INTERVIEWS

Pre-Interview

Self-Assessment - Compile a list of personal strengths and past accomplishments to boost your confidence. Identify and evaluate your:

- education
- experiences
- skills
- accomplishments
- strengths and weaknesses

Note which qualities you want to convey to the interviewer. Also note those you do not want to discuss during the interview.

Research the Employer - Gather as much information about the employer as possible. Communication will be better and you will have a more comfortable and productive exchange. The more you know, the more confident you are likely to feel.

Some information you may want to know:

- size of the organization
- location of facilities
- structure of organization
- past, current and potential growth
- product line, industry, service, clients, potential markets
- stock history
- company's main competitors
- training provisions
- length of time in assignments
- recent news items, trends, problems

Prepare a list of well-researched questions for the interviewer. (See examples on page 7).

Practice Interview Techniques - Before the interview, you are encouraged to participate in the Career and Professional Development Center’s Mock Interview Program. You may also want to meet with your Career Consultant in a role-playing interview situation or arrange to have a mock interview videotaped session. Please see the receptionist in the Career and Professional Development Center for details.

- Rehearse how you will describe your qualifications and career aspirations.
- Know what you want to communicate and how you are going to communicate it.

Revised: 8/14/12
Prepare Yourself - Logistics and materials are extremely important.

- Arrive early (10-15 minutes before the interview).
- Dress to project an image of confidence and success while reflecting the interviewer's organization.
- Prepare to bring additional materials, such as a transcript, samples of your work, and an updated resume.

During the Interview

*Entrance* - Have a positive and cheerful attitude. Be courteous to those you meet and interview with. Give the interviewer a warm greeting with a firm handshake. Build rapport; attitude should be one of openness or sensitivity to the interviewer's style, and a feeling of mutual responsibility for creating a comfortable atmosphere and establishing common ground.

*Your Presentation* - Relax, be yourself, and think of the interview as an exchange of information between two individuals.

Components of a strong answer:
- backing up a statement with a specific example
- sharing the outcome or solution to a specific problem
- summarizing to emphasize your strengths

Non-Verbal Cues

Positive:
- occasional affirmative nodding of the head
- leaning forward
- sitting with hands, feet, and arms unfolded
- smiling appropriately
- practicing good posture
- maintaining a pleasant facial expression
- firm handshake
- appropriate dress, matching the interviewer's organization
- good eye contact

Negative:
- inappropriate facial expression or lack of expression
- a weak and ineffectual handshake
- inappropriate dress
- poor body posture, either sitting or walking
- lack of eye contact
- squirming in the seat or sitting on the edge of the chair
- nervous habits or gestures
- frowning
Non-Verbal Behaviors - In general, nonverbal cues are 50% of the interview. Be aware of posture, eye contact, hand gestures, facial expressions, and active listening.

Verbal Behaviors - Use active verbs, concrete examples; be concise and complete, summarize and make transitions. Be open and thoughtful.

Have your questions ready to ask. They should reflect the amount of research you have done rather than your lack of knowledge about the employer. It is good to bring a written copy of your questions with you so the employer knows you came prepared.

Exit
Thank the interviewer. Give him/her a firm handshake and walk confidently from the interview.

After the Interview
Debrief Yourself - Write down everything you feel you handled right and wrong. Note any information you may need to include in your thank you letter. Use the interview as a learning experience.

Write a Thank You Letter - In a thank you letter, personalize yourself - try to set yourself apart from other applicants. Also, strengthen or add a point about your qualifications in relation to the position.

Types of Interviews
Interviewing styles vary from employer to employer and interviewer to interviewer. To better prepare for an interview, students are encouraged to be familiar with the different types of interviews that may be encountered. Additional information on interviewing can be found on the Career and Professional Development Center’s website or in the Career Resource Center in Hunt Library.

Screening Interview
The goal of this interview is to get the facts from a candidate by identifying relevant skills and abilities, while verifying the resume and looking for a solid potential employee. It is usually less than one hour, and depending on the employer and location, can take the form of a campus, site visit, video, or telephone interview.

Behavioral Interview
This interview is based on the idea that a student’s past behavior is useful in predicting future performance. Typical questions center around how a student has handled past situations where skills, abilities and teamwork have been demonstrated. Areas could include project work, relevant work experiences, difficult situations, accomplishments, and leadership roles. The questions usually begin with, “Tell me about a time when you…”

Video Interview
The interviewing recruiting technology is changing and there may be a time when students will be interviewed using video conferencing equipment. This equipment is used by employers to conduct screening, behavioral and other types of interviews. Even though the interviewer is not in the room, all noise and movement can be seen and heard. The following are tips to help students prepare for this type of interview:
• Treat a video interview as seriously as any other type of interview.
• Dark clothing is best suited to a video interview.
• Complete a pre-interview test shot to see how your screen background will look to the interviewer. Make sure that you are sitting in a professional environment with no clutter.
• Speak clearly and slowly, as the sound system is powerful enough to pick up regular conversations.
• Allow the interviewer to finish speaking before beginning a response.
• Avoid fidgeting and making unnecessary movement as this can be distracting to the interviewer.
• Smile and follow basic rules of interviewing etiquette.

Team Interview
The purpose of this interview is to see how you perform on a team. You will be observed through a window or recruiters will stay to the back of the room. Teams will be developed and projects will be distributed to test each team member. This is your time to emerge as a leader and a good team player. Remember, leaders are not the bossiest person on the team, but the person who receives ideas and suggestions as easily as giving them. The worst thing you could do is to sit in silence and not participate.

Telephone Interview
This interview is sometimes used as a screening interview for a student who is a distance from the employer. It is used to assess whether or not the student should be considered for an on-site interview. Occasionally, students seeking internships and summer jobs have been interviewed and hired using this method. (Note: See the Telephone Interviews Career Success Guide handout for more information on this topic).

Skype Interview
This interview is sometimes used as a screening interview for a student who is a distance from the employer, and is becoming more common. It is used to assess whether or not the student should be considered for an on-site interview. Keep the following things in mind while preparing for or participating in a Skype interview:

• Prepare ahead of time for a Skype interview. Be sure that you have a Skype ID, an internet connection, and that you test your video and sound beforehand. Have a friend call you in advance to be sure that everything works properly.
• Background is important. Make sure there is nothing distracting behind you during a Skype interview that could affect the impression of the interviewer.
• Dress like you'll be attending an on-site interview.
• Make sure you convey appropriate body language, including good eye contact and posture.
• You can have notes during a Skype interview. However, be sure they cannot be seen by the interviewer and that it is not obvious you are referring to them.

Meal Interview
The scariest of all interviews, with many pitfalls for the unwary! Don’t make the mistake of thinking this is a social occasion, and drop indiscreet or gossipy statements about our personal life or your former or current employer, classmates, or professors. You are not being taken to eat because the interviewer wants to become better acquainted; they are testing you. Now is the time to practice social grace and table manners. Also, you may not have much time to actually eat the meal, you will be busy answering questions and promoting your accomplishments.
Group Interview
A group interview could involve several people taking turns asking questions or presenting scenarios for the student to respond to or solve. It could be used as a group discussion that can help determine how a student interacts with other members of the group who could be potential colleagues.

Stress Interview
You sit down, and after a few innocuous questions, the interviewer(s) begins rapid firing questions. The interviewer may seem angry, using harsh tones or contradict and challenge everything you say. You are being tested. The interviewer is trying to rattle you to observe you under pressure. Do not take it personally, rise to the challenge, and respond like the cool-headed professional you are becoming.

Case Interview
This interview is the favorite of strategic consulting firms. Typically, you will be given a scenario and asked to identify the problem and a resolution. This is used to assess your mental acuity. Take your time and remember that there is often not one correct answer. Be sure to ask clarification questions and follow the interviewer’s lead if he/she maintains that a question you are asking or a statement you are making is not relevant to the case.

Improper or Illegal Interview Questions
If you believe you have been asked an improper or illegal question at any time in the interview process, do not dialogue or accuse the interviewer to his/her face but do bring you concern to the Director of the Career and Professional Development Center. In this way, the issue can be addressed without harming your job prospects. Illegal topics include:
- Age
- Personal information
- Disabilities
- Marital/family status
- National origin

If you are asked an illegal question, you have three options:
1. You can answer the question.
2. You can refuse to answer the question; unfortunately this may harm your chances of getting the job.
3. You can ask the intent of the question and answer as you see fit.

STAGES AND TOPICS COVERED DURING THE INITIAL INTERVIEW STAGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERVIEWER TOPICS</th>
<th>INTERVIEWER LOOKS FOR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. First Impressions</strong></td>
<td>Introduction/greeting/ small talk about weather, traffic, record of a sports team</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2. Your Record</strong></td>
<td>Reasons for choice of school/major, grades, effort required for them, special areas of interest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Courses enjoyed most or least</td>
<td>Special/general interest,</td>
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<td>Section</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>and the reasons, special achievements, toughest problems, value of education as career preparation, reaction to teachers, high school record, SAT scores</td>
<td>willingness to work hard, relation between ability/achievement, ability to cope with problems</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WORK EXPERIENCE</strong></td>
<td>Sensible use of resources (time, energy, money), high energy level, vitality, enthusiasm, leadership ability, interest in responsibility, willingness to follow directions, ability to get along with others, seriousness of purpose</td>
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<td>Nature of jobs held, why undertaken, level of responsibility reached, duties liked most/least, supervisory experience, relations with others</td>
<td>Ability to motivate/make things happen, positive “can do” attitude, diversity of interests, social conscience, good citizenship</td>
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<td><strong>ACTIVITIES/INTEREST</strong></td>
<td>Realistic knowledge of strengths and weaknesses, preparation for employment, knowledge of opportunities, seriousness of purpose, career-oriented rather than job-oriented, knowledge of the company, real interest in the company, work interests in line with talents, company’s chance to get and keep you</td>
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<td>Role in extracurricular, athletic, community and social service activities, personal interests (hobbies, sports, cultural interests)</td>
<td>Organization opportunities where you might fit, current and future projects, major divisions/departments, training programs, education, other benefits</td>
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<td><strong>3. Your Career Goals</strong></td>
<td>Informed and relevant questions, indications of interest in answers, appropriate but not undue interest in salary or benefits</td>
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<td>Type of work desired, immediate objectives, long-term objectives, interest in this organization, other companies being considered, desire for future training / education, geographical preferences and limitations, attitude toward relocation, health factors that might affect job performance</td>
<td>Candidate’s attention to information as a sign of continued interest</td>
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<td><strong>4. The Organization</strong></td>
<td>Further steps you should take (application, transcript, references), further steps company will take – outline how application handled, to which departments it will be sent, time of notifications of</td>
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<td><strong>5. Conclusion</strong></td>
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