

Effective Interviewing



**Career Services Center
Clarion University of Pennsylvania**



Purpose of an Interview

For You

- To communicate information about your qualifications
- To obtain sufficient information about the position and organization
- To determine if there is a “fit” or “match”

For Employer

- To gather information about your qualifications
- To present the position and organization positively to attract well-qualified candidates
- To determine if there is a “fit” or “match”
- To hire the best candidate for the job

Steps to Effective Interviewing

1. Pre-interview preparation
2. The actual interview
3. Post-interview follow-up

Pre-Interview Preparation

- RESEARCH...the targeted position and organization
- REVIEW...your qualifications
- REHEARSE...your interviewing skills

Research

- Educate yourself about the targeted position
 - What does this job involve?
 - What are the skills a top employee in this job should have?
 - Knowledge?
 - Skills?
 - Experience?
 - Characteristics?
 - Read the job description
 - Talk to people in a similar position

Research (cont.)

- Research the organization
 - Read the organization’s materials
 - Size and growth patterns...mission...directions...products or services...competitive profile...culture and reputation...problems...projects...organization history
 - Visit the organization’s web site
 - Get the “inside story” from current employees
 - Obtain current information
 - Local newspapers
 - Public library
 - Chamber of Commerce

Review

- Review the job description
 - Highlight required or preferred qualifications
- Assess your qualifications
 - Can you match each job requirement with something from your background?
 - Knowledge?
 - Achievements?
 - Skills?
 - Experience?

Review

- Develop a table with two columns
- In the left column, list the position's required qualifications
- In the right column, match one of your qualifications with each requirement

Position Requirements	My Qualifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Required education/training• Required skills• Required experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• My education/training• My skills• My experience



Rehearse

- Review Career Services Center's interviewing handouts (in print and online)
- Review our interviewing DVD's
- Attend our interviewing workshops
- Go through a recorded mock interview with a Career Services Center staff member
- Ask a friend to role play, serve as the interviewer, and ask you interview questions
- Practice in front of a mirror

The Mock Interview Program

- It's a one-hour practice interview session with a staff member.
- We record the interview so we can review it with you.



Mock Interview (cont.)

- Call our office to schedule a mock interview.
- Provide us with a resumé prior to your mock interview so we can develop questions geared toward your field of interest.
- Dress appropriately for your mock interview so you're comfortable in professional attire.
- Bring a blank DVD if you want to keep a copy of your mock interview.

Typical Screening/Initial Interview

Introduction..... 5 minutes

- Greeting
- Introductions
- Ice breaker (small talk)

Information sharing.....20 minutes

- Provide information about organization
- Ask candidate questions
- Answer candidate questions

Close.....5 minutes

- Follow-up steps
- Farewell



Types of Questions

- Close-ended (yes or no)
 - Are you willing to relocate?
- Open-ended
 - Why did you choose “...” major?
 - What classes do you like and why?
- Behavioral
 - Describe a time when you took the lead on a project. How did it turn out?
 - Tell me about a time when you had to deal with an irate customer or had to resolve a disagreement among a group’s members

Behavioral Interviewing

- Based on the premise that “The most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in a similar situation.”
- Interviewer identifies the knowledge, skills, experiences, and behaviors that are desirable in the position.
- Questions are designed to determine if candidate has the skills and characteristics necessary to succeed in the position.

Behavioral Interviewing

- Questions usually start with:
 - “Tell me about a time....”
 - “Describe a situation when...”
- Respond by using the S-T-A-R approach.

The S-T-A-R Approach

- S** Describe the situation you were in
- T** Describe the task for which you were responsible
- A** Describe the specific action you took
- R** Describe the results of your actions



The Actual Interview

- Be prompt and prepared
- Remember that first impressions count
- Communicate effectively
- Close the interview

Be Prompt and Prepared

- Know the location of the interview
- Arrive 10-15 minutes early
- Take extra copies of your materials
 - Resume
 - Transcripts
 - List of references
 - Portfolio
 - Notebook and pen
- Prepare questions for the interviewer

First Impressions Count

- Review our online handout, Professional Attire, and the online PowerPoint presentation, Dress for Success
- Arrive 10-15 minutes early for your interview
- Check your appearance in a mirror before the interview
- Greet the receptionist cordially
- Shake hands and introduce yourself to the interviewer

Impressions (cont.)

- Address the interviewer by Mr. or Ms. unless instructed to call him/her by first name
- Remain standing until offered a seat
- Avoid nervous laughter
- SMILE!!!

Communicate Effectively

- Listen attentively to each question.
- Respond thoroughly, but concisely.
- Use correct grammar and pronunciation.
- Avoid jargon and slang. Avoid um or uh.
- Use examples of your accomplishments.
- Use the S-T-A-R approach to give examples of your skills.

Close the Interview

- If you're still interested in the position, express it to the interviewer.
- Ask for a business card.
- Thank the interviewer.

After the Interview

- Follow up
- Evaluate

Follow-Up

- Make some notes after the interview.
- Send a thank-you letter to the interviewer within two business days.
 - Express your appreciation for the interview
 - Emphasize your qualifications
 - Re-affirm your interest in the position

Evaluate

- Use the interview as a learning experience.
 - Were you prepared?
 - What do you need to improve?
 - What would you do differently next time?
- Determine if the job is a good fit for you.

Common Reasons for Rejection

- Lack of preparation for the interview
- Lack of knowledge about the employer
- Unsure of career goals; no purpose or direction
- Poor grammar and communication skills; inability to express self
- Doesn't ask questions about the position
- Poor personal appearance; attire not professional

Rejection (cont.)

- Poor eye contact during the interview
- Overbearing, overaggressive, know-it-all attitude
- Too laid back
- Indefinite responses to questions
- Poor academic records; just got by
- Lack of skills, including leadership, involvement, etc.

Resources on Interviewing

- Career Services Center publications (online and in print)
 - Effective Interviewing
 - Behavioral Interviewing
 - The Second Interview
 - Professional Attire
 - Professional Etiquette
- Career Resource Room
 - Books, handouts, videotapes, and CD's on interviewing
 - Employer information
- Interviewing Workshops
 - Professional Development Seminars
- Mock Interview Program

Want more information?

**If you have any questions about
interviewing or want to
obtain additional information
about our services...**

Call or visit Career Services Center and
make an appointment with a staff member.
We look forward to helping you!

