



UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND
EASTERN SHORE

DIVISION OF ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT & STUDENT EXPERIENCE

**CAREER & PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT CENTER**



EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

It is not enough to simply show up for an interview and present yourself for analysis and evaluation. If your interview is going to be a mutual exchange of information, you must be prepared and willing to actively participate in the interview process. Your being ready for the interview depends on two important factors: (1) The knowledge you have of yourself, and (2) The knowledge you have of the potential employer.

If you expect to make a good impression, you must have confidence that your interview is going to be a good one. Self-confidence comes from being well-prepared and by knowing that you are ready for your interview. Get a good night's rest before your interview. Also, consider reading the morning paper on that day. Interviews often start with "small talk", and it may prove helpful to be aware of the day's news.

MOCK INTERVIEWS

The Office of Career Services does conduct **mock, or practice, interviews**. Contact the office to see if a workshop is scheduled or to request this interview service.

The key is... * PREPARATION *****

Preparation is the one element of the interview process over which you have complete control. Take advantage of this fact by doing your homework. Practice responding to some anticipated difficult questions. You can practice with a trusted partner or alone in front of a mirror. Consider making and reviewing a video or audio tape of yourself as practice. Develop some well thought out responses. This, along with an in-depth self-assessment, will help to ease a great deal of natural nervousness.

To get started, consider the following:

I. Knowledge of Yourself (Self-Assessment)

- A. What experience, knowledge, skills, & abilities do you have?
- B. From the above list which will be required for a particular job?
- C. Analyze your strengths and areas for improvement.
- D. What, if any, geographic preference do you have?
- E. Examine your academic performance, interest, achievements, and values.
- F. What are your professional, as well as personal goals and objectives for the 1st year? For the next 5 years?

II Knowledge of the Company or Organization

- A. How much do you know about the company in which you are trying to get a job?
- B. How large is the organization and where are its principal locations?
- C. What product(s) does the company make or what service(s) does it provide?
- D. What kind of questions might the interviewers ask?
- E. How long has the company been in business?
- F. How successful has the company been, e.g., in terms of sales?

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW (continued)

Answers to questions such as these can do a lot to improve self-confidence. The more you know about yourself and the employer, the better prepared you will be to show the interviewer(s) how you might fit in with his or her company or organization.

If you have done this type of research before your interview, you will be regarded as someone who has self-direction and as someone who has given some serious thought to what (s) he wants to do in the future. You will also be able to ask intelligent questions during the interview, which will be regarded as further evidence of your interest.

To get information about potential employers, search the Internet and visit the Resource Library at the Office of Career Services or the Frederick Douglass Library on campus. The more knowledge you have about a prospective employer, the better you will perform in an interview. Explore the following webpage: www.companiesonline.com

...AVOID THIS COMMON INTERVIEW PITFALL...

Be prepared for the question that is every unprepared candidate's nightmare! That is, beware of the open-ended interview questions and statements, such as the routine: "Tell Me about yourself" closely followed by "Why do you think you are the best candidate for the job?"

Think about it. Simple questions but not so easy to answer unless you are prepared! Generally, interviewers are testing how well you handle ambiguity, how poised you remain, how well you communicate and how you focus your response. Briefly discuss your skills, talents and accomplishments as they relate to the position you seek. Summarize related work experience and career aspirations. Avoid appearing arrogant. Be confident!

NOTE: It is the policy of the Career & Professional Development Center that all students must **report to the Office in the SSC, Suite #2158 at least 10-15 minutes before the scheduled interview time.** You will be escorted to the Interview Room. Failure to comply could result in suspension of your current and future interview privileges.

UMES Office of Career & Professional Development Center "No-Show" Policy and Procedure.

If an emergency arises you must call the Office at least 24 hours in advance. Failure to call as indicated qualifies you as a "**No-Show**". Exceptions to this rule will be rare. Any UMES Student who is a "No-Show" for any interview that is scheduled by or through the Career Services Office, will not be scheduled for future interviews until the following procedure is followed. All "No-Shows" must meet with the Director of Career Services before any subsequent interviews will be allowed. Failure to comply will result in the student's name being removed from all interview lists.

TYPICAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

“Fifty Questions Most Often Asked by Employers during the Interview With College Seniors”

Adapted from the Northwestern Endicott Report, by V.R. Lindquist

1. What are your long range and short range goals and objectives. When and why did you establish these goals? How are you preparing yourself to achieve them? 25.
2. What specific goals, other than those related to your occupation, have you established for yourself for the next year, 5 years, 10 years? 26.
3. What do you see yourself doing five years from now? 27.
4. What do you really want to do in life? 28.
5. What are your long range career objectives? 29.
6. How do you plan to achieve your career goals? 30.
7. What are the most important rewards you expect in your business career? 31.
8. What do you expect to be earning in five years? 32.
9. Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing? 33.
10. Which is more important to you the money or the type of job? Why? 34.
11. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses? 35.
12. How would you describe yourself? 36.
13. How do you think a friend or professor who knows you well would describe you? 37.
14. What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort? 38.
15. How has your college experience prepared you for a business career? 39.
16. Why should I hire you? 40.
17. What qualifications do you have that make you think you will be successful in business? 41.
18. How do you determine or evaluate success? 42.
19. What do you think it takes to be successful in a company like ours? 43.
20. In what way do you think you can make a contribution to our company? 44.
21. What qualities should a successful manager possess? 45.
22. Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and those reporting to him or her. 46.
23. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why? 47.
24. Describe your most rewarding college experience. 48.
25. If you were hiring a graduate for this position, what qualities would you look for? 49.
26. Why did you select your college or university? 50.
27. What led you to choose your field or major area of study?
28. What college subjects did you like the best?
29. What college subjects did you like the least?
30. If you could do so, how would you plan your academic study differently? Why?
31. What changes would you like to make in your college or university?
32. Do you have plans to continue study? Seek an advanced degree?
33. Do you think your grades are a good indication of your academic achievement? Why or Why not?
34. What have you learned from participation in extracurricular activities?
35. In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
36. How do you work under pressure?
37. In what part-time or summer jobs have you been most interested? Why?
38. How would you describe the ideal job for you following graduation?
39. Why did you decide to seek a position with this company?
40. What do you know about our company?
41. What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
42. Are you seeking employment in a company of a certain size? Why?
43. What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?
44. Do you have a geographical preference? Why?
45. Will you relocate? Does relocation bother you?
46. Do you enjoy travel?
47. Are you willing to spend at least six months as a trainee?
48. Why do you think you might like to live in the community in which our company is located?
49. What major problem have you encountered and how did you deal with it?
50. What have you learned from your mistakes?

QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK EMPLOYERS

Adapted from the Job Hunting Handbook, Dahlstrom

1. If hired would I be filling a newly created job or replacing someone?
2. Would you describe a typical workday and the things I'd be doing?
3. What duties are most important for this job? Least important?
4. How would I be trained or introduced to the job?
5. How is the job important to the company? How does it contribute?
6. What are the department's goals for the year?
7. Who are the other people I'd be working with and what do they do?
8. How will I get feedback on my job performance?
9. If hired, would I report directly to you, or to someone else?
10. Has the company had a recent layoff? How long was the layoff? Was everyone recalled?
11. Does another corporation own this company?
12. What major markets does this company compete in?
13. Are sales up or down over the last year?
14. If you were to offer me this job, where could I expect to be five years from today?
15. Do you think I'll find this job to be challenging and stimulating?
16. What do you see as the greatest challenge in this position?
17. Could you give me a tour? I'd enjoy seeing where the employees work.

PROFESSIONAL BUSINESS ATTIRE

Adapted from “Knock ‘em Dead Marketing,” John Yates;
College Grad Job Hunter; www.amazon.com; and www.collegegrad.com

Remember: You will not get a second chance to make a first impression!

The first impressions you make are based on your appearance.

You should **always** look immaculate, professional and very conservative.

GUIDELINES FOR WOMEN

- ✓ Whatever the length of your hair, keep it out of your face. Tie it up or pull it back or cut it off. Wear your hair in a conservative, neat and well-groomed style and cut that is comfortable for you and not a distraction while interviewing.
- ✓ Apply makeup conservatively. You want to create a natural, as well as professional look. If you do wear nail polish, wear clean, natural or subtle transparent colors on trimmed, or otherwise well-manicured, clean nails. A suit is preferred, however, a well cut, simple and conservative dress with a jacket is an acceptable substitute. A well-tailored coordinated skirt, blouse and blazer are also appropriate. Stick to basic colors including blue, gray, brown, or black. Avoid low-cut, tight-fitted clothing. A dress pant suit is acceptable for job interviews.
- ✓ A suit is preferred, however, a well cut, simple and conservative dress with a jacket is an acceptable substitute. A well-tailored coordinated skirt, blouse and blazer are also appropriate. Stick to basic colors including blue, gray, brown, or black. Avoid low-cut, tight-fitted clothing. A dress pant suit is acceptable for job interviews.
- ✓ Keep jewelry and accessories to a minimum. Wear small tasteful earrings and no more than one ring per hand. Two rings are acceptable if it is a wedding ring ensemble. A matching scarf or simple necklace is optional and serves the purpose of a man's tie directing attention to your face and encouraging the interviewer to focus on what you have to say.
- ✓ Always wear flawless sheer hose in a color which closely matches your skin-tone. Keep several pairs on hand in the event of a run or some other unforeseen calamity. Put a pair in your interview briefcase or handbag. In the event of an emergency a quick trip to the restroom can remedy the situation.
- ✓ Wear comfortable, vintage, and low to medium heeled enclosed pumps.
- ✓ Carry either a briefcase containing extra copies of your resume and any other documents required for the interview **or** a portfolio **or** carry a purse. You may find that carrying two items while meeting and shaking hands with a number of people, and juggling both items throughout the day may become too cumbersome.

PROFESSIONAL BUSINESS ATTIRE (continued)

GUIDELINE FOR MEN

- ✓ Shave all facial hair, if possible. Any beard or mustache should be neatly trimmed.
- ✓ Get a good, conservatively styled, short haircut. Hair should not touch shirt collar.
- ✓ Trim fingernails and make sure they are clean.
- ✓ A suit is preferred in a solid color (dark blue or navy, gray, olives, browns, and blacks). Suits with pin stripes, or chalk stripes, or subtle patterns are acceptable.
- ✓ A good quality blazer/sport jacket (navy or gray) and dress trousers (navy, gray, black, or khaki) may substitute for a suit.
- ✓ Choose quality shirts and ties that compliment your attire. Be careful when combining prints, stripes and/or other patterns particularly when also wearing a pocket square. Limit jewelry to a watch, tie tack, and one ring as (e.g., wedding). **Do not wear earrings.**
- ✓ Limit jewelry to a watch, tie tack, and one ring as (e.g., wedding). **Do not wear earrings.**
- ✓ Wear dark shoes (black lace-ups are best) with dark socks (black is best) that coordinate with your attire. Wear socks sufficiently high so as to not show skin should you cross your legs when seated.
- ✓ Carry a lightweight briefcase containing extra copies of your resume and any other documents required for the interview.

Some Tips for Men and Women

- ☞ **Dress Conservatively.** **Style:** The simple, conservative-cut two-piece suit is best. **Color:** Wear solid, neutral colors and subtle tones, i.e. blue, gray, black, olive, taupe, beige, and navy are best (pastel shirts and blouses; white is best). **Fit:** Make sure clothing fits well and feels comfortable. Avoid bulging pockets and remove keys and change that may jingle. **Appearance:** Clothing needs to be freshly cleaned and pressed. Wear clean, polished shoes. Attractive people come in all sizes and shapes. Make your clothing work for you, not against you.
- ☞ **Look as good as your outfit.** **Grooming:** Impeccable grooming is a must! Take a bath or shower right before the interview. Water has an amazing calming effect. Use antiperspirant/deodorant, but limit the use of perfumes and colognes. **Hair:** Comb hair off face in a neat cut or style. **Nails:** Clean and trim fingernails. **Jewelry and Accessories:** Limit jewelry and accessories. Carry a lightweight attaché, briefcase or portfolio. **Body/Art Piercing, etc.:** Pierced nose, tongue, and/or eyebrow rings are unacceptable. Where possible, do not display, but rather, cover tattoos.

Remember: "You should 'look' the part in order to have the best chance to play the role."

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Within one week of the interview send a “Thank You” letter. A sample follows. Express appreciation for the interview, reemphasize your qualifications for and interest in the position. For group interviews, contact the person who contacted you for assistance on how to address your correspondence. Wait the allotted time period mentioned during the interview for the company to contact you. This could be a few days or a few weeks. If you have not heard from the organization within this time period, call the company’s personnel/human resources office or contact the person who interviewed you. Indicate the date and time of your interview. Call once per week maximum.

SAMPLE “*THANK YOU AFTER THE INTERVIEW*” LETTER

Carol A. Austin
456 United Avenue
Fine City, MD 21000
(012) 345-6789
me@aol.com
February 5, 2004

Ms. Janice Smalls
Employment Specialist
Office of Human Resources
Company ABC
Fair City, MD 20001

Dear Ms. Smalls:

Thank you for the opportunity to interview yesterday for the position of Program Specialist. I enjoyed meeting you and Mr. Samuel Brown, Director. Learning more about your company was very interesting and exciting.

Your organization appears to be growing in a direction that parallels my interest and career goals. The interview confirmed my initial positive impressions of the company. The educational training and internship experience that I have acquired would enable me to further enhance my skills in the areas of program planning, training, and management. I feel that I would be able to progress steadily through your training program and become a productive addition to your staff.

Again, thank you for your consideration. If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me as noted above.

Respectfully,

Carol A. Austin

NEGOTIATING

Adapted from Florida A&M University career guide

Once you have been offered a job, you have the opportunity to discuss with the employer the terms of your employment. Negotiating with your potential employer can make your job one that best meets your own needs as well as those of your employer. To assure successful negotiations, it is important to understand the basic components. The definition of negotiating as it relates to employment is: a series of communications either oral or in writing that reach a satisfying conclusion for both sides: you and the employer. Negotiation is a planned series of events that requires strategy, presentation, and patience. As with other segments of the job search, preparation is probably the single most important part of successful negotiations. What follows are some suggestions that can help you in your preparation.

Research

Gather as much information as you can to back up the case you want to make. For example, if not entering employees cannot negotiate salary you may be jeopardizing the offer by focusing on that aspect. Turn your attention to some of the other, potentially more flexible parts of the offer such as your health plan or work schedule. There are many things you can negotiate besides salary such as child care, disability insurance, stock options, relocation costs or continued educational benefits.

Mental Preparation

In most cases, you will be negotiating with a stranger. Ask yourself what approach to the negotiating table you find most comfortable. How will you “psyche” yourself up to feel confident enough to ask for what you want? What are your alternatives? What’s your bottom line? In short, plan your strategy. Be sure you know exactly what you want, not approximately. This does not mean that you will get exactly that, but having information clear in your head will help you determine what you are willing to concede. Unless you know what you want, you won’t be able to tell somebody else.

Practice

Rehearse your presentation in advance. Practice with a friend. If you make mistakes in rehearsal, chances are that you will not repeat them during actual negotiations. A friend can critique your reasoning and help you prepare for questions. If this seems like a lot of work, remember that if something is worth negotiating for, it is worth preparing for.

Dollars and Sense

Always begin by expressing genuine interest in the position and the organization. Emphasize areas of agreement but seek compromise on other areas. Be prepared to support your points on why it is in the company’s best interest to accommodate your request. Back up your reasons for wanting to change the offer by re-emphasizing meaningful work-related skills and positive benefits to the employer. Requesting a higher salary just because you are a fast learner and have similar characteristics is not usually a justifiable reason. Rather, meaningful work experience or internships that have demonstrated your skills are things that will make an employer stop and take notice. Consider making a salary request in writing initially and plan to meet later.

If an employer chooses not to grant any of your requests (and note that realistically, they can do that), you still have the option of accepting the original offer, provided that you have maintained a positive, productive, and friendly atmosphere during your negotiations. You can always re-enter negotiations once you are employed and have proved your worth to the organization.

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