Acing Your Interview

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Today you’ll learn:

- purpose of an interview
- how to prepare for interviews
- types of interviews and interview formats
- the content of an interview
- how to follow up on your interview
- how to work with Career Services on
Purpose of an interview: jobseeker

- convey your relevant qualifications and interest
- distinguish and differentiate yourself from other candidates
- determine if the opportunity is a good fit for your skills, interests, and goals
- obtain an offer, or be invited to the next round of interviews (if applicable)
Purpose of an interview: employer

- determine if you have the relevant qualifications and interests to succeed in the job
  - evaluate if you can and are willing to develop any required skills that you don’t already have

- determine if you are motivated to do the job

- assess if you are a good fit for the job and the team
Before the interview

- know the job and industry
  - job description from employer
  - resources on the “Get Started” page on the Career Services site
  - “What you should know about an industry or job” handout
  - your network: faculty, alumni, references

- know the employer
  - #1 complaint employers have is that candidates do not know their organization
  - your network

- know your story
  - review your resume, cover letter, and notes from any previous contact with the employer
Interview preparation (cont’d)

- know your interviewers
  - Google search, LinkedIn
  - your network

- prepare possible questions in advance and practice, practice, practice responses
  - you don’t want to memorize what to say, just be comfortable with responding
  - do a mock interview or interview prep session with Career Services

- assemble your wardrobe
  - use our “Dress for Success” handout as a guide

- map out the logistics of your visit
At the interview

- do a last-minute check on your grooming
- be polite to everyone you meet
- shake hands firmly, smile appropriately, make eye contact when speaking
- listen carefully and actively
- show enthusiasm, confidence, and poise
- keep your answers to 1 ½ to 2 minutes, unless you get signals from the interviewer to go longer
At the interview (cont’d)

- own your accomplishments
  - not the time to be overly modest (or arrogant)

- draw the connection between your qualifications and the employers needs

- respond to the questions asked
  - if you have any doubts, ask

- claim only the current level of skill you possess

- speak positively about previous and current employers, faculty, academic institutions
Types and formats of interviews

Types:
- traditional
- behavioral
- case

Formats:
- telephone
- Skype
- individual
- panel
- group
- presentation
- Twitter
Anatomy of a traditional interview

- icebreaker
- questions from employer
- questions from interviewee
- close
Icebreaker

- tell me about yourself is the most common icebreaker
  - your response should be 1 to 2 minutes long and oriented towards the position you are interviewing for
  - can include
    - academic experiences, particularly those that relate to your career interests
    - one or two relevant significant, relevant accomplishments from an internship or job
    - strengths demonstrated by those accomplishments and how they relate to the position for which you are applying
  - should not be a summary of your entire life, or of your resume
Tell me about yourself example

“I’m an Applied Psychology major at Morrisville with a strong industry in marketing. I’ve pursued my interest in class projects such as xxx, in which I xxx, and my role as marketing chair for xxx club, where I xxx. Last summer, I had an internship as a market research intern for YNN in Syracuse. As an intern there I xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. I am eager to continue building on my interest and experience in marketing since it is such a strong professional fit for me.”
Typical questions from employer

- why are you interested in (the position)? (the employer)?
- why do think you are qualified for this position?
- why did you choose Morrisville? Your major?
- what are your strengths? Your weaknesses?
- have you had any setbacks? How have you dealt with them?
- walk me through your resume.
- tell me something about yourself that is not on your resume or cover letter.
- where do you see yourself in five years?
- questions related to your GPA or academic performance.
- questions related to a skill or experience you don’t have that they are seeking.
Typical questions from interviewee

- One or two questions from your pre-interview research
- Questions referencing information provided in the interview
- Questions about the interviewer that you could not have found from your research
- Generally you avoid asking about salary, time off, benefits, etc.
Close of the interview

- reiterate your interest in the position and employer
- inquire about the next step in the process
- request permission to follow up within the indicated timeframe
- secure the interviewer’s business card
- send a thank you note within 24 hours
After the interview

- touch base with your recommenders to keep them informed

- contact the interviewer at the indicated timeframe by the agreed-upon medium
  - by telephone is preferred, although e-mail may be appropriate if all other contact has been by e-mail

- inquire as to whether you can provide any additional information

- reiterate your interest in the position and request if you can follow up again at the next indicated timeframe

- write a thank you note immediately
Tips for success

- prepare, prepare, prepare, then prepare some more
- keep in mind that employer research counts - a lot!
- do a mock interview, if you have the time
- don’t discuss salary, benefits, vacation unless asked
- write a thank you note
- follow up, follow up, follow up
Partnering with Career Services

connect with us on:

- developing your elevator pitch and response to “tell me about yourself”
- identifying alumni or other contacts in the organization or industry
- crafting answers to specific question about your education, experience, skills, GPA
- doing a mock interview
- writing a thank you note
- following up on your application
Partnering with Career Services (cont’d)

Career Services
308 Whipple Administration Building
(down the hall from the Registrar)
www.morrisville.edu/careerplanning

**Individual advising appointments daily:**
call 315.684.6615 to schedule an appointment
(please note that appointments cannot be made by e-mail)

**Advising Express drop-in hours**
(15 minute, first-come, first-served sessions):
  Tuesdays, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm
  Wednesdays, 9:00 am to 11:00 am
  Thursdays, 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm
Check the Career Services calendar for other times and locations