

# Darden

DARDEN SCHOOL OF BUSINESS,  
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA



INTERVIEW INTELLIGENCE SERIES · QUICK GUIDE · 2026

## The interview, decoded from 20 MBA Protocol client debriefs



### AT A GLANCE **Story-first, conversational**

#### WHO INTERVIEWS

A second-year student or admissions

#### FORMAT

Mostly Zoom, on grounds possible

#### LENGTH

30 to 45 minutes

#### SIGNATURE

One long opening story

### What to expect

The Darden interview lives or dies on the opener: tell me about yourself or walk me through your life story, often with a time budget of 5 to 20 minutes and why MBA and why Darden folded inside it. Then come goals, community and a question or two on working across differences, which one interviewer tied to tense case discussions. Some interviewers never interrupt; others dig in at every turn.

### Questions to prepare

1. Tell me about yourself, or walk me through your life story.
2. Why Darden?
3. Why an MBA, and why now?
4. Tell me about working with people from different backgrounds or perspectives.
5. What are your short-term and long-term goals?
6. How will you contribute to the Darden community?
7. Tell me about a conflict or a difficult person.
8. What do you do for fun?
9. Tell me about a time you led a team, or describe your leadership style.
10. Why did you choose your college or your major?

#### CURVEBALL

##### The silent listener

Some interviewers listen without a word; others stop you at every turning point. Your story has to stand on its own, with natural pause points if someone jumps in.

#### PREP TIPS

##### Have every length ready

Interviewers set the clock: "5 to 10 minutes," "10 to 15 on the past, then 10 on the future," even "about 20, structure it however you like." Practice each version.

#### FROM INTERVIEW HERO

##### Your story is the interview



At Darden the opening story often is the whole interview. Interview Hero's Walk Me Through Your Resume chapter offers eight frameworks for turning your path into a story with a clear arc and a strong landing.

Chapter 11: Walk Me Through Your Resume · [Get it on Amazon](#)

#### YOUR DARDEN INVITE JUST LANDED?

### Get expert help preparing for this interview

[mbaprotocol.com/services/interview](https://mbaprotocol.com/services/interview)

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