

Course Name- Complete guide for campus interviews: Step by step preparation for Internships and Full-time jobs

Professor Name- Prof. Vinod Aravindakshan, Prof.Vibin Aravindakshan

Department name-Humanities and Social sciences

Institute name- IIT Palakkad

Week-03

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Answers to tough Tech & HR questions

Hello everyone. This is a session about interview questions. So we'll talk about tech questions, we'll talk about HR questions and think about how well do you present yourself, what are the best possible answers to give to the interviewers. So that's going to be the agenda for today. We'll talk about general questions, we'll talk about star questions which we discussed earlier, we'll also talk about technical questions and what are the best ways to answer tricky and troubling questions. Firstly, let's begin with general questions.

So firstly, you will get this question called walk me through your resume. That's like the most asked question in every interview. So typically, the purpose of this question is that they may be taking time to read your resume. So they want to talk about what stands out in your resume, like what are some of the peaks in your resume? So do not talk too much about your personal life.

This is a professional interview. Talk about jobs, talk about internships, talk about projects, talk about experiences, talk about skills. Ideally, you don't want this entire answer to go for more than say four to five minutes. Keep it short because if there is follow up, you'll definitely be asked questions. If there's any questions from the back of the minds of the recruiter.

Follow up questions will always be there. So you don't need to give an expanded talk about yourself right from childhood to where you are right now. Pick on important peak points. Talk about what makes you a good fit for the job process. So remember we talked about job description and identifying skills.

So try to hit on the fact that you match the skills which the recruiter is looking for. I think that should be the key of the conversation. So focus on skills, not necessarily on the resume. And you have to typically close with saying that that company you're interviewing for is a dream company. That's what you've always been waiting for.

That passion should come out very well. So the interest, passion, that enthusiasm will make you stand out as a candidate. And that's really what you should be shooting for. You'll get this question, why should we select you, right? So this is a tough one because now you've got to talk a little bit about yourself. You've got to be a salesman talking about why you are the best fit for the job.

So again, the good technique in all these scenarios is to stick to the job description. Identify skills in the job description. Make sure you cover the skills. Don't talk about how awesome you are as a person. In terms of being a person, in terms of being a friend, that is not necessary.

Focus on job. Can you get the job done? Do you have the expectations of the job description? Do you meet the expectations? That really should be where you come from. Sometimes it could turn out that what you bring to the table is a little different from what the companies want. For example, if you are from a non-software sector, you're trying to get into a software job, yes,

there's going to be a little bit of misalignment, right? So what can bridge that gap in that scenario is show your enthusiasm. Show your willingness to learn.

Give examples of willingness to learn. Explain why this company is super important to you. Talk about what's passionate about that sector. Talk about your knowledge of the sector, right? The more interest and passion and general information about the sector and the company you share, the more impressive you will look to the recruiter. So one third HR question you will get, which is also a star question, can be why this role? Why do you want to apply for this job? So one easy way to do it is talk about a prior experience in terms of how the job description and your previous experiences align with each other.

Be very honest about what your long-term goals are. For example, if you're trying for a job in that company, that job could change in the future. You may have to do different things. In addition, you may get promoted within the company. So any recruiter, when they're looking for jobs, they're not necessarily looking for you to fill the job they have.

They're probably shooting for maybe one job above that level or two jobs above the level. And asking, hey, is this person capable of promotion velocity? Which means that can you get into a role? For example, if you're being interviewed for an engineer position, can you become a senior manager? Can you become a manager? Those are questions already being asked. So you have to tell the recruiter that you want to be with the company long term. You want to get promoted. These are absolutely things the company wants.

They don't want people who come and join the company today, leave the company tomorrow. That's not the intent. Make sure that you talk about your long term goals and that has aligned with what the company wants. That'll make you a great candidate. Be honest, be truthful.

These things really matter because it's easy to spot lies in an interview process. When you say something which is not accurate, it'll come across in your body language. When somebody asks a question, why, say maybe three, four times, you start fumbling and you will not be able to answer. So I've done tens of thousands of interviews. I've not seen anybody who can successfully cheat a recruiter, a trained recruiter when it comes to interviews.

Very, very easy to spot people who are faking it. So be honest, it'll definitely help you a lot. Why this company? This is one more question you often get. So it's all about your interest, your passion that has to shine through. It doesn't matter what the role is.

It doesn't matter what the company is doing. If you show interest, if you say that that is the best company for you, that's it. You will get through. Every company wants people who have genuine interest. Knowledge about the space, knowledge about the sector and the company, this direction of the company, the strategic direction, what is happening, what's happening with competitors, all that knowledge you gather about companies, it'll come across when you talk.

Try to include that as part of the conversations. When you are asked to ask questions back to the recruiter, ask them pointed questions about business strategy, not necessarily about the job you're applying for. And the more questions you ask, the more impressive you will see. One more tip I would say is that networking in advance, talking to people from within the company, and mentioning that to recruiters, saying that you already talked to people from within the company, will definitely make you stand out. Because very, very few people, I would say less

than 1% of people applying for jobs really take the effort to talk to somebody from within the company.

So if you do that homework, if you do that effort and reach out, tell recruiters that you already connected with people that will make you a superior candidate and there's no way that you will not move to the next round. Why the sector, right? So we touched on some of the key things. You're going to talk about the future of the company, like why the company, that sector is fantastic place to be in. For example, if you're applying for a job in artificial intelligence machine learning, fantastic place. There's so much happening in the sector.

Talk about the exciting things. Create the image of what the future is going to be and how you can add to that future. The more you can contribute, the better the recruiter is going to see you as a match for that company. Talk about competitors, talk about developments in the sector. All these things will definitely make you again stand out in front of recruiters.

Very few people make the effort to do enough research and homework about the company, so that's going to help you. The next question you could get is, do you have any questions for us? absolutely you have to have questions right so you need to have at least like two to three questions ready with you which has been rehearsed planned in advance you have to do a lot of work for this question you have to spend hours prepping for this question every question you ask you should probably involve around two to three hours of effort so curate questions put it together, remember these questions, and ask them to the recruiter. It can be questions about culture, competitors, strategy. The more you orient your questions, not just towards the narrow job you're doing, but about the business strategy, business direction, that's really where it's going to look very impressive. These are questions which nobody is going to ask.

You could read the quarterly reports of the company, annual reports of the company, and come up with fantastic insights which even maybe the employees themselves do not know, or the recruiters themselves do not know. So if you can find those sort of questions, that is absolutely amazing. That's what you should be targeting. Prep in advance. Not asking questions will leave a very bad impression and that's a sure shot route to failure.

And do not ask very generic questions like how do you think the company is? Why do you think you are here after all this time working in the company? Asking the recruiter back. These questions, what is the company culture? These are very generic questions. A lot of people ask these questions. This is definitely not going to impress the recruiter. So ask those questions which make you stand out.

That really should be your area of focus. Let's now get to some of the star questions, HR questions you could get. So earlier questions are all about the company, in terms of understanding you, where you come from, and all that. But the star questions are going to be very, very specific in nature. They're going to talk about the skills in the job description.

So you've got to be even more specific in these questions. So, clearly the question will be framed in terms of give me an example of a time when you exhibited certain skills, traits and so on. So, for example, if the question is what are your biggest weaknesses? You have to maybe share some examples of the past where you had to improve yourself and what was your weakness. So that's where the recruiter is going to expect the answer from you. But take care not to talk about a situation where you did not change anything.

Don't bring up those situations. Talk about scenarios where you made a big change. So you overcame a bad situation. Overcoming something is very important. Talk about the business context.

Do not get very personal. So I think keeping it professional will make you stand out. Do not get emotional when you talk about weaknesses. Really the recruiter is not looking for a fantastic answer. All they want to know is does this person have a problem or issue which I am not aware of. And many people when asked to talk about themselves say all sort of things.

They run themselves down and they may talk ill about themselves. And that's an easy way for the interviewer to recruit some, to identify some red flags. And if that's a big problem, they may not take you forward. So it's almost a self-sabotage exercise.

So just be careful to go in the right direction. Talk positively about yourself. That's very important. Do not ever mention that you are weak with respect to the job description or the skills as defined in the job description because you have to have every skill in the job description. If you don't meet the skills, you will not get through. So your weakness cannot be the skills the company is looking for.

So just make sure you don't fall into the trap. Keep the answer short and simple. Even if it's a very silly answer, it's fine, right? There are no perfect answers. Just don't mess up the answers. That really is the idea of what I'm trying to tell you today. try to give an answer where you overcame a specific problem and talk about how you overcame it, right? Like use a star framework and I think this is an easy way to sail through this answer.

How have you improved yourself of late, right? This is another question you will get. So talk about, don't talk about technical skills, talk about people skills, talk about business skills because when it comes to technical skills, right, you're expected to have that right from the beginning, right? You cannot There cannot be a learning space when it comes to technical skills. There can be learning space for you inside the company when it comes to both business skills and people skills. So when you talk about improvement, try to stay away from technical skills, but you can clearly talk about people skills, which is the safest, or maybe even business skills. Talk about people management stuff, and these are things which everybody keeps improving in their life.

There's no perfect people manager. Everybody is trying to get better. Do not get very emotional again. And like I said earlier, do not talk about technical skills. In this sort of scenarios, try to deflect the concentration towards business skills and people skills. Preferably people skills because that's a place where there's a lot of improvement possible for every single person.

So even if you're a CEO of a company, what happens is that you have a communications coach who comes with you and gives you feedback on how you could have done a better job. So even a CEO is not the best person when it comes to people's skills. Everybody's continuously learning and improving. What's your biggest strength? Now this is similar to the question we talked about earlier, which is what's your biggest weakness? But strength is something where you have to give a proper answer which matches the job description, right? I mean, try to link your answer to the job description.

Importantly, try to be a good storyteller. Talk about why you are the best fit for the job. Because in any recruiter scenario, they're talking to maybe hundreds of candidates. And you want to tell

the recruiter that your search ends here. And the moment they talk to you, there's no need to talk to other people after you because you are the best person for the job. You have to convince them, right? Because ultimately, they're going to make only one offer or maybe one offer and one backup, right? That's how they're going to release an offer.

So you have to be the best among thousands of candidates. So you have to convince the recruiter that you are the best. So have that attitude, have that approach of confidence, and you have to portray the confidence that you have the best. Only then you'll be able to make it. And these biggest strengths, use it as an opportunity to talk about yourself and how you are a very good fit for the company job description. What's your biggest failure? A little bit similar to the weaknesses question.

Do not spend too much time talking about personal life. And again, do not reveal anything which makes you look bad. Talk about overcoming a problem, exactly similar to the weaknesses question we discussed earlier. The recruiters are not looking for a great answer, but they're trying to spot people who made blunders and want to talk about the blunders openly. So try not to bring attention to what you're not good in, right? Try to talk about something where you made an impact, you made a change, and made a change for the better. Do you have any regrets? I think this is a common question you'll get, right? Why did you leave the earlier job? Did you get a pre-placement offer? What happened? Did you not join that internship? Did you not take up a, why did you leave the earlier manager if the constitution is very good? All that sort of questions mean the same thing, right? Do you have any regrets about your previous employer? I would say be very watchful with this answer.

Try not to badmouth anyone. Talk ill about somebody. Always say that you look at life as an opportunity to learn and develop. Do not look back at the past and talk ill, bad about someone. That's not going to help you. So if you have that attitude, recruiters look at it very seriously. They feel that a person who is blaming everyone typically has a problem within themselves.

So they do look at it as a red flag if you... get into a big conversation about how everything in the earlier company was all bad and you're the only person trying to change everything that typically is not true so be careful about how you talk about other companies other managers other professors or people you've worked with try not to badmouth them just say that you're looking for better opportunities and that company you're interviewing with is going to give you that better opportunity so you're trying to learn and improve and that company you're interviewing with presents the best place where you can actually have the learning and improvement. And that make it look like a very solid answer. What are your salary expectations? That's a very common questions people get, right? And I'm going to offer some tips about how to handle this question. So try not to answer this question the beginning process when it comes to recruitment right the initial first couple of rounds when you're having conversations with the recruiter talking to the initial tech recruiter all that be very thoughtful about answering this question because of a very important reason which is that at that point very early on in the game they're not really looking to select you it's elimination process and we talked about this earlier we talked about in week two we talked about this where we talked about the fact that early on when it comes to interviewing it's all about removing people from the lot it's not about selecting you so Basically, if you say something that doesn't match what the company's expectation is, you just get eliminated.

And you will not even know how wrong you were. You won't even know what the company's policy is when it comes to compensation. So try not to answer this question in the beginning

phase. Try to defer it for later. Try to move that answer for much later. Just tell the recruiter that it is fine if the company pays you whatever is fair market value.

Whatever is fair in the market, if they pay you, you're good with it, right? And that's a solid answer. You're basically saying that do not underpay me, and that's a very good answer. You don't need to give a number. Just the answer can be in terms of words saying that pay me what is fair. Sometimes you can ask a recruiter as you go through the interview process about what the range for that compensation is.

And then you can maybe come up with the numbers. Sometimes the recruiters will give you that number if they are interested in you, if they like you. So have those sort of conversations. Don't give any numbers from your end. Wait to hear some number and then make a call in terms of what that number could be. If you can move this answer as late as possible in the interview process, that is going to work to your advantage.

So don't give a number in the beginning. By the end, you'll have more time so you can talk to people from within the company, talk to your points of network within the company. Maybe you have seniors within the company, maybe you have friends within that company. So talk to them, get a good sense of what the company pays.

You can do market research yourself. There are websites like glassdoor.com. There are websites like [teambblind](http://teambblind.com). There are websites like [levels.fii](http://levels.fii.com). There are a lot of places where you can get compensation information, salary.

com. There are just so many places, right? So do your research and get a good sense of what companies pay. And then ask for a number which you think meets the expectations. You shouldn't be asking for a very high number or a very low number. Try to be somewhere in the middle.

And that ties in back with what we mentioned earlier. Ask to be treated fairly in the market. So ask for a midpoint number that will really help you a lot. And when you give a number pretty late in the interview process, that becomes a very different process.

It's all about selection. It's not about elimination. So even if you give a bad answer, it doesn't mean that you'll get eliminated. Because after having spent so much time with you, the company wants to select you. So that way you have an advantage. Let's maybe go to some technical questions you would face during the interview process. So one very common question you could get is, what if you have absolutely no idea what the answer is? You are clueless.

How are you going to solve the problem in that scenario if you do not know the answer? So I faced this myself during MBA interviews. I faced a scenario where sometimes I was completely stuck. I had no idea how to answer that question. The key lesson I've learned from my own experience is that don't get stuck in that one question.

Typically, every interviewer has maybe seven to eight questions to ask you. And maybe they can only ask you five or six questions. And out of eight, they can only touch five. So they have more questions than they can ask you. So just say, hey, I don't know this answer. Or just say that, can we move to the next question? So try to move on as quickly as possible.

It's possible sometimes. It is not possible sometimes. But if possible, just say, hey, I just cannot think of it right now. Or my mind is blank right now for some reason. I cannot think straight. Can we just move on to the next question? And we'll come back to it later.

Push it in a way so that it makes it easier for them to understand your problem. And you don't need to say that I don't know the answer. You can just say I can come back to it later. That's also a good way to answer. So try to move on quickly.

If they say that no, you have to give an answer, then maybe try to tell them that... I don't know the exact answer to this question but I maybe know the answer to a similar question which is not exactly this but something similar and try to give that different answer and maybe that could work right. So instead of saying I don't know you can try a different approach which is answering a slightly different question that could work with the recruiter again it depends on who the recruiter is. But then if you're stuck, if you're not able to give a clear answer, you can always say, maybe I don't know the answer. Maybe can we come back to it later? Can we move on to the next question? These are all great ways.

But key thing is be comfortable. You are never going to be evaluated on the basis of one question. It's always going to be the overall holistic evaluation of all the questions put together and all the answers you provide. It's never going to be like if you give one fantastic answer, that will not count too much. Or if you give one really bad answer, that will also not count too much.

Just understand it's a big picture and try to move on. Be comfortable. Don't lose confidence. I think if you follow these tips, you should be able to answer most of these tricky questions. What if you had some idea of the answer but not a complete idea of the answer? How then are you going to answer the question? This is where I strongly recommend that you enter into a sort of dialogue with the recruiter. pull the interviewer in into the conversation and make it a to and fro conversation, right? Typically, interviews are always one-sided, where the recruiter asks a question and you're answering in one direction. You're walking through the startup process.

You're talking about situation, task, actions, and results. But this is another way to do it. Sometimes, if you are not sure, instead of giving a blatantly wrong answer, what you could actually do is pull them in, ask questions, just be very communicative and conversant. For example, you could say, hey, interviewer, can you maybe define this question a little better and ask them some follow-up questions. So you can also ask the interviewer for clues about how to answer this question. Sometimes they will offer you clues if they feel that they want to encourage you to give an answer.

So you can get clues from a recruiter. You can ask a lot of follow-up questions with the recruiter. In fact, some interviewers and recruiters love it if you ask follow-up questions. That means that you have the passion, you have the interest. They'll make you stand out. Try to identify some of the big variables of the question, right? And then try to talk about it. Even if you don't know the intricate details, talk about the big picture first and then go down to the details.

That's also one approach which can help you. Talk about some of the assumptions you make. There's no perfectly right or wrong answer. It's all about.

.. Depending on your scenario, what assumptions you make, some answers may be better than the other. And it's okay for you to define those assumptions in front of the recruiter openly. So then they know how you are trying to break down the problem. Sometimes recruiters don't even care what the answer is. All they care about is how do you break down problem into small pieces and how do you work through the problem.

So if you approach it from that perspective, you can impress the recruiter. Talk about maybe some frameworks you use. And we talk about some of these frameworks in other classes. But talk about some framework and say how that can be used to solve this problem. And that's something which all the recruiters absolutely love. Again, you can say that your answer is going to be very different from different perspectives, but you have something unique to share, right? So that uniqueness is what is important.

Like I said, it's not always about the correct answer. It's about the uniqueness and the perspective, the fresh perspective you bring to the table. If you can draw attention to those set of qualities, definitely you will stand out when answering a tricky, tough question. Okay folks, so we pretty much come to the end of this conversation about questions and hopefully you've learned a bunch of ideas in terms of troubleshooting and solving very tricky HR and tech interview questions. Thank you.