

INTERVIEW *tips*

FROM UNIVERSITY OF MARY CAREER SERVICES

WHAT IS AN INTERVIEW?

It is a dialogue allowing you to expand on the information described in your resume and an opportunity for the interviewer to provide more details about the job, ascertaining how you fit the job requirements. The interviewer will ask you questions designed to gain information about your personality, background and qualifications. You will ask questions concerning the job and the organization. During this conversation you have the opportunity to present yourself in a positive and confident manner.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Attend an interview workshop.

Contact the Office of Career Services for scheduled dates.

Do a personal inventory. Analyze how your strengths, personal and academic experiences, as well as your interests can be transferred to the position for which you are applying. Think of examples which include a specific **Situation**, the **Action** you took, and the **Result**.

Research. Investigate the basic facts about the job responsibilities and the services/products of the organization. Obtain the interviewer's name and title. Utilize corporate literature, on-line library resources, or visit their home page on the internet.

Review potential questions.

Decide what points you will use to answer commonly asked interview questions. Practice out loud to be able to communicate your qualifications concisely and provide examples which reinforce these points.

Find out time and place to be.

Be sure you have the correct time and clear directions to the interview.

Arrive Early

Check appearance. Your attire should be neat, professional and appropriate for your intended field. Suits for men and business suits or dresses for women.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

1. Greet your interviewer by name, with a firm handshake and a smile.
2. Be self-confident, alert and interested.
3. Do not smoke or chew gum.
4. Sit comfortably, maintain good body posture.
5. Maintain good eye contact.
6. Listen closely to what the interviewer is saying.
7. Be articulate; do not use slang.
8. Avoid rambling; think before answering.
9. Give examples by stating Situation, Action, Result.
10. Concentrate on your positive attributes.
11. Ascertain needed follow-up action.
12. At the end of the interview thank the interviewer and reaffirm your interest in the position.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Evaluate the interview. Consider where you did well and where you had difficulty. Practice those areas in which you need improvement.

Send a thank you letter immediately. Be sure to use the correct name and title of the person who interviewed you. Emphasize your interest in the position. Mention any facts you may have omitted in the interview.

Follow up. If you do not get a response soon after the date which the interviewer indicated, it is a good idea to telephone and inquire about the position.

Continue to job search. Job hunting is an ongoing process. Begin preparing for your next interview.

continued

typical questions posed by **INTERVIEWERS:**

Tell me about yourself. (in one minute)

Why did you decide to interview with our organization?

Tell me about your scholastic record.

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Tell me about your extra-curricular activities and interests.

What did you learn from your part-time or summer job experiences?

Do you have plans for graduate study?

Why should we hire you?

Why did you choose to become a teacher, nurse,...?

What are your long range goals?

What is your definition of success?

In what ways would you contribute to our organization?

GIVE EXAMPLES FROM YOUR PAST THAT ADDRESS THESE CONCERNS:

Can you describe a time when...

What was the outcome...

Were there any conflicts...

How were they resolved...

REPLY HINTS FOR "TOUGH QUESTIONS"

"Tell me about yourself"

A common opener, this broad question can "throw" many interviewees. It is, in fact, a "sell-me" invitation. Develop a brief summation of your background leading into your interest and desire to work for the organization as well as your qualifications for the position.

"Why should we hire you?"

From your research, you should have gathered information on entry level opportunities within the organization and the necessary qualifications for those positions. From your own self-analysis you will have gained insight into your strengths and accomplishments. Mention key functions of the job and discuss your skills in relation to these functions. Use experiences from previous jobs, internships, and activities as examples to support your answer.

"What are your long range goals?"

This question is popular because it gathers a lot of useful information: maturity, foresight and realistic outlook, degree of preparation in career planning, and commitment to the organization and profession. In your research, determine what position you could reasonably reach in five years. Speak to others who have successfully advanced themselves in the organization or profession. Express your desire and capability to grow within the organization. While you may be unsure of your future plans, demonstrate your knowledge of potential career paths.

"What is your greatest weakness?" Everyone has a weakness but remember not to answer in a negative way. Turn your weakness into a positive (for example) "Because I tend to procrastinate, I have learned to work well under pressure and to always get work done on time."

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYERS

How and when will my performance be evaluated on this job? How is success measured in this department/organization?

What are the day-to-day responsibilities in this job? Is a written job description available?

Does the management encourage the policy of promotion from within the organization?

What are the organization's strengths, and what challenges does it face?

What are your expectations for new hires within their first three to six months on the job?

Describe the work environment.

What is the overall structure of the department where the position is located?

What qualities are you looking for in your new hires?

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University of Mary Career Services

are available to students and alumni to assist in determining and attaining career goals. Our services include a Career Resource Center (located in the University of Mary Library), the Work Information Network (WIN), the Campus Recruiting Program, workshops, and individual appointments.