Make sure you have the spelling correct if you hand write them.
- **Find out the next steps.**



The Meyer Partnership N.A. LLC

- Ask what happens next and try to define next steps – i.e., whom else should you see or speak to? What happens from here; when are they hoping the new hire will start?

Follow Up

Following up can make the difference.

- **Do send a thank you note/email.**
 - Do it within 24 hours of the interview.
 - An email is fine; a hand-written note stands out from the crowd.
 - Restate your interest in the position.
 - Include a paragraph or two about something you learned during the interview that piqued your interest.
 - If you left the interview stating that you would follow up with something i.e. a question you needed time to consider, remember to include it.
 - If you can, include an article about a topic that would be of interest to the recipient.

The Offer – Acceptance / Decline

If You Receive an Offer

- Do not ghost – respond quickly and state that you will review the offer and respond before the deadline.
- Beware of the timing to respond– does the offer expire in a week?
- Review the offer including the Compensation / Benefits / Perks (i.e., travel).
 - Don't be afraid to ask for more information on anything that isn't clear.

Accepting an offer.

- Accept in writing before the deadline and get the firm's confirmation of your acceptance – show enthusiasm.
- If you are also waiting on another offer, let them know.
- Provide references who will give a varied view of your strengths and value (check with your referees first and send them a copy of the job description).

Declining an offer.

- Do not ghost.



The Meyer Partnership N.A. LLC

- Be gracious and thank them for the offer. Let them know you appreciate the vote of confidence, but you are unable to accept the role and you graciously decline the invitation to work at their company.
 - You should let them know why you are declining the offer (fit, competing offer with better pay, benefits don't work for you, cultural fit isn't right, advancement, commute).
- If you already decide (before receiving an offer) that the job is not right for you; graciously withdraw your application **before** the offer, if you can.

What To Do If You Don't Get the Job

- Don't ghost. As tempting as it may be to delete the email and move on, a polite and gracious response is the best approach.
 - The original successful applicant may turn the position down.
 - There may be another position that needs to be filled that you would be suitable for.
 - In these instances, the recruiter is more likely to select from a pool of already interviewed candidates. Your professional response to the initial rejection will help you to stand out.
- Send a brief email.
 - Express disappointment that you were not selected for the position, but thank the interviewer for the opportunity to meet with them and learn more about the company.
 - Reiterate your interest in working for the company and that you would like to be considered for any suitable future positions.
 - Ask for feedback about your interview. Not all interviewers provide feedback, but if they are willing to it can help you in future interviews.