

Interviewing Skills: Before, During & After Your Interview

Before—Preparing for Your Interview

Do your research:

- ❑ When scheduling your interview, ask about the interview format.
 - ❑ For example: Will you be meeting with one person or many people at once?
- ❑ Research the organization, the position you are seeking, and the people with whom you will be interviewing—learn as much as possible.
 - ❑ Know the organization's history, products, services, locations, mission statement, and corporate culture. Utilize a variety of sources when researching.
- ❑ Review your resume. Using your resume and the position description as a guide, think of concrete examples of how your experience and skills match those sought by the employer.

Practice interview questions:

- ❑ Interviewing is a skill—practicing will make an impact!
- ❑ Review sample interview questions. Start by answering these questions for friends or family.
- ❑ Schedule a mock interview with Career Services or attend an Interviewing Skills Workshop.

Create a portfolio of items you may need:

- ❑ Pen, paper (in case you are asked to write something down—even if usually use your phone to jot down notes.)
- ❑ Completed employment application/information needed to complete an application.
- ❑ Questions to ask employers at the end of the interview (yes, it's okay to write these down!)
- ❑ Copies of your resume and references (bring more than needed); copy of transcript (can be an unofficial, updated copy of your transcript that you make multiple copies of for the purpose of interviewing).

Your first impression:

- ❑ Have a neat, well-groomed appearance and wear a business suit. The focus should be on you, not what you are wearing.

During: Finding Interview Success

Good manners are extremely important!

- ❑ Be prompt; for an interview, this means arrive about 15 minutes early.
- ❑ Be polite and pleasant to everyone with whom you come into contact as soon as you are on site— even in the parking lot.
- ❑ Offer a firm handshake—look the person in the eye with an enthusiastic smile!
- ❑ Use proper English/grammar (e.g., "yes" versus "yeah").
- ❑ Be aware of your body language and other nonverbal cues, such as eye contact.
- ❑ Listen to the interviewer. Respond completely to all aspects of a question. Ask for clarification if necessary.
- ❑ Interviews are conversations between you and the employer. Don't monopolize the conversation— use this time to learn as much as possible about the organization.

- ❑ Be positive; don't complain about a former employer, job, or academics.
- ❑ Avoid questions on salary, benefits, or vacation. Focus on what you can do for the employer.
- ❑ Ask for a business card at the end of the interview, or write down the employer's contact information.

After: Assess your Performance

Immediately after the interview, take notes:

- ❑ Write down the questions you were asked and your responses.
- ❑ Evaluate your performance and how you can improve.
- ❑ Did the interviewer make specific comments or appear impressed with any answers, your resume, specific aspects of your experience?
- ❑ What interested you about this position? Why do you want this job? Do you have any concerns about the organization or the position?
- ❑ Use this information to assist in following up with the employer.

Follow Up: Say Thank You

Send a "Thank You" letter within 24 hours to each person with whom you interviewed:

- ❑ Structure your thank you letter as follows:
 - ❑ Remind the interviewer why you are a good match for the position.
 - ❑ Add any information you forgot to give during the interview.
 - ❑ Thank the interviewer for his/her time and attention.
 - ❑ Close by arranging follow-up.
- ❑ Thank-you letters can be hard copy/typed, handwritten or e-mailed. Consider your audience and the employer's timeline when selecting a thank you letter format.
 - ❑ E-mail is appropriate, but be sure to keep your format and content professional.
 - ❑ Hard copy thank you notes are the most formal. Handwritten thank you notes are more personal.

Side Note: Organize Your Job Search

- ❑ Keep good records of interviews as well as the rest of your job search.
 - ❑ This includes, but is not limited to, positions for which you have applied, position descriptions, interview dates/times, thank you letter sent, and additional follow up.
 - ❑ There are many ways to track these details; use the system that works best for you and is easily accessible should an employer contact you.