Interviewing

This is a checklist to help with the mechanics of interviewing. To discuss your goals and career development more broadly, schedule an appointment with a Career Coach through EagleLink. For more information, sample interview questions, and a link to InterviewStream to practice interviewing, visit bit.ly/bcinterviewguide.

What is the purpose of an interview?
An interview allows an employer to learn about your personality, experiences, and skills. It also provides an opportunity for you and the employer to determine if the position and company would be a good fit. Remember, an interview is as much for the employer as it is for you!

How do I prepare for an interview?
- Research the company: view their website and follow the company on social media and LinkedIn. Visit sites such as Vault Guides, Hoover’s Online, and Lexis/Nexis, and Google News.
- Attend one of the Career Center’s Interview Skills workshops or chats.
- Ask yourself: what do I want the interviewer to know about me before I leave? Review your resume and brainstorm a list of your successes and challenges.
- Practice answering questions by using InterviewStream, visiting the Career Center for a practice interview, and working with friends or classmates to answer questions.
- What’s important to you? Prepare a list of questions to ask your employer.
- Gather a list of references who can speak about your accomplishments and attributes.

What do I wear to an interview?
- Dress professionally to make a strong first impression on the employer.
- Do your research to determine what is appropriate for your industry.
- Make sure your clothes fit properly and are pressed.
- Trim and style your hair (and facial hair) neatly.
- Shoes should be polished, fairly low-heeled – and comfortable!
- Avoid heavy perfume, cologne, or aftershave, and keep make up, nail polish, and jewelry to a minimum.
- Choose conservative patterns and darker colors.

What should I do during an interview?
- Know your audience by researching your interviewer(s) ahead of time.
- Be prompt – at least 15 minutes early!
- Greet your interviewer by name, make eye contact, and have a firm handshake and smile.
- Unless your interviewer tells you otherwise, use your interviewer’s last name (“Mr. Smith”).
- Wait for the interviewer to sit down or invite you to sit before seating yourself.
- Avoid chewing gum.
- Maintain good eye contact.
- Show enthusiasm about the job and the company.
- Listen carefully – it’s okay to take a moment to think about a question.
Set yourself apart by describing, in detail, situations in which you demonstrated certain qualities, such as those identified as essential by employers - bit.ly/BCcareerready.

Engage your interviewer by varying the tone and tempo of your voice, showing enthusiasm, maintaining eye contact, asking questions, and matching the interviewer's energy level.

Stay positive, even when talking about challenging situations or people.

Close the interview on a positive note by restating your interest and enthusiasm for the position.

**STAR Method of Answering Interview Questions**

- Use this four-part formula to answer behavioral interview questions:
  - **Situation** – describe the event or project.
  - **Task** – describe the goal and your specific responsibility.
  - **Action** – describe the action steps you took to achieve that goal.
  - **Result** – describe the outcome.

**I completed my interview, now what?**

- Take time to celebrate your accomplishment of completing this interview!
- Reflect on your interview – what did you do well? What can be improved for next time?
- Follow up with a thank you email to each interviewer within 24 hours.
- Continue applying to other positions as you wait to hear back from the interviewer.
- Evaluate the offer – if you accept, withdraw other applications and notify other employers within 24 hours.

**What should I do differently for a phone/Skype interview?**

- Treat the interview as you would an in-person interview.
- Dress professionally.
- Find a quiet place for your interview and eliminate distractions – contact the Career Center in advance to reserve an interview room.
- Consider your surroundings – background, lighting, noise.
- Test your Skype, wireless, and cell phone connection beforehand (both visual and audio).

**Additional Information**

For practice interviews and sample interview questions visit InterviewStream to record yourself doing a practice interview. For more information visit bit.ly/bcinterviewguide.