

Johnson

SC JOHNSON COLLEGE OF
BUSINESS, CORNELL UNIVERSITY

 MBA PROTOCOL

INTERVIEW INTELLIGENCE SERIES • QUICK GUIDE • 2026

The interview, decoded from real
client reports



AT A GLANCE **Friendly, fit-focused, practical**

WHO INTERVIEWS

**A student or admissions
officer**

FORMAT

Mostly Zoom, one-on-one

LENGTH

**30 minutes, often ending
on the dot**

ALSO

**Zoom or in person in
Ithaca**

What to expect

A short, friendly conversation about your plans more than your stories: resume, why MBA and why Johnson, goals, then practical follow-ups such as your Plan B, how you will recruit and who you have talked to at Johnson. Behavioral prompts are rare. Some interviewers seemed loosely prepared or in selling mode, so steer toward what you want them to note. Expect a few minutes at the end for your questions.

Questions to prepare

1. Walk me through your resume, or tell me about yourself.
2. Why Johnson? What specifically about Cornell?
3. Why an MBA, and why now?
4. What are your short-term and long-term goals?
5. What clubs or classes will you pursue, and how will you contribute?
6. What is your Plan B if your target career does not work out?
7. How will you recruit, and which firms are you targeting?
8. Who have you spoken to at Johnson, students or alumni?
9. What do you like to do for fun outside of work?
10. Is there anything you'd like me to pass along to admissions?

CURVEBALL

"Are you do-or-die?"

Interviewers have asked "Are you do-or-die for Johnson?" and "Who have you spoken to at Cornell?" Clients read it as a yield check. An adcom interviewer even asked how you will fund the MBA. Show genuine, specific commitment.

PREP TIPS

Have a real Plan B

After your goals, expect "and if that doesn't work out?" Have a credible backup and a recruiting plan ready.

A LEAD day, in earlier cycles

Some applicants attended a campus day of team exercises, a leadership case and dinner around the one-on-one.

FROM INTERVIEW HERO Make your plan hold up

Johnson tests whether your goals survive scrutiny, from Plan B to recruiting. Interview Hero shows how to give goals answers that sound grounded and yours.

Chapter 12: Why Do You Want This Job? • [Get it on Amazon](#)



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