



## Ezra Penland Actuarial Recruitment Entry Level Interview Preparation

- Review the website of the company with whom you are interviewing. Also do internet news searches for the company to see if there are current press releases you should know about. Review the job description.
- Review your resume in detail and be sure to have it in front of you while you interview. Make sure you are prepared to discuss all information you have listed on your resume. Be prepared to discuss technical aspects of your experience.
- Avoid distractions. For a phone interview, find a quiet place where you will be able to concentrate. For an in-person interview, be sure to arrive 10 - 15 minutes early, and are well rested and prepared. Turn off your cell phone, or change your settings to Do Not Disturb for a phone interview.
- Be sure to smile, make great eye contact, and to extend a strong handshake and warm greeting. Make a great first impression!
- Answer questions fully but concisely. If you find that you've been talking for a minute straight, you are likely going into too much detail.
- Have a range of general and specific questions prepared. Ask different questions to different people. Asking questions shows that you have thought about the company and opportunity, and have genuine interest in both. Use knowledge from the job description and your research about the company to inform your questions.
- Avoid negatives about current or past employers, managers, colleagues, or roles. There are ways to address difficult situations, and if you have concerns we can discuss those, but focus on what makes you a strong, qualified candidate for this role.
- Be ready to address concerns a potential employer might have about you as a candidate. For example, if you have only some exposure to the lines of business the position would be working on, be ready to discuss experience or knowledge you have that would allow you to transition nicely into the role.
- If you are not sure whether you should say something, don't! You can always discuss anything later if it still seems important, but you cannot take something back once it is said.
- Do not ask about salary, hours, benefits (including study program) and other forms of compensation / benefits but be prepared to provide a range if they ask you about your compensation expectations.
- Be on guard and prepared, but within that, relax and enjoy meeting the people who might be your future colleagues! Be prepared for different interview styles.

## **Behavioral interview questions**

*Asks past-oriented questions that challenge respondents to relate what they did in past jobs or life situations that are relevant to the particular job relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities required for success.*

- Describe a time when you were in charge of a project, and something went wrong. How did you fix the problem?
- Describe a time when you made a significant mistake at work. What did you do to remedy the situation?
- Tell me about a time you had to deal with a difficult person, either client or co-worker. How did you adapt?
- Tell me about a time when you didn't fully understand the concept that was presented to you. How did you handle it?
- Tell me about a group project that you have worked on, and tell me about the outcome. How would you describe your place in the group dynamic?
- Tell me about a time you provided exceptional customer service.
- Tell me about a time a project changed midstream. How did you adapt?
- Tell me about a time that you had to work with a lot of data and how you handled it.
- Tell me about a time when you had to do analysis with insufficient information.
- Tell me about a time when you had to make a tough leadership decision, and would you do anything different in hindsight?
- Describe a time when you went above and beyond.
- How do you encourage under-performing team members to excel?

## **Industry experience questions**

*Asks candidates to describe or demonstrate job or industry knowledge.*

- What are recent trends in the industry?
- When given a data project, what is your process?
- Where applicable, name the four financial statements and how they interact with each other.
- Describe the actuarial present value
- Why did you pick your discipline?
- Share your understanding of this role's responsibilities.
- What investment strategy would you advise someone to follow?
- What is the difference between insurance and consulting?
- What do you think an actuary does? How would you explain what an actuary does to someone?
- Be prepared to answer questions about your technical skills (Excel, SQL, SAS, R, Python, etc.) e.g. How do you get rid of empty rows in Excel?
- What are some unique challenges to a mutual company?
- What are you looking to get out of this internship/role?
- What do you know about our competitors?
- What is your knowledge of insurtech?

## **Case questions**

*Asks the applicant to solve puzzles, brain teasers, or out of the ordinary questions*

- How would you design a toaster oven?
- How many ping pong balls are on Air Force One?
- What questions should I ask you?
- How would you rate me as an interviewer from 1-10? Why?
- How would you explain the time value of money to a 5 year-old?
- If you were given \$20 million, how would you spend it?

## **Situational interview questions**

*Asks job applicants to imagine a set of circumstances and then indicate how they would respond in that situation.*

- How would you approach a client with a needed change to which they were resistant?
- How would you track down an elusive manager to get a response?
- You're responsible for an important project near completion but receive another important project that must be completed immediately. How do you multi-task and prioritize?
- Give an example of what you would do with idle time on the job without instruction from others.
- How do you hold yourself and others accountable at work?
- You disagree with the way your supervisor says to handle a problem. What would you do?
- What would you do if you realized a project you completed just before deadline did not meet all of the project specifications?
- Tell me about the time when you had to explain a technical issue to a non-technical person.

## **Background questions**

*Focuses on work experience, education, and personal background*

- What is your biggest weakness? (Choose a skill you can improve upon, and frame how you have worked on it rather than something you cannot change)
- Describe someone who has been a mentor to you, and what you learned from them.
- What was your favorite and least favorite class in college and why?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- Why are you the best candidate for this role? What would you bring to the team?
- What do you do outside of work?
- How would your best friend describe your personality?
- If I contacted your most recent manager, what would they have to say about you?
- Do you have experience documenting technical processes?
- How do you stay organized and on task?
- How do you deal with stress on the job?

- What do you want to get out of this internship?
- What was your largest success in college?
- What was your greatest challenge in college?
- Describe an actuarial concept you have learned and explain it.
- What are your exam progress plans? How long do you think it will take you to be an Associate (or Fellow)? (Be prepared to explain any gaps in your exam progress)
- To what extent have you developed your technical skills? (E.g. Excel, SAS, Python, etc.)
- What is your experience with financial statements?
- What leadership qualities are you looking for in your future boss or supervisor?
- Do you possess any knowledge of \_\_\_\_ ? (Review the job description and prepare to explain your experience as it relates to the position responsibilities)
- How do you manage classes and exams?
- Why would you pick (P&C) over (life insurance) or vice versa?
- What was your favorite non-actuarial class in college?
- What is your proudest accomplishment?
- How did you hear about Actuarial Science, and what made you want to become an Actuary?
- Why did you choose \_\_\_\_\_ University?