

How To Interview (COVID Edition)

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Division of Student Affairs

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HOW YOU GET INVITED TO AN INTERVIEW BY MAKING A GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION

- You saw a great job or internship advertised.
- You made sure that you had a professional voicemail greeting on your phone, and you cleared out your old voicemail messages.
- You made your social media private, and you're using professional profile pictures.
- You sent your resume with a cover letter that directly responded to the job posting.

NEXT comes a phone call or email inviting you to interview.

- If it's a phone call, then **before** you answered the call from this unknown number, you made sure that you were in a good place for a phone interview (or you let the call go to voicemail).
- You had been keeping track of all the jobs you applied to, so it was easy to remember the job they were talking about, even though it had been two months since you applied.
- After confirming your interest, you asked these questions:

How much time should I plan for the interview?

Sometimes even though they don't tell you, you'll have a series of interviews that last for a few hours. It's best to check before the interview.

Can you tell me who I will interview with? (get spellings, and ask for titles)

If the answer to the first question is longer than an hour, and/or if they haven't provided you with the name and title of your interviewer, you will want to ask this second question. You can ask while you're on the phone, or you can send an email like this:

Dear Moriah Campbell,

I am excited about my October 19 interview at Lewis Scientific! As part of my preparation, I would like to have as much information as possible about those I will interview with. Can you please share with me an agenda with name(s) and titles of those who will be participating in the interviews?

Thank you,
Chris Student

WELL DONE. NOW you're ready to prepare for the interview.

This can be scary. You may be the best person for the job, but if you don't make a good impression in the interview, you can lose your chance at the position.

If you think you're just going to go in there and have a casual conversation with the interviewer, you're likely to fail. You need to prepare for the interview by planning a strategy.

PREPARATION BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Know yourself and your reasons for wanting this job

By the time you interview, you must know yourself very well. You must be aware of your skills, interests, values, and the kind of job that you want. You should also be aware of your liabilities. Interviewers can tell if you really know yourself well.

Learn about the organization

Another essential part of your preparation is thoroughly researching the company. Get to know as much as you can about a company before the relatively rapid interview and decision-making process. Don't make the interview a blind date.

If you don't research an organization, how can you know whether or not you want to work there?

What to look for when researching:

Size of organization	Potential growth areas
Product lines and/or services	Competitors
Clients and their products	Type of training program
Promotional path or career path in your field	Trends/major issues in your field

Where to find the information:

- www.Glassdoor.com – Access company information, including interview tips, salaries, etc.
- Annual Reports
- OhioLINK databases, including news article archives (available through our library)
- Specific professional journals/publications

Capital's library has additional resources for locating information on specific organizations, including online databases. Ask a librarian to show you where they are and how to use them!

Read corporate information and current news information about the companies. Call people whom you know in order to get the name and phone number of someone who works for the company. Find out if any Capital alumni work there through LinkedIn's Capital Alumni Group, and through the CapFam Network on Wisr!

The interviewer will respect and trust you much more if you have taken the time to learn about the organization. This shows preparation and a true interest on your part. You must show an intelligent interest in them!

Prepare for the interview process

Simply being informed about an employer isn't enough to guarantee a successful interview unless you can effectively use the information. It is only helpful when you know how to smoothly "weave" your knowledge into the interview instead of just randomly stating facts or statistics.

Practice responses to possible questions

Although it isn't good to have "canned" answers that you blurt out when asked, it is a good idea to review some of the most common questions. That way, you can calmly remember what you want to say. You have a better chance of speaking without forgetting. A list of popular questions can be found on the back page of this booklet.

Prepare for the interview environment

If possible, stage a mock interview with a Career Development staff member, a faculty member, or a friend. By doing this, you can try out some of your answers and receive constructive feedback on the way that you present yourself. You can also learn about any distracting habits, which can be eliminated before your interview. You might find it helpful to record and view mock interviews on your phone.

Practice questions that you will ask them

You will be expected to have some intelligent questions to ask. Don't enter into a working relationship without first asking questions of your potential employer. We've included a list of possible questions on page 11 of this booklet.

In addition to these, develop specific questions about the company based on information that you have read online and in newspapers, magazines, and annual reports.

Prepare for the trip to the interview

Get dressed

Yes, you must wear clothes. In general, dress conservatively. Men should wear a suit, tie, and a plain shirt (usually white or a light color is your best bet). Women should wear a suit or jacket/skirt or pants combination. You want the interviewer to remember you, not your clothing, hair, jewelry, or (if you're interviewing in-person) cologne/perfume. If you don't already have a couple of appropriate interview outfits, go to a store that sells professional interview clothes. Women should wear closed-toe shoes, and either flats or low heels.

Arrive

For in-person interviews, arrive between 5 and 10 minutes early for the interview. Take your gum out of your mouth, and leave your cell phone in your car (or turn the power off).

If you come too early they won't know what to do with you. Sit in your car for a few minutes if you have to. If you arrive late, you'll be seen as irresponsible.

THE INTERVIEW

The introduction

It's helpful if you can know the interviewer's name, and how to pronounce it, prior to the interview. When meeting this person for the first time, make eye contact (or if it's a virtual interview, look in the camera) and say, "Good morning, Ms. Steele," or "Good afternoon, Mr. Brandt."

These days the assumption is that you will not shake hands with anyone.

Strategy

Two guidelines are (1) Be yourself, and (2) Think of the interview as both a selling *and* a matching process. You and the employer are trying to determine whether you are a good match for each other. You both want to make the best decision. You must know yourself well enough to give the employer a good idea of who you are and what you are like. The employer must know the company and work environment well enough to give you a good idea of what it is like to work there.

Your roles change during the process. In the interviews, you are selling yourself to the employers. When they are ready to make an offer to you (usually not until you've been invited back for a second interview), the tables turn; they are trying to sell the position to you. This is why you should defer discussion of salary and benefits until you are offered the position. It is at this point that you can actually negotiate from a position of strength.

Length of time

Interviews come in all lengths of time. They can range from fifteen minutes to a few hours. The most common for you will probably be 30 minute interviews. You may also have several of these interviews in a row, within one day of interviewing. This is especially true if you have "made it" through the screening interview and have been invited back for more in-depth interviewing.

A typical interview structure is:

FIVE minutes - Small talk.

FIFTEEN minutes - A discussion of your background and credentials as they relate to the employer's needs. In the screening interview, the employer might go into detail about the organization.

FIVE minutes - You ask questions.

FIVE minutes - Conclusion of interview.

The first few minutes

First impressions ARE the most important, and these first few minutes (or seconds) could be crucial for you. Most interviewers make an immediate judgment about you. Sit up straight, smile, think things through before you say them, and be yourself. Relax if you can, but stay alert.

Interviewers usually want to put you at ease because they get a more accurate sense of your personality. During this period of time, the interviewer may ask some simple questions about your background, or comment on a common interest that you have listed on your resume. Even though small talk seems relaxed, it has a definite purpose. They may be judging how well you communicate on an informal basis. This means you must do more than smile and nod.

The time in the middle

This is the time for questions, both from the interviewer and from you. Take a look at the next section for some of the ways in which questions might be asked. Consider these ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS after you ***listen carefully*** to each question (see box on the right):

FOUR ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS before you begin your answers:

1. Listen carefully to the question.
2. Why are they asking this question?
3. What example will you use?
4. How will you the end your response?

The last few minutes

This is usually an opportunity for you to say anything or ask anything that you were unable to address earlier in the interview. If you think that you screwed up, this is the time to redeem yourself. If the conversation was dominated by the interviewer and you were unable to talk about yourself, or ask some questions, this is a good time to do that.

Before you leave the interview, you must remember to ask: "What is the next step in this process?", "When should I expect to hear from you?" and "Will you be contacting all of the candidates?" If you don't ask these questions, you will probably wait a week and then start to call friends and ask for their advice on whether or not you should call the company and inquire about your status. You can avoid all of that by asking the question, and then following up. For instance, if the response is, "We'll call you within two weeks," you can ask, "If I don't hear from you within two weeks, may I call?" Press them *gently* for specific information that will guide the way in which you should act.

If you know that you really want the job, and you feel that you are a great candidate for the position, you can say so! Say something like, "I am very interested in this position, and I'm confident that I would do a great job." [Be specific here...why are you so sure? Briefly name two or three key qualifications] Then say, "I hope that you offer the position to me." [If this seems too bold, you can instead say, "I hope that you strongly consider me."]

If you clearly have no interest in the position, thank the interviewer, and explain that after learning more about the job, you realize that it isn't a good match. Interviewers will appreciate that you're not going to waste their time by pretending to be interested in the position.

Never leave the interview without knowing the recruiter's name (including correct spelling), title, and address. *Ask for a business card!* You'll need the information when you begin your follow-up correspondence. Even better: use the advice on page 2, and get the information earlier.

QUESTION STYLES

There are a number of different question styles, and you should be prepared for any of them, even though some (like stress questions) are rare.

Structured

The interviewer asks questions from a sheet of paper, and writes responses in spaces provided on the sheet.

If the interviewer is taking questions from a sheet of paper, chances are you will have prepared for similar questions. It is important that your answers are complete, yet concise; no more than one or two minutes each. This interviewer needs to complete a series of specific questions, and you should try to make that as easy as possible.

Another kind of structured interview is *The Behavioral Interview*. In this type, the interviewer asks for specific situations in which a desired characteristic or behavior was exhibited. He or she is using past behaviors to predict future behavior/performance on the job. For example, if the job for which you are interviewing requires that you work without supervision, you may be asked to relate an experience when you were given a project or task to complete without any direct guidance from a supervisor. If the interviewer wants to know how you handle adversity, you may be asked for an experience in which you had to explain something to someone and failed in your first attempt.

Unstructured

This occurs when the interviewer knows what information is needed, in general, and lets your responses take them in the direction of the questions that they need to ask. Many interviewers conduct these because they can learn much more about you from the way that you respond in a more informal interviewing situation than from your responses to overused interview questions.

You can prepare for this type of interview by carefully thinking through what kind of person you are, how you react in different circumstances, what kinds of qualities you are looking for in a job, and what you think they are looking for in an employee. If you don't know what *specific* qualities you are hoping to find in the perfect job match, it's okay to say that you are looking for a job in which you can grow and learn about a particular field while contributing to the organization. Be honest without disqualifying yourself.

Stress

There are many kinds of stress questions and interviews. I've provided two examples here. For a comprehensive list of stress questions, see [Knock 'Em Dead](#), by Martin Yate.

Example 1: You have 30 minutes. Tell me why I should hire you.

The purpose of this type of question is to see how you react to stress, not whether you can talk about yourself for 30 minutes. You should tell briefly (less than five minutes) why you are appropriate for the job. After this, change the focus of the interview. "There are a few questions that I'd like to ask you" is a good way to change it. Refer to your sheet of questions, and begin a dialogue with the interviewer.

Example 2: They sit and stare at you after you've answered the question.

This is another attempt to observe your behavior under stress. If you are nervous and unsure of yourself, you'll likely cave in to the pressure. You might continue to talk, thinking that interviewers stare because they want you to say more. You might sit silently, waiting for the next question.

If you feel that you have answered a question completely, and an interviewer continues to look silently at you, do not be uncomfortable (or at least don't look it!) Prepare yourself with additional comments or information about yourself. Be bold! Change the subject! You'll show your social skills and your initiative!

Additional stress questions from [Knock 'Em Dead](#):

- What's your greatest weakness? (don't say "I'm a workaholic" or "I'm a perfectionist")
- See this pen I'm holding? Sell it to me.
- What's the worst thing you've heard about our company?
- Tell me about a time when you put your foot in your mouth.
- What did you dislike about your last employer?
- I'm not sure you're suitable for the job.

Windbag

The interviewer dominates the conversation, even after asking questions of you. For instance, "What kind of work environment are you looking for? (and then, without pausing) Let me tell you about the work environment *here...*" They end up telling you about their experience and what they are looking for, but don't give you a chance to tell them anything about yourself.

This is dangerous because at the end of the interview they will know nothing about you. They can't easily consider you for the position because they don't yet know you.

The solution: Even windbags need to inhale. During an appropriate breath, interject with a comment, like: "You mentioned speaking skills...I've obtained speaking experience in classroom presentations and in programs that I have facilitated as a Resident Assistant at Capital University." Then continue to describe your experiences so that you will leave the interviewer with a solid impression of you.

INTERVIEW FORMATS

Traditional (face-to-face)

This is the typical interview format. One candidate (or a group of candidates, and this is obviously more stressful for you) interviews with one interviewer (or a group of interviewers – again, more stressful). The information in most of this guide pertains to this format.

Group of candidates: If you are all asked the same question, you shouldn't always try to be first. When responding after someone whose answer is similar to what you were going to say, it's okay to say, "My answer is similar to Helen's," and repeat the core of her answer, making sure that you illustrate your answer with a different example.

Group of interviewers: Look at each of the interviewers (not just the one who asked the question) when responding, and when you are concluding your answer, look at the person who asked. Part of what makes this kind of interview difficult is that you are answering for a variety of people who might have different roles and expectations for what they would like you to focus on. Keep everyone in mind as you are responding.

Telephone

This format is often used to screen candidates because it is inexpensive. Sometimes they are set up in advance, and other times you will be surprised in the middle of the day by a recruiter on the phone (which is why you shouldn't answer your phone if you don't recognize the number!). Some things to remember are:

- Use a private room, and use a land line, if possible.
- Stand up and smile while you're talking. You'll sound better.
- Dress professionally; you'll feel and sound more professional.
- Keep a copy of your resume, notes, and other information in front of you.
- Talk into the phone using your mouth, not your chin.
- Listen for your cues, since you can't see the body language of the interviewer(s).
- Avoid babbling or lapsing into trite language to stall for time while you think. Instead, say, "Let me think about that", and be quiet for five seconds. We're often conditioned to "think out loud" on the phone.
- Take notes, especially on the key points you want the employer to know about you, and refer to them when you need to during the interview.
- At the end of the interview, say that you are interested (if you are) in the position, and ask about next steps in the process.

Video (Zoom – or other format)

Although a video interview is not as effective as a face-to-face interview, it has become essential for most employers during COVID. It's also cost-effective as a screening interview. It can be more useful than a phone interview. Here are some aspects of the video interview that you should prepare for (next page):

Video, continued

FAMILIARITY WITH THE TECHNOLOGY

- Practice with the technology *before* you apply for jobs so that you can confidently answer “yes” when an employer asks if you can schedule a Zoom (or other format) interview.
- Practice using the audio and video controls, and check to see what you look like.
- Set up your webcam so that you’re looking directly into the camera. If you have a laptop, you might have to set it on top of something. Move the video chat window as close to your computer’s camera as possible so you can look at both.

YOUR APPEARANCE

- Dress professionally and appropriately, from hair to shoes, in case you need to get up during the interview.

CONNECTION FAILURES

- Use a solid, fast internet connection to minimize the possibility of frozen screens, slow images, and pixilation. The best way to ensure this is to use an Ethernet cable directly connecting your computer to an Ethernet port on campus, or to your modem.
- Be aware that sometimes the audio fails, and sometimes the picture freezes or is out of sync.
- Get the interviewers’ names and phone numbers ahead of time in case Zoom doesn’t work.
- Have a landline or fully charged cell phone nearby in case the audio drops out of the Zoom call.
- Being prepared and calmly responding to technical issues can impress an employer.

ENVIRONMENT

- Experiment with the lighting in the room; avoid shadows or too much brightness on your face.
- Take a look at the background of the room showing in the webcam. The background should look plain or professional, with nothing distracting or inappropriate.
- Remove or silence distractions like cell phone ringers, email alerts, music, pets, roommates, etc. And put a note on your door so no one knocks or rings your doorbell.

INTERVIEW LOGISTICS

- Similar to the phone interview, keep a copy of your resume and other notes nearby where you can refer to them (without being too noticeable). Taking some notes might help focus your answers.
- Don’t type on the keyboard during the conversation; it will look (and probably sound) like you’re not fully engaged. Instead, use a pen and a tablet, and try not to look away from the camera too much while writing notes.
- This should be obvious, but don’t eat or chew gum during the video interview.

Interview during a meal (probably won’t happen again until after COVID)

Often an interview schedule will include lunch or another meal. Even if it seems casual, it is a real part of the interview process, and you are being evaluated. Please review the “General Information” on page 2 of our Dining Etiquette guide (www.capital.edu/career-how-to), and the tips on appropriate dining behavior throughout the rest of the guide.

ASKING QUESTIONS DURING INTERVIEW

When you're asked, "What questions do you have for me?" don't say "I don't have any questions", and don't say, "You've answered all my questions." MAKE SURE you have questions to ask.

What are the best questions for you to ask the employer?

The best questions are developed from your own interest and curiosity about the organization, and from research you have conducted. (see page 2). But you'll find some common suggestions to consider below.

Always be prepared to ask the interviewer questions.
It tells them that you are genuinely interested.

Questions you may want to ask (if they haven't already been answered):

Why is this position open?

How long has the position been open?

Who would I report to?

How does the department fit into the organizational structure--its purpose and collaboration with the other departments with which it works?

Does the company/organization/department have specific goals for the upcoming year? *[If yes]:* What aspects of this position contribute to the accomplishment of those goals?

How does this division/unit/department contribute to the mission/vision of the company/organization?

What type of formal or informal training is built into the position?

Would I be working on my own or as a member of a team?

Will I have an opportunity to meet current employees?

Have there been any recent organizational changes?

What have the predecessors in this job moved on to?

What does a successful employee "look like" here?

How is job performance measured?

Do you have a policy/procedure manual, and would it be possible for me to review it?

What type of support do you provide for professional development?

What is the next step in the selection process? (When should I expect to hear from you?)

OTHER INTERVIEW ISSUES

Types of Interviewers (tailor your responses to your audience)

In the interviews, you might be talking with your future boss, a colleague, or a member of the support staff. You will want to react differently to each one. Consider what each of your interviewers will want to know about you.

Illegal Questions

You need to be prepared for these questions. In case you're not familiar with them, these are questions like, "Are you married?", "Do you have plans for (marriage/ children) in the future?", "Would you describe yourself as religious?". Your choices for a response may seem limited:

- (1) answer the question and compromise your values, or
- (2) refuse to answer and lose a chance at a job

We suggest in most cases is to answer the question that they are *really* asking. For instance, if the interviewer asks, "Do you have plans to have children?", they are most likely really concerned about how long you will be working there, and whether you will have problems coming to work on time in the future. You respond, "My personal life will not affect my job performance." It answers the question without compromising your values.

Salary Requirements

If asked what salary you require, you don't want to be high and scare them, and you don't want to be so low that you undersell yourself. Try to avoid being the first to state an amount. If an interviewer asks you about your salary requirements (this usually doesn't happen until at least the second interview), you can ask them for the salary range for the position. They will usually tell you. If it seems fine, tell the interviewer that the range meets your expectations. Later, when they offer a specific salary, you can negotiate. At times you may have to cope with more complex situations. Remember that your compensation includes more than just salary--consider the whole package (vacation, insurance, etc.). For a complete overview of salary negotiation, see [Knock 'Em Dead](#).

Accepting/Delaying offers

START WITH THE RIGHT TONE

- When you get a phone call (or return the call after listening to their message), say something positive, like, "I'm so glad to hear from you," or "This sounds like a great opportunity." If you received an offer via email, consider calling the employer instead of responding via email.

(continued on next page)

ASK FOR MORE TIME

You should ask for a couple of days to think about an offer (after you've confirmed to the employer that you *are* interested in the position). Being “put on the spot” can feel very uncomfortable, and can result in making poor decisions.

- Say something like, “As you might imagine, I’d like to think about this for a couple of days. Can I call you back on Friday?”
- If an employer expects for you to accept right then on the phone, there might be cause for concern. Any reasonable employer will give you time.

DO YOU HAVE ALL THE INFORMATION YOU NEED?

Sometimes the employer still hasn’t covered all of the important information, like benefits.

- Ask questions about anything that you’re unsure of.
- This is the one opportunity you will have to ask for more money. This is your time to negotiate; it’s the time when you have influence. But asking for more money (or other compensation or benefits) can be very intimidating, and you can instead simply accept their offer if that feels too uncomfortable or seems inappropriate. Talk with Career Development about this if you have questions.

ARE YOU WAITING TO HEAR BACK FROM AN EMPLOYER YOU’D PREFER? BEFORE ACCEPTING, CALL THE OTHER EMPLOYERS!

If you’re still interested in another employer, but haven’t heard back after an interview, you can call the other recruiters and ask for their advice.

- If you’ve already interviewed with another organization and you’re waiting for a response (and you’d rather get an offer from **them**), it’s okay to call your contact there. You would say something like, “I need your advice; I’ve received an offer from another organization, but I think that you’re a better fit for me. Can you give me a sense of my candidacy for the Public Relations Assistant position?” In other words, how interested are they in you? You can get an idea of when you might expect a decision from them, and at that point, you can make a more informed decision about the offer. Call Career Development and ask us for specific advice, too.
- Please do NOT accept an offer and then continue to interview with other organizations. For many reasons, this is a bad idea. Instead, if you have questions about how to proceed, please talk with one of the professional staff members in Career Development.

AFTER ACCEPTING AN OFFER, CONTACT ALL EMPLOYERS YOU HAVE APPLIED TO

Let them know that you have accepted an offer, and that they should remove you from their applicant list. It sends a message about your professionalism that could help you in a future job search.

FOLLOW UP WITH A THANK-YOU

Within **one day** (but not minutes after your interview), send a thank you letter or email to the person who interviewed you (85% of employers in our recent survey indicated that an email thank-you is okay). NOTE: You should not expect a response from the employer whether you send your thank you by email or mail, but it might feel like you should expect an email response. Don't expect it.

If two people interviewed you, and IF the interviews were very different (the two interviewers had different priorities, interests, focus, etc), send two *different* letters/emails (see examples on next two pages). If you send an email, you don't need to use the business letter format. Also, the text should be in the body of the email (not an attachment).

If several people interviewed you, you can generally send one thank-you to the main person who is supervising the selection process. Thank this person for the interview and for the other interviews, and ask him/her to extend your appreciation to the other interviewers.

This is a good format:

Your Address
City, State, Zip Code
Date

Interviewer's Name
Title
Company
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. _____,

Thank him/her for the interview. Mention the position for which you interviewed and the date of the interview.

Reinforce your interest in the position if you are still interested, or inform them that you are no longer interested. It is a good idea to respond in either situation. If possible, mention something significant that you learned or discussed in the interview. You may add any additional information you wish in order to clarify pertinent aspects of your resume.

Let the interviewer know that if they need any additional information, they can contact you by phone or email. (List your contact information).

Sincerely,

(Your signed name, or one blank line)

Your typed name

Thank you emails/letters sent when interviewed by two people: EXAMPLE 1

Box 000, Capital University
Columbus, Ohio 43209
December 7, 2020

John Calphalon
Huntington Bank
989 Crupper Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43229

Dear Mr. Calphalon:

Thank you for the opportunity to have an office interview on May 6 for a Staff Internal Auditor position with Huntington Bank.

I feel as though I gained a thorough understanding of the Internal Auditor's role in Huntington, particularly in the area of financial audits. The position appears to offer much opportunity for learning, growth, and team effort. These are three essential qualities I am seeking in a career.

If you need any additional information, please feel free to contact me at 236-0000 or at dposthole@capital.edu.

Sincerely,

Doug Posthole

Thank you emails/letters sent when interviewed by two people: EXAMPLE 2

Box 000 Capital University
Columbus, Ohio 43209
December 7, 2020

Stephanie Cottonwood, CPA
Huntington Bank
989 Crupper Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43229

Dear Ms. Cottonwood:

Thank you for the opportunity to have an office interview on May 6 for a Staff Internal Auditor position with Huntington Bank.

I am very interested in an Internal Auditor position with Huntington. I was excited to learn about the opportunities and prospective growth in the internal audit department. I am very interested in contributing my skills and ideas to Huntington and becoming an essential part of this growth.

I appreciated hearing your comments and views on internal auditing and public accounting, as well. If you need any additional information, you can contact me at 236-0000 or dposthole@capital.edu.

Sincerely,

Doug Posthole

PREPARATION SUMMARY

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Practice responses

- Prepare yourself for specific questions

Check your appearance

- Do you need a suit?
- Have you polished your shoes (or are they new?)

Consider possible distractions

- Are your accessories and perfume/cologne distracting?
- Do you need to change your hairstyle to keep it out of the way?
- Will the color/pattern of your shirt, tie or blouse be distracting?
- Are you going to remove/cover any body piercing or tattoos?

Know how to act

- Use their name, if you can
- Maintain eye contact
- Eliminate nervous habits
- Sit up straight

Understand the different interview styles (reviewed in the booklet)

- Structured
- Unstructured
- Behavioral vs. Generalized
- Windbag
- Stress
- Other specific formats

Be aware of illegal questions

- Know how to respond:
 - What is the question they are really asking?
 - Can they explain how their question relates to the position?

Research the employer and the position

- Learn about them (check your needs/wants list) and compare to other employers
- Know why you are interested in this job and employer

STRATEGIES SUMMARY

AT THE INTERVIEW

FOUR ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER WITH EACH QUESTION:

1. Listen carefully to the question.
2. Why is the interviewer asking this question?
3. What example(s) will you use?
4. How will you end your response?

Articulate your goals

- Know yourself and your professional goals, and why you want this job

Make a good verbal impression

- Sound like you care
- Speak clearly, confidently, and at a reasonable pace
- Train yourself out of using lazy language (e.g., “like”, “you know”)
- Don’t end statements as if they are questions; watch your intonation

Use examples to illustrate your points

- Showing is more powerful than telling (it creates mental pictures)
- Examples substantiate your claims

Know how to answer questions that you need to think about

- Repeat the question, or the core of the question, in order to buy extra time while you think silently about your response (although you will want to do this in moderation). You can also modify the question so you can answer it.
- Think through to the END of your response (what is the point that you will be making?) so you don’t “trail off” when you get there

Remain positive in all interview responses

- Previous employers/supervisors (never say anything negative about them)
- Failures (focus on what you learned from failures)
- Tell the *best* things about you

Know how to work with silence in the interview

- Be comfortable with your silence (see above)
- Learn strategies for responding to *their* silence (in a stress interview)

Ask questions

- Be ready with questions when they ask “what questions do *you* have?”
 - What are the two things you should NOT say?
- Ask about next steps in the selection process, and ask about a predicted time frame

Keep a list of points that you want to emphasize

- Refer to this at the end of the interview
- Summarize your degree of “fit” for the position, and if you’re really interested, tell them!

Understand negotiation power

- Know when you have power (have they offered you the position?), and when you do not. Don’t ask about salary or extra perks until you have an offer, or at least until you’ve established a mutual interest. This is probably after a second interview.

FOLLOW-UP SUMMARY

Take notes after the interview

- You are expected to remember what you discussed. Information from this interview might come up in a second interview with the organization. Do not trust your memory.

Send a thank you email or letter

- Do this within 24 hours.
- Know what to do if you interview with more than one person.

Accepting an offer

- When you get the phone call (or return the call after listening to their message), say something positive, like, "I'm so glad to hear from you", or "This sounds like a great opportunity".
- Ask for some time to think about it, saying, "As you might imagine, I'd like to think about this for a couple of days. Can I call you back on Friday?"
- If an employer expects for you to accept right then on the phone, there might be cause for concern. Any reasonable employer will give you time.
- Ask questions about anything that you're unsure of. This is your time to negotiate; it's the time when you have influence.
- This is the one opportunity you will have to ask for more money. But it can be intimidating. Talk with Career Development about this if you have questions.

What if you're waiting for another offer?

- If you've already interviewed with another organization and you're waiting for a response (and you'd rather get an offer from them), it's okay to call your contact there. You would say something like, "I need your advice; I've received an offer from another organization, but I think that you're a better fit for me. Can you give me a sense of my candidacy for the Public Relations Assistant position?"
- Please do NOT accept an offer and then continue to interview with other organizations. For many reasons, this is a bad idea. Instead, if you have questions about how to proceed, please talk with one of the professional staff members in Career Development.

NOTE: Look at the next page for 55 Favorite Employer Questions!

FIFTY-FIVE FAVORITE EMPLOYER QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your long-range and short-range goals and objectives, when and why did you establish these goals, and how are you preparing yourself to achieve them?
3. What specific goals, other than those related to your occupation, have you established for yourself for the next ten years?
4. What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
5. What do you **really** want to do in life?
6. What are your long-range career objectives?
7. How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
8. What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
9. What do you expect to be earning in five years?
10. Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
11. Which is more important to you, the money or the type of job?
12. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
13. How would you describe yourself?
14. How do you think a friend or professor who knows you would describe you?
15. What motivates you to put forth your greatest efforts?
16. How has your college experience prepared you for a career?
17. Why should I hire you?
18. What qualifications do you have that make you think you will be successful?
19. How do you determine or evaluate success?
20. What do you think it takes to be successful in a company like ours?
21. In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?
22. What qualities should a successful manager possess?
23. Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and those reporting to him or her.
24. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
25. Describe your most rewarding college experience.
26. If you were hiring a graduate for this position, what qualities would you look for?
27. Why did you select your college or university?
28. What led you to choose your field of major study?
29. What college subjects did you like most? Why?
30. What college subjects did you like least? Why?
31. If you could do so, how would you plan your academic study differently? Why?
32. What changes would you make in your college or university? Why?
33. Do you have plans for continued study? An advanced degree?
34. Do you think that your grades are a good indication of your academic achievement?
35. What have you learned from participation in extracurricular activities?
36. In what kind of a work environment are you most comfortable?
37. How do you work under pressure?
38. In what part-time or summer jobs have you been most interested? Why?
39. How would you describe the ideal job for you following graduation?
40. Why did you decide to seek a position with this company?
41. What do you know about our company?
42. What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
43. Are you seeking employment in a company of a certain size? Why?
44. What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?
45. Do you have a geographical preference? Why?
46. Will you relocate? Does relocation bother you?
47. Are you willing to travel?
48. Are you willing to spend at least six months as a trainee?
49. Why do you think you might like to live in the community in which our company is located?
50. What major problem have you encountered and how did you deal with it?
51. What have you learned from your mistakes?
52. Why do you want to work in this field?
53. Give me an example of a problem you have solved.
54. Think of a time when you had to contact a stranger and persuade him/her to do something. What was the situation? What did you do? What happened?
55. Think of when someone was angry with you or there was conflict. What was the situation? What did you do? What were the results?

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