



MORRISVILLE STATE COLLEGE

Acing Your Interview

Morrisville State College
Office of Career Services
318-319 Crawford Hall



In this presentation you'll learn:

- the purpose of an interview
- types of interviews and interview formats
- steps to take in preparing for an interview
- the contents of a traditional interview
- what to do after the interview
- how to work with Career Services to ensure your success



Purpose of an interview: jobseeker

- convey your relevant qualifications and interest in this specific position with this specific employer
 - conversation must be focused on this audience, not just general summary!
- learn more about the position and where you can contribute
 - what value can you add?
- 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

- evaluate if you have the relevant qualifications and interests to succeed in the job
 - may also consider if you have the aptitude and interest in developing any required skills that you don't already have
- evaluate if you are motivated to do the job – for them
- evaluate if you are a good fit with the organization and/or group you'll be joining
 - you can have the best skill levels of all candidates, but still not get an offer if you're not the best fit for the business or team culture



Types and formats of interviews

types

- traditional
- behavioral
- case

formats

- in-person
- telephone
- Skype
- individual
- panel
- group
- presentation
- Twitter



Before the interview

- know your story
 - review your résumé , cover letter, and notes from any previous contact with the employer
 - get comfortable telling your story
 - do a mock interview or interview prep session with Career Services
 - prepare possible questions in advance and practice, practice, practice your responses
 - practice waling the interviewing through your portfolio, if applicable
- create a list of questions for the interview
- map out the logistics of your visit



Before the interview

- assemble your interview wardrobe
 - use our on-line [“Dressing for Success” handout](#) as a guide
 - both men and women: well-fitted, dark-colored suit, with dress shirt, belt (if applicable), polished shoes
 - all clothing should be neatly pressed
 - clothing does not need to be new, but does have to be in good shape and fit well
 - accessories should be modest in size and limited in number
 - grooming should be impeccable
- create your reference list and/or speak with your references
 - see our [“Compiling Your Reference List” handout](#)



Before the interview

- know the job and industry
 - job description from employer
 - our [“What you should know about a job, career field, and industry”](#) [handout](#)
 - resources on the [“Get Started”](#) [page](#) on the Career Services site
 - your network: faculty, alumni, references, etc.
- know the employer
 - the most frequent complaint from employers is that candidates don’t know anything about their organization!
 - our [“What you should know about an employer”](#) has questions and resources
 - your network: faculty, alumni, references, etc.
- know your interviewers
 - Google search, LinkedIn
 - your network: faculty, alumni, references, etc.



Day of the interview

- eat a good breakfast – and don't drink too much caffeine!
- review your résumé, cover letter, job description, interviewer profiles, and portfolio
- bring a couple of extra copies of your résumé and your reference list
- allow extra time for travel
- be mindful of your behavior anywhere within the vicinity of the employer or interview



At the interview

- check your grooming when you arrive, and as the day progresses, if applicable
- shake hands firmly, smile appropriately, make eye contact when speaking
 - be polite to everyone you meet
- listen carefully and actively
- show enthusiasm, confidence, and poise
- connect the dots between your qualifications and the employer's needs



At the interview (cont'd)

- own your accomplishments – now is not the time for modesty!
- 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
- keep your answers to 1 ½ to 2 minutes, unless you get signals from the interviewer to go longer



Anatomy of a traditional interview

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



Icebreaker

“So, tell me about yourself” is the most common icebreaker

- your response should be 45 to 90 seconds 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 résumé



Tell me about yourself example

“I’m an Applied Psychology senior at Morrisville with a strong interest in Marketing. I’ve pursued this interest in class projects such as xxx, in which I (micro description of responsibilities and/or achievement) and my role as marketing chair for xxx club, where I xxx. Last summer, I interned in marketing research at YNN in Syracuse in which I (micro description of responsibilities and/or achievement). I am eager to continue building on my interest and experience in marketing since it is such a good fit for what I’m good at and what I like to do.”



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?
- walk me through your résumé .
- tell me something about yourself that is not on your résumé 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.
- have you had any setbacks? How have you dealt with them?



Typical questions from interviewee

- more information about something you learned from your pre-interview research
- about the interviewer that you could not have found from your research
- follow up on information provided in the interview
- do not ask about salary, time off, benefits, etc.
 - this could open the door to negotiating, which you don't want to do until you have the offer



Close of the interview

- repeat 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



After the interview

- make notes about the interview in the event there is a future interview or you need clarification before you accept an offer
- send a thank you note within 24 hours
- touch base with your recommenders about the interview
- contact the interviewer at the indicated timeframe
 - 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



Best practices for interviewing

- make sure your résumé and cover letter accurately and fully demonstrate your key qualifications
- do a mock interview even before you get an interview
- prepare, prepare, prepare, then prepare some more
- be confident, but not arrogant
- don't discuss salary, benefits, vacation unless asked
- write a thank you note
- follow up, follow up, follow up



Partnering with Career Services

- editing and tailoring your résumé and cover letter before you apply
- researching a job title, career field, and industry
- researching an employer
- developing and honing your elevator pitch and response to “tell me about yourself”
- crafting answers to specific question about your education, experience, skills, GPA
- practicing your responses in a mock interview



Partnering with Career Services

- identifying alumni or other contacts in the organization or industry
- assessing who you should include as references
- debriefing after the interview to determine next steps
- writing a thank you note
- following up with the employer after your interview
- reaching out for feedback if you don't get the offer



Next Steps

Make an appointment to speak 1/1

30 minutes for interview prep, 1 hour for mock interview
call 315.684.6615 or stop by 318 Crawford
(please note that appointments cannot be made by e-mail)

Stop by Drop-in Hours:

15 minute, first-come, first-served sessions
read your weekly “This week in Career Services” e-mail
and check the campus calendar for times and locations

Come to a workshop

read your weekly “This week in Career Services” e-mail
and check the campus calendar for times and locations

Visit our website:

www.morrisville.edu/careerservices/guides.aspx