



Finding a new career opportunity that matches your professional aspirations can be challenging. At Cummins, we're interested in helping you clearly understand what our career options can offer and if your skills are a fit. We've created a new series designed to help you interact with our employees during your employment search.

"Interview Tips" is a behind-the-scenes glimpse into Cummins recruiting like we've never shown before. The series includes real answers from hiring decision-makers designed to provide candidates an insider's perspective of how to succeed during our process.

At Cummins, we're interested in getting to know you better during the early stages of our process. Below are recruiter responses from our team to help you prepare for your interview regarding a series of interview topics.

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Phone interviews

Are there simple things I can do to have a good phone interview?

"Have a pen and notebook ready to be able to write down pertinent details, including your interviewer's name. It's a good idea to say the interviewer's name in conversation to help build a relationship, especially if it goes good and they request certain items from you to follow up on. It's generally a good thing to remember who you are speaking with and not forget their name because you're nervous."

"If you have the opportunity to speak with your interviewer in advance, you can learn about them or the hiring manager. Be proactive to ask what expectations your contact may have of you. The phone interview is important to you getting to meet the hiring manager, so be clear on all of the details."

Why is your personal style important to success?

"Smiling while talking helps connect you to the interviewer. Even on the phone, we can tell the difference between someone who is personable and someone who is flat. Voice inflection and energy comes across as a more interesting candidate to the recruiter, so be positive and personable."

"It can be difficult for us when we talk to a negative person. Always say "thank you" and close the call with your reasoning of why you want this job. It helps you leave our conversation on a positive note."

"Videoconferencing is another positive step for you that can lead to a face-to-face interview. Make sure you're presentable looking, stay focused on the camera and don't fidget. Remember we can see you! Make sure your internet connection is good – and always think about the background behind you. Keep the environment very conservative if possible, especially since it can be distracting to the viewer."



How is my situation the day of the interview important?

"I usually recommend talking to someone on a landline if possible, and it's good to have a backup number just in case you get disconnected. Some college applicants use a focus booth inside the library where it is secluded, so find a space where you can concentrate on our conversation."

"Think about what type of distractions are inside your environment – kids, animals, your television, roommates, etc. It's important to plan for the unexpected, because distractions usually have a negative impact on your conversation."

"I've had many conversations dropped because applicants were in their car driving and we lost the cell phone signal. I've also been on the phone with candidates who were in traffic and I could hear honking horns around them. One time a high level candidate was interviewing for an executive role and, all of a sudden, a dog started barking in the background. These things rarely leave a good impression with our recruiting team."

Functional talent manager interviews

Why are functional interviews an important part of our process?

"We go through this step because it helps candidates focus on the needs of opportunity they're interviewing for. It gives us confidence that you're serious about this position. As a recruiter, I'm interested in the commitment you are ready to make to Cummins right now. It's important for our Company to understand the impact you can make today."

"We're interested in candidates who are willing to learn, can succeed at what they know and are interested in becoming a longer term contributor over time. I specifically look for enthusiasm for the position we're discussing and type of work we do here."

How does the functional interview help us see your development potential?

"It's the curiosity of our work we do here at Cummins that makes someone a good fit in my opinion. That's encouraging to me – do you see this is something you can be excited about? Those are the type of employees that are fully engaged in the problems we solve. They're invested for our customers and our business. This type of candidate is a better fit for how we're analyzing the future needs of our business."

"We are interested in understanding your goals and how you can contribute. Our training and development is focused on building capable employees, so explain to us why this specific role is important to the current stage of your career path and how it will fit inside your career plan."

"One unique thing about Cummins, which may be hard to understand before you work here, is we have many types of careers inside the Company. You might think your development path is going one way when, instead, it may change once you investigate different elements of our business model. This is not one of those ordinary jobs and we have many unique, global opportunities here."



What do we look for inside your functional experiences and background?

“I believe it’s the application of your solutions that’s really important. It helps us understand you can see the problem and would be able to create solutions inside of our business. It’s difficult for you to realize the full job description we’re interviewing you for, so show us you saw the context of the solution created and how you impacted the project through your capabilities.”

“Candidate experiences have a lot to do with how successful you might be at Cummins. We want you to communicate the work you’ve done in a credible way: why you did the project and how it’s important to what you were working on overall. Show us you have a firm grasp of the subject we’re talking about. Make sure you demonstrate why your solution fits inside the scope of the larger problem you solved.”

“Be clear and honest about what you’re talking about. If you don’t understand something, made up answers don’t work in our process. You’ll lose credibility, which doesn’t make the interviewer want to recommend you for hire. Concisely demonstrate the true successes from your background.”

SUCCESS DURING YOUR INTERVIEW

Avoiding interview mistakes

What if I don’t know the answer to a specific question?

“One mistake we often see is not thinking through the question being asked. If you don’t know the answer, it’s fine to pause and think about what to communicate. Don’t ramble in the interview – clear, concise answers help the recruiter see your fit inside our Company. Rambling shows us it may be difficult for you to focus in stressful situations”

“Don’t panic if you can’t answer a question we ask you. It changes the feel of the interview and may distract you during future questions. Do your best to respond based on your previous experiences and make sure you have an answer for what your development plan is. We want to understand how you will work on your weaknesses over time - if that answer is not clear, it can have a negative effect on your interview.”

Is my environment important during a phone interview?

“Going to a quiet spot instead of driving in the car or being around roommates is very important. Make sure the time is convenient for you and don’t allow yourself to be distracted by other things – be focused on what you’re saying. If the noise in your background is a distraction for you, chances are it is a distraction to the interviewers as well. Finding a quiet space to have your interview shows us you’re serious about the position. ”

“Arrange for a land line if possible and reserve an interview or conference room. We don’t recommend you doing the interview on a cell phone from your car.”



Are manners important during an interview?

“Honesty is the best policy, so it’s OK to tell us about your negatives if you have a current plan for working on them. Be able to articulate how your career path and goals for development align.”

“Some candidates don’t realize the person they are interviewing with is a high-level employee inside the company. They know their job and the Company. Be polite in the way you interact with others. Also show us that you know yourself & have the maturity to go after what you want in life. Everyone has a skill set – it’s a mistake when you haven’t considered your background & development path. We’re interested in more than “I like engineering” or “I like finance”.”

“Listen to the question in full. Don’t be hesitant to ask us to repeat the question for clarification. Explain the situation we’re discussing, your actions and the final end result. Being able to show how you worked through scenarios in an articulate manner is important to us.”

How should I follow up with the recruiter?

“Sometimes following up with you is out of our control. It doesn’t mean you have been closed out of consideration if you haven’t heard from us. We’re doing our best to get you through the process as soon as possible.”

“Ask your recruiter how they would like to follow up with you. If they prefer to follow up by email, then don’t call. If they prefer you follow up by phone, then ask when would be a good time to speak next. This way you both have an understanding of the timeline. It’s best for you to give the recruiting team time to connect internally with the decision maker to get feedback on your interview. We realize you may be excited, but sometimes we travel and have many candidates in process at the same time.”

“Many times we’re waiting on feedback from multiple people to consider your stage of the interview process. It’s best to give us at least 48-72 hours to connect with our internal team to better understand the status of your interview. Calling once an hour is not appropriate in any situation.”

Common interview questions

Is my education or work experience important?

“Be able to explain the work you’ve done, be it academic or internships or design projects. Help me understand the “why and what” of your project, how it fits into the real world and why you feel like your work is making an impact on others.”

“Describe something specific about Cummins and why you feel you are important to what we do. For example, if you’re working on a technology, show us why the technology could make a difference for us. Where can we use your background? Show us how you’ve succeeded and learned from your work.”



“One thing candidates don’t appreciate is there is internal consistency inside questions we’re asking. Sometimes questions we ask build on each other and are linked to answers you’ve already given.”

Will you ask about my career experiences and goals?

“I’m very interested in why you want to work at Cummins and complete the work we do here. It helps our team understand if you’ve thought about our careers beyond monetary compensation.”

“How can you show us you recognize when projects are not aligned with optimal performance? Your examples might include visualizing inconsistencies across teams or projects. Then connect your intellect to the bigger picture of what we do here at Cummins.”

“Success is good, but being able to demonstrate how you’ve learned is better. We often talk to graduate students completing technical research. Show us your process of moving testing failures to successes.”

How much research should I do about Cummins?

“Many candidates don’t recognize all of the business units we have here. Do you have a grasp of our business and the different ways to succeed in your career? We want to know you are interested in the different types of business units we have here.”

“It’s impressive for us to hear a good answer, but open ended questions can have lots of good answers. Think about it from the employer’s perspective to show why you’re a fit for Cummins. Remember who you are talking to, including how the answer might be analyzed by your future supervisor.”

How much should I think about my career in advance?

“We often ask open ended questions about the job function or role we’re interviewing for. I look for answers that are thought out and show you can think on your feet, especially how your answer applies across teams you’ve been on or more broadly in your field.”

“The best candidates have made their own path to success. Sometimes we undertake challenges bigger than we conceptually see – why can you solve complex problems and see the forest through the trees?”

“Demonstrate how you responded when something didn’t go the way you expected it to go. Show us your plan for overcoming adversity. If something unforeseen happened and you dealt with it, tell us in detail and your analysis to turn things around.”



Communicating strengths during the interview

Why it is important to discuss what work I prefer to do?

“I’m looking for what the candidate likes to do and does it align with the position we have available. If I receive an answer during an interview that “I really like to do this specific type of work” and it fits to the needs of the projects we’re working on, it can help us identify if the career opportunity is a match for their interests. That’s critical to the success of both the candidate and Cummins.”

“Can you go beyond the sentences on your resume? We are looking to understand if there is depth to your strength. Demonstrate what you’re talking about before you leave the interview – provide examples as you describe your skill set. For example, if someone doesn’t like to do technical laboratory work, then we can ensure their success by looking for other roles where they might be a fit.”

How do I communicate what challenges I can help solve?

“We want our employees to succeed, so candidates can increase their success by helping us clearly understand their experiences. We’re interested in understanding why you’ll be engaged in finding solutions that match our challenges. Being able to find the right candidate who will have a long tenure at Cummins depends on what solutions that can provide.”

“I’m interested in how capable is the candidate. How can they contribute to what we’re working on now? If you can show us your previous contribution in school or in your career, we can analyze what type of projects you could have the most impact on. If you have difficulty communicating this, it’s hard for us to understand what different items on your resume really means.”

What if I’m a recent college graduate and am still developing my skill set?

“The level of commitment to a role is important. We like for you to demonstrate this through your experiences because you may still have work to do inside your strengths if you’re just out of college.”

“We want to understand the process you’ve developed inside the work you’ve completed - how did you do it, what was accomplished during your project and what did you learn from this experience. It gives us insight into what can be accomplished from an entry level candidate in the near term.”

“It’s important for both Cummins and the candidate to be engaged in the work we’re doing here. If a candidate has strengths that help them be a contributor at work, ultimately they may enjoy working here over time - even if they are early in their career today and still learning their craft.”



Interview etiquette

How should I dress for an interview?

“Dress for success – it makes a difference. If you come to a career fair in jeans, you probably aren’t taking the employers seriously. If your clothes are distracting, the recruiter doesn’t always take in your qualifications. Personal space and personal hygiene are very important to think about as well. Be warm and friendly, and show us you respect why we’re there to meet you.”

“We’re trying to be focused on your answers and not your earrings. It is difficult for your interview to go well if you show up inappropriately dressed. Candidates who wear low cut dresses or short skirts don’t take into consideration how employees in a corporate environment dress each day.”

“You never know who you might meet at a career fair – for example, there may be senior level employees who drop in on your interview. Make sure you make the right first impression. You can take a suit jacket off if you’re overdressed, but you can’t make it appear where there isn’t one.”

How can I make a lasting impression at a career fair?

“Some candidates show up in the front row of our Company presentations just because they want the opportunity that bad. That type of effort stands out to us. We know who wants the job. Your attitude relates to how hard you will work down the line.”

“Bubbly personalities often come across as warm and personable. That’s the type of genuine interest we’re looking for – show us why we’re who you’re looking for. We have many applicants that are passionate about the Company. Always put your best face forward and be positive. Your handshake is also important, but it doesn’t have to be so firm that it hurts. That’s never a good thing.”

Should I ask about compensation during my interview?

“In an organization like Cummins, we’re interested if you can understand the total rewards of our Company. That includes work life balance, career development and lots of on-the-job training. Many strategic training initiatives are paid for by the Company that is outside of your compensation.”

“If the recruiter brings up compensation, it is appropriate to discuss. If they do not, wait and see where the interview goes. Compensation includes tuition reimbursement, Six Sigma training, investment benefits and lots of other options that go beyond money. You’ll also get professional reviews every three months that have an impact on your compensation as you’re promoted over time.”

“Our entry level job offer salaries are fixed based on your college degree. Make sure you understand the Company’s career mobility options that can also grow your compensation. If you do a good job here and are willing to relocate, growing your salary can happen quicker than you may think.”



GENERAL BEST PRACTICES

Prepare in advance

What type of research should I do for my interview?

“Make sure you research our Company – know what Cummins product lines are, different industries our business units engage in and how we support our customers. It shows us why you want to be here.”

“Bring prepared questions to show us your interest in our organization. Even if you’ve done your homework, it helps us see the personality of the candidate. Will you be shy or bubbly? That makes a difference in how you do your job in the future – and how might you fit inside our team culture.”

“We review how candidates have prepared over time for what their intended career path is. Then we consider if they see the future leader inside of them. Or would they prefer to be an individual technical leader or contributor and not a team leader? You can be either role, but tell us how you see yourself.”

“We often ask the question “what are your career goals?” because Cummins is a hire-to-develop company. We want to consider how training might make a long term difference in what you can do.”

Should I bring samples or examples of my previous work?

“Live interviews sometimes go better if we see samples what the candidate can do. Different majors or employment backgrounds have unique experiences. We have many areas to consider – for example, someone who is an Electronics major might succeed in our power generation or combustion positions.”

“I’m reviewing the resume and often looking for specific keywords or capabilities to discuss. If the candidate can speak to these items, it might connect to their strengths to the position that may not jump off their resume. These discussions often lead to good conversation about their skill set.”

What information on the job posting is most important for me to review?

“Have you thought about what it takes to be an expert in your field? That’s important here, because we have high potential employees leading our most important customer programs. Demonstrate you understand your field, which often shows us the maturity level of the candidate.”

“I look for why the candidate wants to specifically work for Cummins. That’s very important because we’re looking for passionate people who are interested in our business. It makes a difference in our selection process.”



What kinds of questions should I ask of the interviewer?

“If the candidate has good functional knowledge of Cummins, they often succeed in our process. Be able to articulate why the area you’re applying for interests you. If there is something you don’t understand based on your research, asking clarification questions help us see you are interested.”

“Simple questions like “what is the culture like?” and “what is the most difficult thing about working at Cummins?” shows you are seriously considering our opportunity. If you’re really interested, then ask “what are the next steps in the process?” We want to interview candidates who want to make a difference for Cummins.”

“Be energetic when you’re with us, because we’re excited to work here! Each of us talk to thousands of applicants each year. We like people who ask questions and demonstrate the energy they bring to their career.”

Resume success

What are the most important parts of a college student’s resume?

“A candidate’s contact information is very important, especially if it can change if you move to and from college. Make sure there is updated information on your profile so we can reach out to you at any time. We can’t call you if your contact information isn’t correct.”

“For college candidates, it’s important for education, level of degree & receiving graduation date to be at the top of the page. If they don’t match what we’re looking for, I usually move on to other candidates who may be a closer fit.”

“If you’re a recent college graduate, how professional your resume is can help us decide if we move on with a phone interview. Talent scouts often look at extracurricular activities you’re interested in. Think seriously about how someone who doesn’t know you might find negative items.”

Is there a format to my resume that works best?

“Resume organization and layout is important, so make it clear and concise. Bullet points can make your details look appealing and easier to review. Sometimes wordy resumes are too long. It usually takes me less than 60 seconds to review if you could be a match for the position we’re working on.”

“Don’t over format your resume either because it tends to hide keywords – don’t overuse bold font and background color or pictures. Sometimes candidates try to make their resume pretty. Instead, it often makes it busy. Borders, pretty designs or intricate writing – please simply give us the info we need.”

“We don’t ask for personal references on your resume. Date of birth isn’t always critical either, especially considering since you can be very young or a seasoned employee and be highly qualified for the job. Marital status is never a deciding factor in employment with our Company.”



Are certain items on my resume more important than others?

“Your relevant work experience & skill set is very important. We think about leadership qualities because we’re looking for people who can move through our hire-to-develop model. It could be a good idea to include leadership training courses or certifications in the industry that you have acquired.”

“Do you see gaps in your work history? Make sure you explain any gaps on your online social profile if there are any. It can present questions for the hiring manager as to why you were out of work.”

“Any key skills you have should be included as keywords on your resume. Some have very specific skill sets, so as we’re scanning resumes I look for keywords that are included. We search LinkedIn by specific words that match the descriptions we’re sourcing for. Don’t use keywords that aren’t applicable to your skill set because that can lower your ranking in search results.”

Online social profile

Does Cummins use online social profiles as part of the recruiting process?

“Cover letters are something of the past when you applied by mail. Today, applicants go online to submit applications and LinkedIn becomes the digital cover letter. Many candidates connect their LinkedIn profile to our talent community so we always have their qualifications at our fingertips. Sometimes we review your background in advance if we know new jobs will become available.”

“Make sure to attach your resume when you create an online social profile. When we do a keyword search, it helps us find you in the search results. Another idea to remember is keep your social profile private if it isn’t your professional version. Your social pictures can follow you forever – and some online technology isn’t as private as candidates believe.”

What types of content should I add to my online social profile?

“Professional networking content may or may not help your profile with recruiters. We have different feelings about it. It could be a good idea to add presentations about your skills and reference projects you’ve completed. However, if that takes time away from adding the descriptions of what projects you’ve worked on, then it becomes more difficult for us to understand your skill set.”

“I encourage candidates to move sections of their social profile around based on the stage of career. For example, if you’re a recent college graduate then move your educational experience to the top of your profile. If you’re an executive, your pertinent work experience should be closer to the top.”

“LinkedIn is the opportunity to put short resume descriptions into a paragraph form. You can describe gaps in your background, highlight your skills and make a nice summary of what we want to see.”



How should I respond when a recruiter reaches out to my online social profile?

“If we reach out to you through social, getting a response back within 2-3 days of first contact is often ideal for us. If I’m reaching out to you through LinkedIn, please contact me via LinkedIn. If we ask you to text us as a follow up, then text us. Every recruiter has a preferred method of communication.”

“Everyone’s organization is different. Social email helps me stay organized via urgent sourcing projects when candidates can’t talk during their day due to a confidential job search. Email through LinkedIn can be a better alternative for everyone during the process.”

“It’s difficult to have one phone number to call here since we work at different desks inside our collaborative work space each day. If we connect with you through your online profile, make sure to keep your communication style consistent with ours.”