

HOW **2** guide:

Interviewing: Panel and Group Job Interviews

Most of us have experience with the traditional job interview which involves a one-on-one meeting with a recruiter. However, companies are increasingly using other types of interviews, like panel and group interviews, to be more efficient and screen large numbers of candidates.

In a “**Panel**” interview, you will be asked questions from a group of company representatives. The challenge here is that it is difficult to build the kind of connection with the interviewers that you can with a one-on-one interview.

- If possible, ask in advance who will be in attendance so that you know the level of staff you will be interacting with, and so you can do some advance research on their role in the organization. It is likely each person on the panel has an agenda or their own concerns. For example, if the Director of Sales participates, expect questions about sales or your perception of the role of sales in an organization.
- When offered a seat, select one that allows you to easily see all panel members, like the head of the table. Sitting in the middle and swiveling your head back and forth will make you feel like you are watching a tennis match.
- When answering questions, direct most of your attention to the person who asked that question, but make sure to make periodic eye contact with all members of the panel.
- Use the names of the panel members frequently while answering the questions. This builds rapport and demonstrates strong interpersonal skills. For example, *“That’s a good question, Mr. Brown...”*
- If possible, write down the names of the panel members and jot down notes related to their questions.
- Another great technique to utilize within a panel interview is to cross reference the latest question with a previous one. For example, *“Mr. Smith, I believe student success should be at the center of all our endeavors. But as Dr. Lee noted earlier, there are numerous impediments to the learning process. Therefore, in order to reach students, we need to...”*
- If you need time to think of an answer, let them know. Otherwise, your silence will be disconcerting.
- When you are asking questions, direct them to the person most appropriate to answer.
- Send a follow-up email to each of the panel members thanking them and expressing your continued interest in the position. Refer to your notes, and customize the email to reflect anything you think may be important to them.

In a “**Group**” interview situation, all candidates interview at the same time in the same room. For job seekers, this is also one of the most stressful types of interviews since you are competing directly with the person sitting next to you.

- Don't be shy. Speak clearly and forcefully, but don't cut other people off or go over your allotted time.
- Prepare and practice a 2-minute introduction summarizing your education, experience, and career goals, and how this position will fit into your future plan.
- Arrive early. This will allow you extra time to meet the interviewers and other candidates, as well as get comfortable in your surroundings.
- Be courteous and professional at all times, even if others are not.

Make sure you have also reviewed the other guides on Interviewing available from FGCU Career Services.