

## Before the Interview

Know yourself. Know your strengths, weaknesses, and what makes you better than the other candidates.

- Research the organization. Utilize Career Insider, trade journals, industry magazines, newspaper articles, organization website and pamphlets, www.hoovers.com, work and personal contacts, etc. Prepare at least 10 questions to ask at the end of the interview, but only ask three.
- Practice interviewing. Video-tape yourself, complete a mock interview, and/or mentally review interview questions.
- Buy an industry-appropriate outfit in which you feel comfortable — don't forget the shoes.

## During the Interview

Employers are assessing:

- Why are you interested in the position and the company?
- Why should the company be interested in you?
- How will you fit in with the company/department and how will you get along with other team members?
- What is your orientation toward life and work?
- Do you have the skills, knowledge, and experience to do the job?

## Closing of the Interview

- If you are still interested, express it. Say "This interview has confirmed my interest in the position of..."
- Always ask: "What is the next step?"
- Thank the interviewer(s), and ask for their business cards so that you can send a thank-you letter.
- Send the thank-you letter within 48 hours. It is preferable to mail the letter but, if a decision is going to be made soon, send an email. Besides expressing appreciation for the interview, use the letter to address any mistakes you made, reinforce your strengths, and state whether you are still interested in the position.
- Immediately contact your references. Alert them to a possible call and prepare them for potential questions.

## Reasons for an Unsuccessful Interview

- Not qualified
- Lack of enthusiasm
- Poor personal appearance
- Unprepared for interview
- "What is in it for me" attitude
- Bad mouthing previous employers
- Revealing weaknesses
- Indifferent attitude

## Going into the Interview

- Arrive 10-15 minutes early
- Be pleasant to everyone, even as you drive in
- Make eye contact
- Read the organization's material while waiting
- Initiate handshakes and introductions
- Turn off your cell phone

### What to bring:

- Several copies of your résumé
- Printed list of references
- Intelligent questions
- Portfolio of relevant papers
- Pen and paper
- A positive mental attitude
- Research papers/projects, if mentioned in your résumé

## Interview Essentials

- Create a story line that emphasizes your knowledge, skills, and expertise. Keep it under two minutes.
- Mimic the interviewer's body language.
- Don't be afraid to ask for clarification to ensure you fully understand and answer the questions.
- Be honest. Emphasize your book knowledge and your ability to apply it to a work situation.
- Do not answer "yes" or "no." Expand on questions and comments to keep the conversation going.
- Answer questions using complete sentences without slang words.

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## Questions Interviewers Frequently Ask College Seniors

Review the sample questions below and practice answering each question.

1. What are your long-range and short-range goals and objectives? When and why did you establish these goals? How are you preparing yourself to achieve them?
2. What excites you most about this position?
3. Do you consider yourself to be a team player?
4. Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
5. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths? Your greatest weakness?
6. How would you describe yourself? How might a friend or a past supervisor describe you?
7. What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
8. How has your college experience prepared you for this career?
9. Why should I hire you?
10. What qualifications do you have that make you think that you will be successful in this career?
11. How do you determine or evaluate success?
12. In what ways can you make a contribution to our organization?
13. Describe the ideal relationship between a supervisor and subordinates.
14. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction?
15. Why did you choose to attend the University of Mary Washington?
16. What led you to choose your field of major study?
17. Do you think that your grades are a good indication of your academic achievement?
18. What have you learned from your participation in extra-curricular activities?
19. In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
20. How do you work under pressure?
21. How would you describe the ideal job for you following graduation?
22. Do you have a geographical preference? Why?
23. Tell me about a major problem that you have encountered and how you dealt with it.
24. What have you learned from your mistakes?
25. Give an example of a time when you had to be a leader.
26. Give an example of a time when you had to be creative or develop an “out-of-the-box” solution or suggestion.
27. What would you like to know about us?

## Questions to Ask Interviewers

Generally at the end of an interview, time is allotted for you to ask the interviewer a few questions. The best questions usually result from doing research on the organization and a genuine interest in the interviewer's response. The following is a list of sample questions to ask in an interview:

1. Would you please describe the responsibilities and duties of this position?
2. What characteristics do you seek in people in this position?
3. What do you consider ideal experience for this job?
4. Is there anything unusually demanding about this position?
5. What have been some of the best results produced by people in this position?
6. Would you describe the office environment in which I would be working?
7. Why is this position vacant?
8. Is there room for growth within this organization? If yes, what would be a typical career path?
9. Who would be my supervisor? What is his or her management style?
10. Would I be involved in a training program?
11. How will success be measured within this position?
12. Is there an opportunity for creative innovation in this organization?
13. Does this position work with outside departments or the public?
14. How long have you worked for this organization? What have you liked most and least?
15. Does this organization promote from within?
16. Does the company support continuing education for employees? How does the company encourage this?