

# Accounting Society Interview Guide



## Before the interview

- 1) Research the firm
  - a) Know the different service lines they provide, which industries they work in, and their main clients.
  - b) Key: Look up the values/principles of the firm. Know them, especially if your personal values are the same or similar to the firm's.
  - c) Know if the firm has published any recent articles, been in the news recently, or received awards.
  - d) Determine how you fit in and why they should hire you.
  - e) Why do you want to join XYZ company?
- 2) Stay up to date on business and economic news. Be able to hold an intelligent conversation about business and world news.
- 3) Prepare
  - a) Update your resume, know everything on it, and be able to speak about anything on your resume. You never know what aspect of your resume may resonate with the interviewer, be prepared to talk about anything and everything on it.
- 4) Your Experiences
  - a) Have a list of 8-10 of your experiences that you could use as answers for behavioral questions.
  - b) Cater your experiences to what the company looks for such as teamwork, leadership, excellence, times where you dealt with difficult people, and times where you went above and beyond, etc.
- 5) List of Questions
  - a) Create a list of thought provoking questions for the interviewer.
  - b) Think of questions that they do not normally get asked.
    - i) Ex: I'm trying to enjoy this process and learn the most I can. Thinking back to when you were in my shoes, what would you have done differently and do you have any lessons I could learn from?
  - c) Ask a question about research you did about the company.
    - i) Ex: I recently saw an article that PwC posted about the Internet of Things and how by 2020 pretty much everything will be connecting with the Internet. Do you think accountants will become extinct with the rise of computers and technology?
    - ii) Ex: I saw online that PwC has additional training called "Learning at PwC", what extra training have you done through this program?
- 6) Visit the office
  - a) If you have time, visit the office before your interview to get familiar with the area, the parking lot, how long it will take to get there, and to ensure that you will not be late.
- 7) Relax
  - a) You got this! Be yourself. If you already have an in-house interview, they know you are qualified, they simply want to see how you interact and if they could put you in front of a client.

### Interview Structure for Big 4 and most accounting firms

- 1) Almost always starts off with, so tell me about yourself.
  - a) Key: tell them about your experiences that pertain to the job/position you're applying for. Also throw extra-curricular activities and hobbies into it at the end. About 1-2 minute.
- 2) Behavioral Questions
  - a) Ex: Tell me about a time when...
  - b) Past experiences are a good determiner of how you will react in the future, be prepared for behavioral questions.
- 3) Questions for the interviewer
  - a) They will always leave time for questions that you have at the end of the interview.
  - b) Key: always ask questions, always.
  - c) Don't be afraid to get to know them on a personal level.
  - d) So what do you do outside of accounting?
- 4) Key: Get them talking about themselves, their experiences, their family and be truly interested in their story. If you get someone talking about themselves they will like you a lot more than if you did all the talking.
- 5) Ask for a business card and when you should expect to hear back from them.
- 6) Shake their hand while looking them in the eye and smiling. While shaking their hand address them by name, say thank you, and express how grateful and excited you are about the opportunity you are interviewing for.

### After the Interview

- 1) Always follow up with your interviewer and the recruiter. Thank them for the opportunity of interviewing for the position and that you are looking forward to hearing back from them.

## Sample Interview Questions

- 1) Tell me about yourself
- 2) Why our company?
- 3) Why accounting? (If you've declared interest in a specific service line: Why assurance? Why tax?)
- 4) What are your strengths?
- 5) What are your weaknesses?
  - a) Always mention how you have been improving upon your weakness.
- 6) Tell me about a time where you had to work in a team.
- 7) Tell me about a time where you had to be a leader.
- 8) Tell me about a time where you were in a team and had to deal with a difficult person.
- 9) Why should we choose you?
- 10) Tell me about a time where you had to go above and beyond to get the job done.
- 11) Describe the last time you had to juggle many things.
- 12) What was your toughest project to lead and how did you keep it on track?
- 13) Describe a situation that you initially thought you could handle alone and where you needed to reach out to someone when you were overwhelmed.
- 14) Tell me about a time where you disagreed with someone in your group.
- 15) What is the most stressful situation you have been in and how did you handle it?
- 16) Tell me about a time where you did not want to do something and how you motivated yourself to get it done.
- 17) Have you ever worked in a team setting where not everyone in the team agreed? How did you handle it?
- 18) Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?
- 19) When was a time you had to think quickly on your feet?

## How to Respond to Behavioral/Interview Questions

- 1) Use the S.T.A.R. method
  - a) Situation: describe the situation, set up your response with any knowledge one would need to know to understand your experience.
  - b) Task: describe the actual task that you or the group were set out to accomplish.
  - c) Action: describe the steps you took to accomplish the task.
  - d) Result: describe how the experience turned out.
    - i) Key: describe what you learned because of this experience and what knowledge you gained.
- 2) Don't keep rambling
  - a) Do not ramble on and on, the interviewer can tell when you are just trying to fill space.
  - b) Keep your response between 2-3 minutes.
  - c) Gage the interviewer's body language and if they are becoming uninterested, make your point and wrap up.

### Thought Provoking Questions to Ask the Interviewer

- 1) Did you ever see yourself being in the position you are now and what has been your journey to get there?
- 2) In your experience what has been the difference between people who stay with the firm and thrive and people who leave?
- 3) What is one thing that you encountered in the profession that you did not expect when you were in my shoes?
- 4) What's one action that a young aspiring accountant like myself could take that would get me closer to my dreams?
- 5) If you could go back to the day you graduated and give yourself advice, what would it be?
- 6) Where do you see yourself and the firm in 10 years?
- 7) What are the objectives for the firm for the next 5 years and how do you plan on getting there?
- 8) What are a few key techniques that you use to motivate your team?
- 9) What are some of the biggest challenges that first year associates come across?
- 10) How did you move up the ladder within the firm and what were some key aspects of doing so?
- 11) What are a few mistakes that other employees have made that I could hopefully avoid?
- 12) What problems are your firm facing?
- 13) What personality traits or characteristics do the most celebrated people at your firm have?
- 14) Where is the most interesting place you've traveled for work?
- 15) What do you like to do in your free time?
- 16) What are the skills you have seen that make people succeed at your firm?