



## INTERVIEWING SUCCESSFULLY

This Guide is designed to help you develop your interviewing skills and prepare for the most integral part of the job search process. To sharpen your interviewing skills, take advantage of the resources in the Career Development Center, including the Career Library, mock interview services, and on-campus interviews.

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## THE INTERVIEWING PROCESS

**"Interview" defined:** "a formal consultation usually to evaluate qualifications (as of a prospective student or employee); a meeting at which information is obtained" ~Webster.

For the purpose of the job seeker, **both** portions of the Webster definition are correct. While employers will evaluate your qualifications and will try to obtain information about you, interviewing is NOT a one-way street. In fact, interviewing is a **two-way street**. Both the interviewer and the interviewee evaluate and collect information about each other.

### **The employer tries to determine if the candidate:**

- Will fit into the organization
- Has the skills necessary for success on the job
- Can and will do the job the well
- Has potential for promotion

Answers to the above questions are central to the decision making process. The successful candidates are those who best meet the needs of the employer and who market themselves effectively.

The truly sophisticated job hunter will look at the employer with a critical eye to determine how he/she will fit into that organization. In fact, the job seeker should be interviewing the employer, just as the employer is interviewing him/her.

How would you fit into the organization? What will be expected of you? Do you feel comfortable with the people you have met? Do you like the work you will be expected to perform? Do you believe in the products/services provided by the employer? Like trying on a new suit, you will know when the interview goes well and when an employment opportunity is right for you. **It will just fit!**



# THE INTERVIEWING CYCLE

## I. PRE-INTERVIEW PREPARATION

Contrary to popular belief, the interview does not begin when "they" begin asking you questions. Rather, the interview begins much earlier in the process. In order to be successful, long before you show up for the interview you must:

- Identify your skills and your abilities
- Know your strengths and weaknesses
- Prepare 5 or more success stories
- Analyze your career objective(s) and goals
- Review your resume...know it inside & out
- Research the organization
- Prepare to make a good impression (manners, appearance, posture)
- Anticipate questions they will ask
- Prepare your own list of questions to ask
- Confirm schedule, interviewer(s) name(s), date, time, location

Having done these things you are now ready to proceed to the next step.

## 2. INTRODUCTIONS

Get ready, because the interview actually kicks in with the introductions and not with the first question.

When meeting the interviewer and other staff members, pay attention. Listen for the interviewer's name and title. Listen to how people introduce themselves to you (Ms., Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.). It is important that you address recruiters in the manner in which they prefer. So, look and listen!

When introduced to the interviewer, present yourself in a professional and confident manner. A firm, but not bone-crushing, handshake along with good eye contact (don't look at the floor or inspect the ceiling) is essential in this first meeting.



As you proceed into the interview room, watch for signals from the recruiter. Generally, the interviewer will gesture toward a specific seat in the interview room. If not, wait until you are directed to sit down! Sit erect with hands folded in your lap. Get comfortable, but don't slouch or become too relaxed in your seat.

Now you are ready to respond to the interviewer's questions.

### 3. BREAKING THE ICE

**MYTH:** This initial phase of rapport building exists to set both the interviewer and the interviewee at ease. This is when you may find the interviewer asking about things that do not seem to relate to the interview or the position for which you are applying.

**TRUTH!** Every question, no matter how trivial, has a direct relationship to the hiring process. When the interviewer tries to break the ice, help him or her out! Learn the art of 'small talk' and building rapport with the interviewer. Remember, this portion of the interview will set the tone for what is to follow.

### 4. QUESTIONING

Generally, you will find that there are two segments to the questioning. During the first segment, the interviewer will have the opportunity to question you about your skills, abilities, interests, values, goals, and aspirations.

In the second segment, you will have the opportunity to ask the interviewer questions related to the position, the organization, the employer's expectations of the new employee, etc.

Just as in your resume, honesty is a must in the interview. If you are asked a question for which you have no answer, it is better to say "I don't know" than to ad lib a response. Experienced interviewers know when you try to "snow" them, and this will not help you in the interview. Instead, your best strategy is to prepare for the interview in advance.

The best way to prepare for the questioning portion of the interview is to study! Know yourself! Prepare five or more success stories and provide concrete, quantifiable data. Read your resume. Know what you've written about your work experiences, your education, and your extracurricular activities.

**Research the organization** (a minimum expectation!). What are the employer's primary products and/or services? Where are they located? Know something about their operations and/or current events.

Review the Questions section of this Guide. You should be able to easily answer these questions when asked.

Repeat your key strengths several times. Show some emotion. Be enthusiastic about the organization and the opportunity.

Be prepared to ask several questions. Show an interest in the possibilities.



## 5. THE CLOSE

When the interview is over you will know. Watch for the signs: body language, a simple gesture, or a subtle question may signal the end to the interview. When you get the message that the interview is over, conclude your discussion in style and with grace, but also be sure you understand what happens next in the process.

Before you conclude the interview you should:

- Ask the interviewer for a business card. You will want to send a thank-you note soon after the interview...this way you will have the correct spelling and person's title.
- Ask when you will find out if a decision has been made.
- Ask how they will contact you (phone call, email?).
- Ask who will be contacting you (the interviewer, Human Resources staff, etc.).

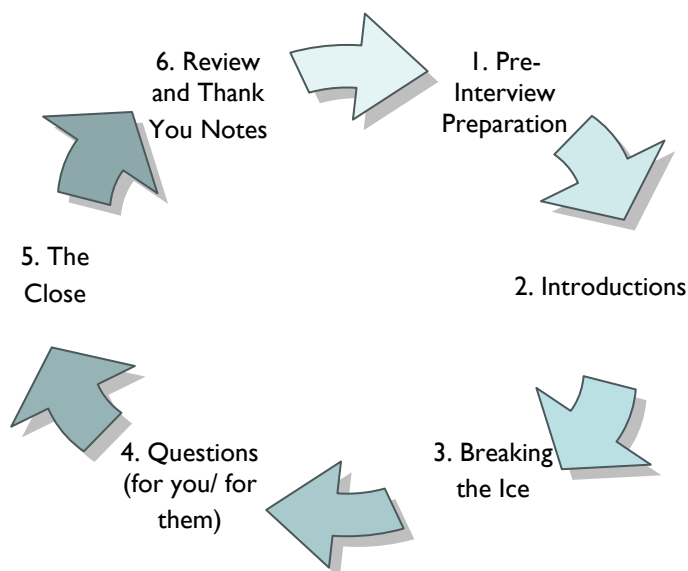
As the interview concludes, once more offer the interviewer a firm handshake, thank them for their time and exit.

**Congratulations!** You have now completed the formal portion of the interview.

## 6. POST-INTERVIEW REVIEW

Although you have completed the formal portion of the interview, you have one more thing to do: the post-interview review. Take some time to replay the interview. What worked well? What did not work so well? Which questions were you less prepared to answer? How do you feel about the interview in general?

By answering these questions, and jotting down some notes and tips, and by addressing areas of concern, you are actually preparing for your next interview. You have completed the interview!!! Now, it's on to your next interview and time to start this process over again.



## QUESTIONS THEY MAY ASK YOU

### General Questions for ALL Majors

- Tell me about yourself. What about this position interests you the most?
- Why did you choose Kutztown University? Why did you choose your major?
- What was your favorite course? Why? Least favorite course? Why?
- Are your grades a good indication of your abilities? Why?
- How has your education prepared you for this position?
- What do you expect from your employer?
- What do you think makes a good manager?
- Tell me about your \_\_\_\_\_ and how it prepared you for this particular position.
- Tell me about your involvement in activities during college.
- Identify a goal you have not attained. Why not?
- What do you see as the biggest challenge facing organizations such as ours?
- What motivates you? What are the important rewards you expect from your career?
- What have you learned from previous work experiences that will assist you in this position?
- What accomplishments are you most proud of? Why?
- What are your short/long term goals? Where do you see yourself in five/ten years?
- How do you determine or evaluate success?
- Do you have any geographic restrictions? Are you willing to relocate?
- Are you willing to travel?
- What position are you interested in and why?
- What criterion is most important to you in choosing an employer?
- Why do you want to work for us?
- What are three of your strengths and weaknesses?
- What strengths do you have that we have not discussed?
- Do you prefer working alone or with others?
- What is your favorite book? Last one you've read?
- How would your best friend describe you?
- What is the newest thing you learned or did?
- What do you do in your free time?
- How familiar are you with computers? To what extent?
- How do you deal with stress?
- Have you thought about attending graduate school? When? Where? Program?
- Who is your hero? Why?
- Why should I hire you?

## BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

An increasingly popular way for employers to determine whether you're the right fit, behavioral interviews focus on your past behavior in actual work or conflict situations. Why? The philosophy is simple and straightforward: Your past behavior predicts your future behavior.

Behavioral interviewing is designed to minimize personal impressions that might cloud the hiring decision. By focusing on the applicant's actions and behaviors, rather than subjective impressions, interviewers can make more accurate hiring decisions.

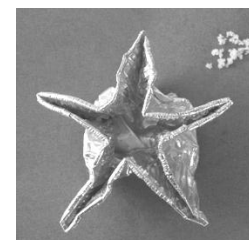
- Tell me about a recent project you had to plan. What went well? What might you have done better?
- Tell me about a specific time when you eliminated or avoided a potential problem before it happened?
- What is the most difficult situation you have faced? How did you handle it?
- Tell me when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- Tell me about a time you were criticized. What was the issue involved, who made the criticism, and how did you handle it?
- Tell me about a time when you had to approach several different people for support or cooperation. How did you approach them?
- Give me an example of how you exercised leadership in a recent situation. What did you do to gain the team or groups' cooperation?
- Describe a time on the job when you were faced with problems or stresses that tested your coping skills.
- Tell me about a recent team you worked on/with. How may you have handled someone who was not as cooperative as needed?
- How would you motivate someone who is not motivated?
- At your job, how did you know if your internal/external customers were satisfied?
- Tell me about a time you had to conform to a policy with which you didn't agree.
- Even though we may do everything possible to satisfy a customer, it seems that some will complain about how they were treated. Tell me about the last customer who complained about the service you provided.

Follow up questions will test for consistency and determine if you exhibited the desired behavior in that situation:

- |                               |                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| - Can you give me an example? | - How did you feel?    |
| - What did you do and say?    | - What was your role?  |
| - What were you thinking?     | - What was the result? |

**To prepare, think "S.T.A.R."**

- 1) The **situation** you were involved in or **task** you had to perform
- 2) The **actions** you took
- 3) The **results** of your actions



## WHAT CAN YOU ASK?

**ALWAYS** have a few questions prepared to ask the employer (minimum of 3-5). This shows preparation, professional maturity, and most importantly...interest! So ask yourself...what do I need to know in order to make an informed decision?

- Have you had a chance to review my resume? Did it raise any questions about my qualifications that I can answer?
- Can you describe the duties of the job for me? What is a typical day like?
- What type of orientation and training programs do you have?
- What do you consider ideal experience for the job?
- Can you tell me about the people I would be working with?
- What are the primary results you would like to see me produce?
- Can you give me some idea as to the retention rate(s) for new staff?
- To whom will I report?
- Can you tell me about your personnel evaluation process? Who will evaluate me? How often will I be evaluated? When will I have my first evaluation?
- What are your expectations of new staff members?
- Can you tell me about professional development opportunities within the organization?
- To what extent are technical support services (computer hardware/software and courses) provided to staff?
- Can you tell me about any opportunities for advancement?
- How would you characterize the working environment here?
- Can you tell me about the organization's philosophy of management?

As the interview concludes, you should always ask:

- What is the next step in the interview/hiring process?
- When can I expect to hear from you?
- How will you contact me?

### **NEVER ASK ABOUT:**

salary, vacation, health, retirement package, etc....  
**it will reflect misplaced priorities.**

Don't worry, you will find out that information  
later in the process.



## TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

As you begin your job search, you must know your own qualifications. Over the years, you have developed many skills from your coursework, activities, work experience and your total life experiences. They are critical for success in all types of work. Knowing your transferable skills and being able to market them gives you an edge in your job search. Employers expect you to be able to apply these skills to their work environment.

There are literally hundreds of transferable job skills. Here are some categories with skill samples meant to help you identify your skills. You should also describe past experiences of using your skills to a future employer during an interview or on a resume.

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Job/Technical Skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repair</li> <li>• Programming</li> <li>• Typing</li> <li>• Machinery/electronics</li> <li>• Tools</li> <li>• Driving</li> <li>• Telephone courtesy</li> </ul>   | <b>Data</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research</li> <li>• Investigation</li> <li>• Analysis</li> <li>• Organization</li> <li>• Forecasting</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• Assessment</li> </ul>   | <b>Creative</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visualize</li> <li>• Design</li> <li>• Illustrate</li> <li>• Appreciate</li> <li>• Present</li> <li>• Entertain</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Computer</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Software</li> <li>• Hardware</li> <li>• Multimedia</li> <li>• Internet/web development</li> <li>• Project management</li> <li>• Troubleshooting</li> <li>• Prioritization</li> </ul>                                  | <b>Leadership</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Decision making</li> <li>• Instruction</li> <li>• Mediation</li> <li>• Respectful delegation</li> <li>• Coaching</li> <li>• Persuasion</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> <li>• Tolerate stress/risk</li> </ul> | <b>Financial</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budgeting</li> <li>• Accuracy</li> <li>• Fund-raising</li> <li>• Resourceful</li> <li>• Estimating</li> <li>• Evaluating</li> <li>• Audit/monitoring</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Self-Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow instructions</li> <li>• Responsible</li> <li>• Sense of humor</li> <li>• Detail oriented</li> <li>• Dependable</li> <li>• Career oriented</li> <li>• Ethical</li> <li>• Meet goals/deadlines</li> </ul> | <b>People</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teamwork</li> <li>• Respectful</li> <li>• Trustworthy</li> <li>• Supportive</li> <li>• Counseling</li> <li>• Sensitive</li> <li>• Perceptive</li> <li>• Encouraging</li> </ul>   | <b>Communications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening</li> <li>• Speaking</li> <li>• Interpreting</li> <li>• Corresponding</li> <li>• Facilitating groups</li> <li>• Persuading</li> <li>• Reporting</li> <li>• Editing</li> <li>• Languages</li> </ul> |

## PRE-EMPLOYMENT INQUIRIES

This chart outlines the type of information employers can request in applications and during job interviews as specified by federal laws.

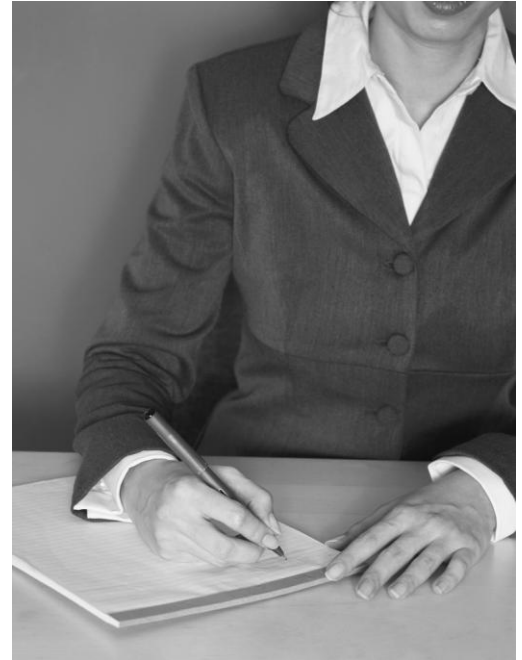
| <b>SUBJECT</b>            | <b>LAWFUL INQUIRIES/REQUIREMENTS</b>   | <b>UNLAWFUL INQUIRIES/REQUIREMENTS</b>   |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| Age                       | Whether the applicant meets the minimum age requirement set by law; if required as a Bona Fide Occupational Qualification (BFOQ); or After hire, if inquiry serves a legitimate record-keeping purpose.  | That applicant state age or date of birth. That applicant produce proof of age (birth certificate, baptismal record). Specifications such as: "young", "college student", "recent college graduate", and "retired person."             |
| Arrests & Convictions     | Inquiries about convictions that bear direct relationship to the job and have not been expunged or sealed by the courts. Consideration should be given to nature, recentness, rehabilitation.  | Inquiries about a candidate's general arrest and conviction record.  |
| Citizenship, Birthplace   | After employment, verification of legal right to work (all new hires).   | Whether applicant, parents or spouse are naturalized or native-born U.S citizens. Birthplace of applicant, parents or spouse. Requirement that applicant produce naturalization papers.  |
| Dependents                |  | Inquiries regarding: the number and ages of children; what child care arrangements have been made; family planning.  |
| Disability                | Whether applicant is able to perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodation. That applicant demonstrate how she/he would perform the job and with what accommodation(s). After a job offer, but before hire, require medical examination for all similarly situated entering employees. | Requirement that applicant take medical examination or provide information about workers' compensation claim(s) before a job offer. General inquiries into the applicant's state of health or the nature and severity of a disability. |
| Marital Status            |  | Whether applicant is: single, married, divorced, widowed, etc.; Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms. Inquiries regarding the names and ages of spouse or children.   |
| Military Service          | Job related inquiries into military experience in the U.S. Armed Forces or state militia (e.g. branch, occupational specialty).  | Inquiries regarding foreign military experience. Whether honorably discharged.   |
| Name                      | Whether the applicant has used another name (for the purpose of verifying past work record).   | Inquiries or comments about the name that would reveal applicant's lineage, national origin, marital status, etc. (e.g. maiden name?) Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.?  |
| National Origin           | What languages applicant reads, speaks or writes fluently if relevant to the job or if required as a Bona Fide Occupational Qualification.   | Inquiries regarding: applicant's nationality, ancestry, lineage or parentage; nationality of applicant's parents or spouse; maiden name of applicant, wife or mother.  |
| Photograph                | May be requested after hire (for identification).  | Request before hire.   |
| Polygraph, Lie Detector   |  | Require test to be taken as a condition of employment.   |
| Professional Associations | Inquiries regarding memberships in <u>job-related</u> clubs and organizations. Applicants may omit those that reveal the race, religion, age, sex, disability, etc. of applicant.  | Requesting the names of <u>all</u> organizations, clubs, and associations to which the applicant belongs. Inquiries regarding how the applicant spends his/her spare time.   |
| Race, Color               |  | Inquiries regarding: applicant's race; color of applicant's skin, eyes, hair or other questions directly or indirectly indicating race or color; applicant's height (unless a Bona Fide Occupational Qualification).                   |
| References                | Inquiring by whom was applicant referred. Requesting names of persons willing to provide professional or character references. Making job related inquiries of references.   | Requiring the submission of religious references. Inquiries of references that would elicit information on applicant's race, color, national origin, age, marital status, disability or sexual orientation.                            |
| Religion                  | Inquiries regarding the normal hours of work. After hire, inquiries regarding religious accommodations.  | Inquiries regarding applicant's religious denomination or affiliation or religious holidays observed. Any inquiry that would indicate or identify religious customs or holidays observed.  |
| Sex                       | Inquiry only if required as a Bona Fide Occupational Qualification.  | Inquiries regarding: applicant's sex; Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.; if applicant is expecting, planning a family or uses birth control.  |
| Sexual Orientation        |  | Any inquiry concerning an applicant's heterosexuality, homosexuality or bisexuality.   |

## THE THANK YOU

**ALWAYS** send a thank you note!!!

It is not only polite, but it also reminds the interviewer of your meeting and why you should be hired.

- The traditional interview thank you is handwritten. While a typed or email thank you is appropriate (particularly if you have been communicating with the employer via email) a handwritten one will set you apart.
- Use folded note cards, plain (no design or "thank you" on the front), in a neutral color (white, gray, tan, cream).
- Mail the letter within 24 hours of the interview.
- Send a thank you to every person who interviewed you. If you are not absolutely sure of an interviewer's name or title, call the office to find out. (This is why it's important to ask for business cards during the interview.)



### **SAMPLE :**

February 20, 20xx

Dear Ms. Tudor:

Thank you for meeting with me this morning to discuss the position of \_\_\_\_\_. After speaking with you, I am even more certain that my experience and coursework will be valuable to your organization. My involvement with \_\_\_\_\_ and related coursework have prepared me well for your organization. It was particularly helpful for me to learn about \_\_\_\_\_.

If I can provide you with any additional information, please let me know. My enthusiasm for this opportunity has only increased. It is my understanding that I will receive a call from you during the next two weeks; I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,  
Signature  
Name  
Email & Phone

## EVALUATIONS

What do employers look for when interviewing candidates for positions? Most employers have identified common characteristics they look for in ALL candidates. These generally include:

- Oral/Written Communication Skills
- Problem Solving Abilities
- Organizational Skills
- Computer Skills
- Ability to Work in Groups/Group Dynamics
- Willingness to Take Risks
- Enthusiasm/Interest
- Critical/Creative Thinking
- Positive Attitude
- Leadership Ability

If you can convey these characteristics to the employer throughout the interview, you are one-step closer to a successful job search!

### All employers want to know:

- Can you do the job?
- Will you do the work?
- Will you work well with colleagues?

Following this page are evaluation forms presently used by two different employers. Read these so you are aware of how employers typically evaluate candidates. How would you rank yourself if you were in the employer's shoes?



## JOB INTERVIEW EVALUATION FORM

Interviewee Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*All applicants are expected to have an appropriate cover letter and resume.*

| <b>Appearance</b> | <b>Poor</b> | <b>Fair</b> | <b>Average</b> | <b>Good</b> | <b>Superior</b> |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Dress             |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Grooming          |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Body Language     |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Eye Contact       |             |             |                |             |                 |

| <b>Characteristics</b> | <b>Poor</b> | <b>Fair</b> | <b>Average</b> | <b>Good</b> | <b>Superior</b> |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Assertive              |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Achievement-oriented   |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Cooperative            |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Responsible            |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Outgoing               |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Open                   |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Dedicated              |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Poise                  |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Maturity               |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Professional           |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Verbal/Persuasive      |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Ability to learn       |             |             |                |             |                 |

| <b>Goals/Perception of Self</b> | <b>Poor</b> | <b>Fair</b> | <b>Average</b> | <b>Good</b> | <b>Superior</b> |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Realistic appraisal of self     |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Reason for interest in field    |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Realistic career goals          |             |             |                |             |                 |

| <b>Qualifications</b> | <b>Poor</b> | <b>Fair</b> | <b>Average</b> | <b>Good</b> | <b>Superior</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Education/Training    |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Accomplishments       |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Skills                |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Relevant Experience   |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Potential             |             |             |                |             |                 |

| <b>Decision Making/<br/>Problem Solving</b> | <b>Poor</b> | <b>Fair</b> | <b>Average</b> | <b>Good</b> | <b>Superior</b> |
|---|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Creativity                                  |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Logic                                       |             |             |                |             |                 |

| <b>Reasons for Applying to Our Position</b> | <b>Poor</b> | <b>Fair</b> | <b>Average</b> | <b>Good</b> | <b>Superior</b> |
|---|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Commitment                                  |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Knowledge of Organization                   |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Knowledge of Industry                       |             |             |                |             |                 |

| <b>Job Expectations</b> | <b>Poor</b> | <b>Fair</b> | <b>Average</b> | <b>Good</b> | <b>Superior</b> |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Realistic               |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Match our needs         |             |             |                |             |                 |

| <b>Long Term Objectives</b> | <b>Poor</b> | <b>Fair</b> | <b>Average</b> | <b>Good</b> | <b>Superior</b> |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Realistic                   |             |             |                |             |                 |
| Potential to grow           |             |             |                |             |                 |

| <b>Overall</b> | <b>Poor</b> | <b>Fair</b> | <b>Average</b> | <b>Good</b> | <b>Superior</b> |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Evaluation     |             |             |                |             |                 |

**Additional Comments**

Ranking \_\_\_\_\_

## INTERVIEW EVALUATION FORM

Applicant Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Based on the interview and the responses given, indicate how you would rate the candidate on the following categories (where applicable):

|  | Excellent | Above Avg. | Avg. | Below Avg. | Poor | Comments |
|--|-----------|------------|------|------------|------|----------|
| <b>Leadership</b><br>(Assertive/Motivation)    |           |            |      |            |      |          |
| <b>Composure</b><br>(Confident/Eye Contact)    |           |            |      |            |      |          |
| <b>Intelligence</b><br>(GPA)                   |           |            |      |            |      |          |
| <b>Maturity</b><br>(Self-Reliant, Decisive)    |           |            |      |            |      |          |
| <b>Speaking Ability/Skills</b>                 |           |            |      |            |      |          |
| <b>Listening Ability/Skills</b>                |           |            |      |            |      |          |
| <b>Attitude</b><br>(Enthusiasm/Positive)       |           |            |      |            |      |          |
| <b>Motivation</b><br>(To Set & Meet Goals)     |           |            |      |            |      |          |
| <b>Achievements</b><br>(Problems Solved/Goals) |           |            |      |            |      |          |
| <b>Sincerity</b><br>(Honest/Genuine)           |           |            |      |            |      |          |
| <b>Appearance</b><br>(Professionalism/Posture) |           |            |      |            |      |          |
| <b>Personality</b><br>(People Oriented)        |           |            |      |            |      |          |
| <b>Overall Impressions</b>                     |           |            |      |            |      |          |

RECOMMEND:    YES    NO    Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

## TELEPHONE/VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS

Sometimes the importance of the telephone or virtual interview is overshadowed by the attention given to the “in person” interview. Many employers screen job applicants over the phone, and this occurrence is increasing as employers seek ways to reduce recruiting costs.

### Why Telephone Interviews?

- When you send a resume to an employer, a recruiter may conduct a telephone interview if your qualifications fit the employer’s needs.
- Recruiters often use the telephone for follow-up questions to students who already have been interviewed.
- Finally, many calls are placed by managers or supervisors who do the actual hiring. After a recruiter interviews you, your resume is often given to department heads who may be interested in employing you. Frequently, these managers will telephone you before extending an invitation to come for an office/site visit.



### Preparation

- Keep a pen, paper, copy of your resume and cover letter near the phone.
- Be sure that everyone who answers your telephone understands the importance of the calls you will be receiving. Make sure they take complete messages for you.
- Listen to the message on your answering machine/voicemail. How does it sound? Is it something you want potential employers to hear?

### Doing Well on the Phone

- Respond positively. Once you realize the call relates to your job search, make every effort to put yourself into the proper frame of mind to be interviewed. If there are any distracting background noises, ask the caller for permission to leave the line while you close the door, turn off the stereo, tell others who may be present that you have an important call, or do whatever is necessary to give you privacy and quiet.
- Listen closely to everything the interviewer says. Think through your responses as carefully as you would if you were sitting across the desk from him or her. Remember to ask questions as well and take notes.
- At the conclusion, the caller usually explains what you should expect to happen next. If the interviewer fails to identify the next steps, you should politely ask.
- Before hanging up, be certain you have the person’s name (& spelling), title, address and phone number.
- Be sure to thank the person for calling you.

## DINING INTERVIEWS

Food and business cannot be separated anymore! Because of this, many organizations take potential employees out for a meal as another strategy of interviewing candidates. If you are applying for a position that involves a lot of client contact the employer may want to make sure you are making a good impression of yourself and representing the organization well. Like it or not, good manners are associated with competence in your job and in business...they say a lot about you!! So...do not get too comfortable or relaxed if you are taken out to lunch as part of the selection process. No matter how informal, you are still being interviewed!

If you are confident with your manners and etiquette, you will feel comfortable in any situation, no matter how formal. If you are not confident, please consider attending the Career Development Etiquette Dinner (offered every semester) and looking through materials in our resource library. These resources will help answer any questions you may have on the several basic components to proper etiquette listed below:

- Handshakes
- Introductions & Making Conversation
- Honoring the Host
- Tackling Tableware
- Tricky/Challenging Foods
- Paying the Bill/Tipping



**It is important that you leave a good  
impression of  
- YOURSELF -  
not your poor manners!!**

## GOOD IMPRESSIONS

“You never get a second chance at a first impression”. A very old and true saying that definitely relates to the interview. An employer’s first impression is formed by what they see and sense in you. If they don’t like what they see and sense, they may not hire you...regardless of your skills and abilities. How do you form a good impression? Focus your attention on three basic things...Appearance, Attitude and Manners.

### **APPEARANCE**

The way you dress has an effect on the interviewer’s initial impression of you. Remember, always appear polished and it’s best to err on the conservative side.

Follow these guidelines:

#### **Women**

- Skirted suit, knee length, in solid color (navy, dark gray, black) or light pinstripe, no extreme slits.
- Polished and closed-toe shoes, basic dark pumps with medium or low heels.
- Clutch or small shoulder bag, choose between an attaché case or handbag (not both).
- Simple and basic jewelry. Nothing that dangles or is distracting.
- Nails subtle color if polished, clean and not chipped.
- Always wear hosiery and keep color neutral.
- Make-up should be minimal.
- Light perfume, if any.

#### **ATTITUDE**

Your attitude makes a statement. If you act enthusiastic and eager, the impression is that you’re an enthusiastic and eager worker. If you act too timid or too quiet, it implies that you may need a lot of supervision. Some managers say that it can be even more important than experience.

#### **MANNERS**

Good manners are important. They show that you’re civilized and sociable. They show that you will represent the company well and work well with your colleagues. The first manner an employer will look for is punctuality; it is critical that you arrive on time to an interview!!



#### **Men**

- Navy, charcoal gray or black suit.
- Clean nails.
- Conservative tie, simple, and neat.
- Avoid flashy cuff links, rings or neck chains.
- Over the calf dark socks.
- No strong fragrant cologne.
- Shined shoes. Tassel loafers, wing tip or lace shoes preferred.

#### **Both**

- No smoking nor chewing gum.
- No cell phone.
- One ring per hand.
- Quality pen, portfolio, briefcase and extra copies of your resume and letters of reference.

## COMMON MISTAKES OF INTERVIEWEES

- Unprepared for interview -- lack of knowledge of the organ. and/or available positions. Did not research the organization!
- Overbearing – over aggressive - conceited - superiority complex - know-it-all
- Inability to express self clearly and explain strengths – poor communication skills
- Lack of career planning - no purpose, goals or direction, not focused on what he/she wants to do
- Asks no questions about the job/company
- Lacks involvement in campus activities
- Does not belong to professional association associated with his/her major
- Poor communication skills - uses slang - improper grammar
- Lack of enthusiasm, doesn't smile, appears uninterested
- Poor appearance - inappropriately dressed for interview
- Lack of confidence - nervousness (to a fault) - ill at ease
- Overemphasis on money
- Poor academic record
- Expect too much too soon; unwilling to start at the bottom
- Makes excuses - evasiveness
- Lack of tact, courtesy & maturity
- Condemnation of past employers
- Poor eye contact
- Limp handshake
- Candidates who are merely "shopping around"
- Candidates who want job only for short time
- Lack of or little sense of humor
- No interest in organization or in industry
- Too much emphasis on whom one knows - trying to impress
- Unwillingness to relocate
- Strong prejudices
- Narrow scope of interests
- Little or no interest in community activities
- Inability to take criticism
- Late for interview without good reason
- Indecisive



## INTERVIEWING DO'S AND DON'TS

### DO'S

### DON'TS!

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Know yourself (skills, abilities, goals, interests, values, strengths/weaknesses, etc.)            | Don't be late.  |
| Know your potential employer (position you're interviewing for, primary products, services, etc.)  | Don't ask about other applicants.   |
| Read employer literature.  | Don't request salary information.   |
| Look professional.   | Don't smoke.  |
| Be on time. (Arrive at the site 15 minutes early to check your appearance, compose yourself, etc.) | Don't chew gum/eat life savers, etc.  |
| Be clear, concise, and to the point.   | Don't slouch.   |
| Send a thank-you follow-up. Get correct names and titles.  | Don't criticize previous employers, professors, etc.                                      |
| Bring appropriate materials (resume, transcript, etc.) in a portfolio.                             | Don't dress inappropriately. (You must dress to fit in.)                                  |
| Share your success stories.  | Don't dominate the conversation.  |
| Find out when a decision is expected to be made.   | Don't invade the interviewer's physical space.  |
| Give a firm handshake.   | Don't make excuses. (Give reasons instead.)   |
| Maintain eye contact.  | Don't tell the interviewer what he/she doesn't need to know such as personal information. |
| Prepare several insightful questions.  | Don't patronize the interviewer.  |
| Be positive & enthusiastic.  | Don't ramble (Make your point and stop talking.)  |
| Listen carefully.  | Don't try to be what you're not.  |
| Market yourself.   | Don't interrupt.  |
| Think before you answer.   | Don't make assumptions.   |
| Give concrete examples to support your points.   | Don't apologize.  |
| Be assertive, not aggressive.  | Don't ask obvious or inappropriate questions (about vacation, sick leave, etc.)           |
|  | Don't be aggressive. (Be assertive.)  |
|  | Don't rely on other people's words or thoughts. (Use your own.)                           |

## STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS!

- Do a good job in the pre-interview activities to insure a successful interview.
- Interview with a variety of organizations. Don't focus all your attention on the Fortune 500 companies. Remember, the largest growth in the job market will be with small to medium size companies.
- Prepare for any and all contingencies. This means that you should consider all possibilities. Don't reject an employer or a position because you think you know something about the industry/job. Talk to the employer. Explore the opportunity. Remember, you are under no obligation to accept an offer if one comes your way.
- Look throughout the region, and to the extent possible, look at opportunities across the country. Flexibility will be key to any successful job search.
- Be persistent! If you haven't heard from an employer in a timely fashion, call them to find out where they are in their process.
- Interview with any and all organizations, using all resources available to you. Take on-campus interviews, develop your own leads, follow up newspaper ads, and develop your own network.
- Maintain an accurate record of all your interviews. Who did you interview with (organization and individual)? When and where did you interview (date and place)? What did you think of the interview? Was there anything of note which was said during the interview? Did you send the thank you?
- Most importantly, keep at it!



The Career Development Center services and resources are designed to empower you in finding your career path and creating effective career development plans. It is imperative that students work on acquiring and improving these skills throughout their college experience to maximize their opportunity for SUCCESS!!!



**Please invest in yourself and your future by utilizing our Center –  
Reserve the time for your job search and practice your interviewing skills.  
Getting involved in your future will lead you to the key for success!**



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