

This Guide is designed to help you develop your interviewing skills and be prepared for this integral part of the job search process. In addition to this Guide there are several resources in the library for you to refer to.



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THE INTERVIEWING PROCESS

Before getting too far along with our discussion, we should first define "interview". According to Webster, an interview is "a formal consultation usually to evaluate qualifications (as of a prospective student or employee); a meeting at which information is obtained".

For the purpose of the job seeker, both portions of the Webster definition are correct. Employers will evaluate your qualifications and will try to obtain information about you. Although these definitions are correct, they imply that the interview is a **one-way** street, that the employer is the one who evaluates and gathers information. In fact, the interview is a **two-way** street. Both the interviewer and the interviewee evaluate and collect information about each other.



The employer tries to determine if the candidate:

- ✓ will fit into the organization
- ✓ has the skills necessary for success on the job
- ✓ can do and will do the job the well
- ✓ is promotable

Answers to these questions are central to the decision making process. The successful candidates will be the ones who best meet the needs of the employer and who market themselves most effectively.

Just as the employer is evaluating the candidate, so should the candidate evaluate the employer. The truly sophisticated job hunter will look at the employer with a critical eye to determine how he/she will fit into that organization. In fact, the job seeker should be interviewing the employer.

How do you fit into the organization? What will be expected of you? Do you feel comfortable with the people you have met? Do you like the work you will be expected to perform? Do you believe in the products/services provided by the employer? Like trying on a new suit, you will know when the interview works well and when an employment opportunity is right for you. **It will just fit!**

Now that you have a basic understanding of what an interview is, let's begin to discuss the cycle of the interview.

↻ THE INTERVIEWING CYCLE ↻

1. PRE-INTERVIEW PREPARATION

Contrary to popular belief, the interview does not begin when "they" begin asking you questions. In fact, the interview begins when you start to get in touch with yourself. Long before you show up for the interview, you should:

- ✓ identify your skills and your abilities
- ✓ know your strengths and your weaknesses
- ✓ prepare 5 or more success stories
- ✓ analyze your career objective(s) and goals
- ✓ review your resume...know it inside & out
- ✓ research the organization...their literature and available material
- ✓ prepare to make a good impression (manners, appearance, posture)
- ✓ confirm schedule, interviewer(s) name(s), date, time, location

Having done these things you are now ready to proceed to the next step.

2. INTRODUCTIONS



Get ready, because the interview actually kicks in with the introductions and not with the first question.

When meeting the interviewer, pay attention. Listen for the interviewer's name and title. Listen to how people introduce themselves to you (Ms., Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.). It is important that you address recruiters in the manner in which they prefer. So, **look and listen!**

When introduced to the interviewer, present yourself in a professional and confident (without showing too much fear) manner. A firm, but not bone crushing, handshake along with good eye contact (don't look at the floor or inspect the ceiling) is essential in this first meeting.

As you proceed into the interview room, watch for signals from the recruiter. Generally, the interviewer will gesture toward a specific seat in the interview room. If not, wait until you are directed to sit down! Sit erect with hands folded in your lap. Get comfortable, but don't slouch or become so relaxed that you make the interviewer uncomfortable.

Now you are ready to respond to the interviewer's questions.

3. BREAKING THE ICE

This initial phase of rapport building exists to set both the interviewer and the interviewee at ease. This is when you may find the interviewer asking about things that doesn't seem to relate to the interview or the position for which you are applying.

WRONG! Every question, no matter how trivial, has a direct relationship to the hiring process. When the interviewer tries to break the ice, help him or her out! Remember, this portion of the interview will set the tone for what is to follow.

4. QUESTIONING



Generally, you will find that there are two segments to the questioning. During the first segment, the interviewer will have the opportunity to question you about your skills, abilities, interests, values, goals, and aspirations.

In the second segment, you will have the opportunity to ask the interviewer questions related to the job, the organization, the employer's expectations of the new employee, etc.

Just as in your resume, honesty is a must in the interview. If you are asked a question for which you have no answer, it is better to say "I don't know" than to ad lib a response. Experienced interviewers know when you try to "snow" them, and this will not help you in the interview. Instead, your best strategy is to prepare for the interview in advance.

The best way to prepare for the questioning portion of the interview is to study! Know yourself! Prepare five or more success stories and provide concrete, quantifiable data. Read your resume. Know what you've written about your work experiences, your education, and your extracurricular activities.

Research the organization (a minimum expectation!). What are the employer's primary products and/or services? Where are they located? Know something about their operations and/or current events.

Review the "Questions Frequently Asked During The Employment Interview" section of this Guide. You should be able to easily answer these questions when asked.

Repeat your key strengths several times. Show some emotion. Be enthusiastic about the organization and the opportunity.

Be prepared to ask several questions. Show an interest in the possibilities.

5. THE CLOSE

When the interview is over you will know. Watch for the signs: body language, a simple gesture, or a subtle question may signal the end to the interview. When you get the message that the interview is over, conclude your discussion in style and with grace, but also be sure you understand what happens next in the process.

Before you conclude the interview you should:

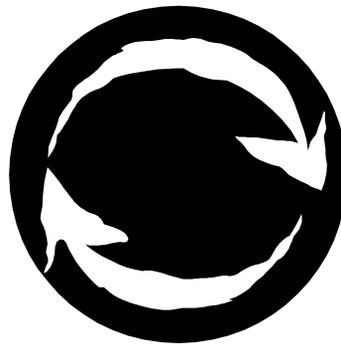
- ✓ Ask the interviewer for a business card. You will want to send a thank-you note soon after the interview...this way you'll have the correct spelling and person's title.
- ✓ Ask when you will find out if a decision has been made.
- ✓ Ask how they will contact you (phone call, letter, etc.?).
- ✓ Ask who will be contacting you (the interviewer, other Human Resources staff, etc.).

As the interview concludes, once more offer the interviewer a firm handshake, thank them for their time and exit.

Congratulations! You have now completed the formal portion of the interview, and it didn't hurt one bit.

6. POST-INTERVIEW REVIEW

Even though you have completed the formal portion of the interview, there is still one more item that needs your attention: the post-interview review. Take some time to replay the interview. What worked well? What didn't work so well? Which questions were you less prepared to answer? How do you feel about the interview in general?



By answering these questions and by addressing areas of concern, you are actually preparing for your next interview. You have completed the interview!!! Now, it's on to your next interview and time to start this process over again.

QUESTIONS ASKED OF YOU

General Questions for ALL Programs

- Tell me about yourself. What about this position interests you the most?
- Why did you choose VHCC? Why did you choose your program?
- What was your favorite course? Why? Least favorite course? Why?
- Are your grades a good indication of your abilities? Why?
- How has your education prepared you for this position?
- What do you expect from your employer?
- What do you think makes a good manager?
- Tell me about your _____ and how it prepared you for this particular position.
- What activities have you participated in during college? Tell me about your involvement.
- Identify a goal you have **NOT** attained. Why not?
- What do you see as the biggest challenge currently facing organizations such as ours?
- What motivates you? What are the most important rewards you expect from your career?
- What have you learned from previous work experiences that will assist you in this position?
- What accomplishments are you most proud of? Why?
- What are your short/long term goals? Where do you see yourself in five/ten years?
- How do you determine or evaluate success?
- Do you have any geographic restrictions? Are you willing to relocate?
- Are you willing to travel?
- What position are you interested in and why?
- What criterion is most important to you in choosing an employer?
- Why do you want to work for us?
- What are three of your strengths and weaknesses?
- What strengths do you have that we have not discussed?
- Do you prefer working alone or with others?
- What is your favorite book? Last one you've read?
- How would your best friend describe you?
- What is the newest thing you learned or did?
- What do you do in your free time?
- How familiar are you with computers? To what extent?
- How do you deal with stress?
- Have you thought about attending graduate school? When? Where? Subject/Major?
- Who is your hero? Why?
- Why should I hire you?

QUESTIONS ASKED OF YOU

Are you ready for a Behavioral Interview?

An increasingly popular way for employers to determine whether you're the right fit, behavioral interviews focus on your past behavior in actual work or conflict situations. Why? The philosophy is simple and straightforward: Your past behavior predicts your future behavior.

Today, more than ever, each hiring decision is critical. Behavioral interviewing is designed to minimize personal impressions that might cloud the hiring decision. By focusing on the applicant's actions and behaviors, rather than subjective impressions that can sometimes be misleading, interviewers can make more accurate hiring decisions.

- Tell me about a recent project you had to plan. What went well? What might you have done better?
- Tell me about a specific time when you eliminated or avoided a potential problem before it happened?
- What is the most difficult situation you have faced? How did you handle it?
- Tell me when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- Tell me about a time you were criticized. What was the issue involved, who made the criticism, and how did you handle it?
- Tell me about a time when you had to approach several different people for support or cooperation. How did you approach them?
- Give me an example of how you exercised leadership in a recent situation. What did you do to gain the team or groups' cooperation?
- Describe a time on the job when you were faced with problems or stresses that tested your coping skills.
- Tell me about a recent team you worked on/with. How may you have handled someone who was not as cooperative as needed?
- How would you motivate someone who is not motivated?
- At your job, how did you know if your internal/external customers were satisfied?
- Tell me about a time you had to conform to a policy with which you didn't agree.
- Even though we may do everything possible to satisfy a customer, it seems that some will complain about how they were treated. Tell me about the last customer who complained about the service you provided.

Follow up questions will test for consistency and determine if you exhibited the desired behavior in that situation:

- *Can you give me an example?*
- *What did you do and say?*
- *What were you thinking?*
- *How did you feel?*
- *What was your role?*
- *What was the result?*

How do you prepare for these type of questions? Think about developing brief accounts from your past highlighting the skills for which the company will be looking. Think "S.T.A.R.": 1) the situation or task you had to perform 2) the action you took 3) the results of your actions.

QUESTIONS ASKED BY YOU

ALWAYS have a few questions prepared to ask the employer. This shows preparation, professional maturity, and most importantly...interest! So ask yourself...what do I need to know in order to make an informed decision?

- Have you had a chance to review my resume? Did it raise any questions about my qualifications that I can answer?
- Can you describe the duties of the job for me? What is a typical day like?
- What type of orientation and training programs do you have?
- What do you consider ideal experience for the job?
- Can you tell me about the people I would be working with?
- What are the primary results you would like to see me produce?
- Can you give me some idea as to the retention rate(s) for new staff?
- To whom will I report?
- Can you tell me about your personnel evaluation process? Who will evaluate me? How often will I be evaluated? When will I have my first evaluation?
- What are your expectations of new staff members?
- Can you tell me about professional development opportunities within the organization?
- To what extent are technical support services (computer hardware/software and courses) provided to staff?
- Can you tell me about any opportunities for advancement?
- How would you characterize the working environment here?
- Can you tell me about the organization's philosophy of management?

As the interview concludes, you may want to ask:

- What is the next step in the interview/hiring process?
- When can I expect to hear from you?
- How will you contact me?

AVOID:

asking about salary, vacation, health, retirement package, etc....it will reflect misplaced priorities. Don't worry, you will find out that information later in the process.

REMEMBER:

*Interviewing
is a two-way street.
You are assessing
them as well!*

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

As you begin your job search, you must know your own qualifications. Over the years, you have developed many skills from your coursework, activities, work experience and your total life experiences. They are critical for success in all types of work. Knowing your transferable skills and being able to market them gives you an edge in your job search. Employers expect you to be able to apply these skills to their work environment.

There are literally hundreds of transferable job skills. Here are some categories with skill samples meant to help you identify your skills. You should also describe past experiences of using your skills to a future employer during an interview or on a resume.

Job/Technical Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair • Programming • Typing • Machinery/electronics • Tools • Driving • Telephone courtesy 	Data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research • Investigation • Analysis • Organization • Forecasting • Problem solving • Assessment 	Creative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visualize • Design • Illustrate • Appreciate • Present • Entertain
Computer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Software • Hardware • Multimedia • Internet/web development • Project management • Troubleshooting • Prioritization 	Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation • Decision making • Instruction • Mediation • Respectful delegation • Coaching • Persuasion • Flexibility • Tolerate stress/risk 	Financial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgeting • Accuracy • Fundraising • Resourceful • Estimating • Evaluating • Audit/monitoring
Self-Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow instructions • Responsible • Sense of humor • Detail oriented • Dependable • Career oriented • Ethical • Meet goals/deadlines 	People <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork • Respectful • Trustworthy • Supportive • Counseling • Sensitive • Perceptive • Encouraging 	Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening • Speaking • Interpreting • Corresponding • Facilitating groups • Persuading • Reporting • Editing • Languages

Guide to Appropriate Pre-Employment Inquiries

This chart outlines the type of information employers can request in applications and during job interviews as specified by federal law.

Subject	Lawful Inquiries/Requirements	Unlawful Inquiries/Requirements
Age	Whether the applicant meets the minimum age requirement set by law; if required as a Bona Fide Occupational Qualification (BFOQ); or after hire, if inquiry serves a legitimate record-keeping purpose	That applicant state age or date of birth. That applicant produce proof of age (birth certificates, driver's license). Specifications such as "young", "college student", "recent college graduate", and "retired person"
Arrests & Convictions	Inquiries about convictions that bear direct relationship to the job and have not been expunged or sealed by the courts. Consideration should be given to nature, recency, rehabilitation.	Inquiries about a candidate's general arrest and conviction record.
Citizenship, Birthplace	After employment, verification of legal right to work (all new hires).	Whether applicant, parents or spouse are naturalized or native-born US citizens. Birthplace of applicant, parents or spouse. Requirement that applicant produce naturalization papers.
Dependents		Inquiries regarding: the number and ages of children; what child care arrangements have been made; family planning
Disability	Whether applicant is able to perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodations. That applicant demonstrate how she/he would perform the job and with what accommodation(s). After a job offer, but before hire, require medical examination for all similarly situated entering employees.	Requirement that applicant take medical examination or provide information about workers' compensation claim(s) before a job offer. General inquiries into the applicant's state of health or the nature and severity of a disability.
Marital Status		Whether applicant is single, married, divorced, widowed, etc.; Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms. Inquiries regarding the names and ages of spouse or children.
Military Service	Job related inquiries into military experience in the US Armed Forces or state militia (ex. Branch, occupational specialty)	Inquiries regarding foreign military experience. Whether honorably discharged.
Name	Whether the applicant has used another name (for the purpose of verifying past work record).	Inquiries or comments about the name that would reveal applicant's lineage, national origin, marital status, etc. (ex. Maiden name) Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.?
National Origin	What languages applicant reads, speaks or writes fluently if relevant to the job or if required as a Bona Fide Occupational Qualification.	Inquiries regarding applicant's nationality, ancestry, lineage or parentage; nationality of applicant's parents or spouse; maiden name of applicant, wife or mother.
Photograph	May be requested after hire (for identification).	Request before hire.
Polygraph, Lie Detector		Require tests to be taken as a condition of employment.
Professional Associations	Inquiries regarding memberships in job related clubs and organizations. Applicants may omit those that reveal the race, religion, age, sex, disability, etc. of applicant.	Requesting the names of all organizations, clubs, and associations to which the applicant belongs. Inquiries regarding how the applicant spends his/her spare time.
Race, Color		Inquiries regarding: applicant's race; color of applicant's skin, eyes, hair or other questions directly or indirectly indicating race or color; applicant's height (unless a BFOQ)
References	Inquiring by whom was applicant referred. Requesting names of persons willing to provide professional or character references. Making job related inquiries of references.	Requiring the submission of religious references. Inquiries of references that would elicit information on applicant's race. Color, national origin, age, marital status, disability or sexual orientation.
Religion	Inquiries regarding the normal hours of work. After hire, inquiries regarding religious accommodations.	Inquiries regarding applicant's religious denomination or affiliations or religious holidays observed. Any inquiry that would indicate or identify religious customs or holidays observed.
Sex	Inquiry only if required as a Bona Fide Occupational Qualification.	Inquiries regarding: applicant's sex; Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.; if applicant is expecting, planning a family or uses birth control.
Sexual Orientation		Any inquiry concerning an applicant's heterosexuality, homosexuality or bisexuality.

Different Situations

The Mature Worker

Employers are often hesitant to hire an older worker for several reasons. They may view you to be overqualified, slower to adapt to new technology or ideas, or less ambitious than younger workers. It is your job to present your age as an advantage.

During interviews point out that as a mature worker, you have more dedication to an employer and will tend to stay longer in a position and company than a younger person eager to build a new career. Mention that you have years of experience dealing with various personalities and developing problem solving skills. If appropriate, mention that the aging client population may better relate to a worker in the same age group. It is important to mention new skills you have learned and programs or classes that you have attended. Express an interest in new solutions and give examples of your efforts to use change or solve a problem.

Make it harder to distinguish your age. A new suit along with an update hairstyle and glasses can make you look years younger. You will also be viewed as keeping up-to-date with new ideas and open to change. Avoid comments that hint at your age, such as “I spend as much time as I can with my grandchildren.” Instead, use comments such as “I enjoy the time I get to share with my family.”

It is illegal for an employer to inquire about your age, but some may ask for your date of birth, graduation date, or other inquiries that would establish your age. If you choose not to supply the information, make sure your answers are calm and polite, not agitated or defensive. Consult groups such as AARP for job development advice for mature workers.

The Overqualified Worker

Employers view overqualified applicants as a risk because they will probably be dissatisfied with their daily tasks and soon seek new work. Presenting interest in both the position and company will help to sway the employer’s mind.

Emphasize that you are fully qualified, not overqualified. Express how you view both the position and company as important. Find out as much as you can about the company and discuss what impressed you about its history, present and future. Ask questions about the position itself, and future goals for the person in that job. If you have had a similar position in the past, mention what you miss about the work. Point out work experience where you have stayed for years to establish your loyalty to a company.

An employer who views you as overqualified will be sure to ask why you want the position. An employer would likely view you as less of a risk if you are taking a position with less responsibility in order to have more time for the care of children and parents, or to pursue personal goals. If this is the case, inform the interviewer of these changes.

Criminal Records

If you have a criminal record, an employer is more likely to give you a chance if they feel you have become an honest, dependable person. Do not lie about your history; parole officers can often call employers to confirm they know of an employee's criminal conviction. If you lie on an application, you can be fired, regardless of how well you are doing your job. When an employer asks about your criminal conviction, state your crime but do not go into detail. Instead, your reply should focus on your current and future plans for improvement. Do not make excuses or downplay your criminal record in any way.

Pursuing education or training and volunteer work are good ways to establish your reliability and build references. The more skills you develop, the more an employer will be willing to hire you. Be realistic about where you apply. Remember to take things one step at a time; your first job is merely a stepping stone to a better one. As you continue to work you will build a reputation, contacts, and referrals to help you develop your career.

Substance Abuse Testing

Substance abuse not only affects your mental and physical health, but also your family, friends and employers. Al-Anon teaches that for every alcoholic, twelve people are affected. Unfortunately, those twelve people will be the ones you care about most.

Substance abuse has become a \$100 billion a year problem for employers. When employees call in sick or cannot work to their full potential, an employer loses productivity and revenue. Furthermore, mistakes made while under the influence of drugs or alcohol can lead to a faulty product and lost customers. Add to this the cost of insurance and treatment for employees with substance abuse problems, and employers are forced to have a firm no-drug policy.

Employers have several different ways of screening applicants to determine a potential substance abuse problem. They may test urine, hair or blood samples, ask you to take a polygraph test, and directly question you. They may also ask your views on drugs – if they should be legalized, if you consider casual use acceptable, etc. Some employers will tell you in advance of testing, others prefer unannounced testing. If you lie about drug use and tests prove that you use drugs, you can be fired for lying. If you refuse to take a test, it will probably be interpreted as a sign of drug use.

If you are tested, be sure to mention any prescription and over-the-counter drugs you take to the test administrator before the test is given. Ask what would cause a positive result – it depends on the type of test used, the type of drug, and how long ago the drug was used. Inquire if any foods or drinks can trigger a false positive result – poppy seeds are an example.

If you feel you need help with a drug or alcohol problem, contact your doctor or look in the yellow pages for treatment centers and support groups.

The Thank You

ALWAYS send a thank you note!!!

Its job is not just to be polite but to remind the interviewer of you and why you should be hired.

- 1) The traditional interview thank you is handwritten. While a typed or email thank you is appropriate (particularly if you been communicating with the employer via email) a handwritten one will set you apart.
- 2) Use folded note cards, plain (no design or "thank you" on the front), in a neutral color (white, gray, tan, cream).
- 3) Mail the letter within 24 hours of the interview.
- 4) Send a thank you to every person who interviewed you. If you are not absolutely sure of an interviewer's name or title, call the office to find out. (This is why it's important to ask for business cards during the interview). Make sure you spell the name correctly!
- 5) Use the thank you note to underline anything that was discussed during the interview you want to remind them of, or to add anything you left out, that was important.
- 6) Sending a thank you note is the most often overlooked piece of advice – don't ignore it, it may assist you in getting the job.

SAMPLE:

February 20, 2005

Dear Ms. Tudor:

Thank you for meeting with me this morning to discuss the position of _____ . After talking about it with you, I am even more certain that my experience and coursework will be valuable to the XYZ organization. I believe my involvement with _____ has prepared me well for your particular position.

If I can provide you with any additional information, please let me know. My enthusiasm for this opportunity has only increased and I look forward to hearing from you!

*Sincerely,
Name*

EVALUATIONS



What do employers look for when interviewing candidates for positions? Most employers have identified common characteristics they look for in ALL candidates. These generally include:

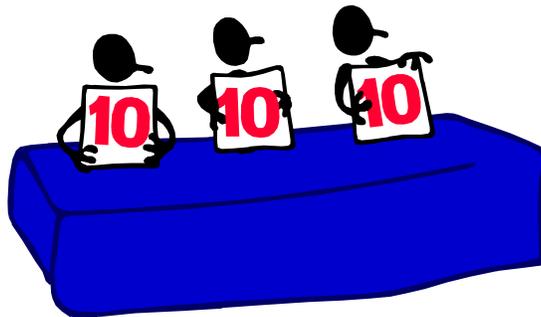
- ~ Oral/Written Communication Skills
- ~ Organizational Skills
- ~ Ability to Work in Groups/Group Dynamics
- ~ Enthusiasm/Interest
- ~ Positive Attitude
- ~ Problem Solving Abilities
- ~ Computer Skills
- ~ Willingness to Take Risks
- ~ Critical/Creative Thinking
- ~ Leadership Ability

If you can convey these characteristics to the employer throughout the interview, you're one step closer to a successful job search!

All employers are seeking answers to these questions:

- ~ Can you do the job?
- ~ Will you do the work?
- ~ Will you work well with colleagues?

Following this page are evaluation forms presently used by two different employers. Read these so you are aware of how employers typically evaluate candidates. How would you rank yourself if you were in the employer's shoes???



Interview Evaluation

Name _____ Date _____
 Current address _____ Telephone no. _____

Candidate for _____ Date available _____
 First interview
 Second interview
 Third interview

Experience Excellent background and experience	Very suitable qualifications	Average qualifications	Inadequate background	No relationship to position
Education Superior	Good	Average	Limited	Poor
Appearance Excellent well groomed	Good appearance, dresses well	Satisfactory appearance	Careless in appearance	Poor taste, very untidy
Personality Outstanding	Very desirable	Satisfactory	Questionable	Unsatisfactory
Poise—Maturity Well poised and very mature	Composed and confident	Average maturity	Somewhat tense	Nervous and ill at ease
Friendliness Very friendly and outgoing	Warm and congenial	Sociable	Reserved	Distant and aloof
Conversation Very articulate and forceful	Speaks well and to the point	Average fluency and expression	Poor self-expression	Quiet and uncertain
Objectives Ambitious, well-defined goals	Suitable goals established	Ordinary objectives	Undecided about goals	No goals or objectives
Alertness Exceptionally keen and alert	Perceives well	Average understanding	Slow	Poor comprehension
Overall Outstanding	Desirable	Average	Questionable	Unsuitable

Disposition (check one) Comments _____
 Recommended
 Referred to
 Employed
 Rejected
 Interviewer _____

Ranking _____

ARMSTRONG INTERVIEW EVALUATION FORM

Applicant Name _____ Date _____ Interviewer _____

Based on the interview and the responses given, indicate how you would rate the candidate on the following categories (where applicable):

	Out- Standing	Above Avg.	Avg.	Below Avg.	Poor	Comments: _____
Leadership (Aggressive/Motivation)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Composure (Confident/Eye Contact)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Intelligence (GPA)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Maturity (Self-Reliant, Decisive)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Speaking Ability/Skills	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Listening Ability/Skills	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Attitude (Enthusiasm/Positive)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Motivation (To set & meet goals)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Achievements (Problems solved/goals)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sincerity (Honest/Genuine)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Appearance (Grooming/Posture)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Personality (People oriented)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Overall Impression	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Additional comments: _____

TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS



Sometimes the importance of the telephone interview is overshadowed by the attention given to the “in person” interview. Many employers screen job applicants over the phone, and the number of these calls is expected to increase as they seek ways to reduce their recruiting costs.

Why Telephone Interviews?

- When you send a resume to an employer that is not interviewing on campus, a recruiter may conduct a telephone interview if your qualifications fit the employer’s needs.
- Recruiters often use the telephone for follow-up questions to students who already have been interviewed.
- Finally, many calls are placed by managers or supervisors who do the actual hiring. After a recruiter interviews you, your resume is often given to department heads who may be interested in employing you. Frequently, these managers will telephone you before extending an invitation to come for an office/site visit.

Preparation

- Keep a pen, paper, copy of your resume and cover letter near the telephone at all times.
- Be sure that everyone who answers your telephone understands the importance of the calls you will be receiving. Make sure they take complete messages for you.
- Listen to the message on your answering machine/voicemail. How does it sound? Is it something you want potential employers to hear?

Doing Well on the Phone

- Respond positively. Once you realize the call relates to your job search, make every effort to put yourself into the proper frame of mind to be interviewed. If there are any distracting background noises, ask the caller for permission to leave the line while you close the door, turn off the stereo, and tell others who may be present that you have an important call, or do whatever is necessary to give you privacy and quiet.
- Listen closely to everything the interviewer says. Think through your responses as carefully as you would if you were sitting across the desk from him or her. Remember to ask questions as well and take notes.
- At the conclusion, the caller usually explains what you should expect to happen next. If the interviewer fails to identify the next steps, you should politely ask.
- Before hanging up, be certain you have the person’s name (& spelling), title, address and phone number.
- Be sure to thank the person for calling you.

DINING INTERVIEWS



Food and business cannot be separated anymore! Because of this, many organizations take not only clients, but potential employees, out for a meal as another strategy of interviewing candidates. If you are applying for a position that involves a lot of client contact the employer may want to make sure you are making a good impression of yourself and representing the organization well. Like it or not, good manners are associated with competence in your job and in business...they say a lot about you!! So...don't get too comfortable or relaxed if you're taken out to lunch as part of the selection process. No matter how informal, you are still being interviewed!!!

If you are confident with your manners and etiquette, you will feel comfortable in any situation, no matter how formal. If you are not confident, please consider attending the Career Services Etiquette Dinner offered every semester and looking through materials in our resource library. These resources will help answer any questions you may have on the several basic components to proper etiquette listed below:

- Handshakes
- Introductions & Making Conversation
- Honoring the Host
- Tackling Tableware
- Tricky/Challenging Foods
- Paying the Bill/Tipping

ETIQUETTE IS:

- ~ Simply common sense made common practice.
- ~ About graciousness...you should never try to make someone else embarrassed by their or your actions.

*It is important that you leave a good impression of
- you -
not your poor manners!!*

See Workplace Dress & Etiquette Guidebook for more tips

GOOD IMPRESSIONS

“You never get a second chance at a first impression”. A very old and true saying that definitely relates to the interview. An employer’s first impression is formed by what they see and sense in you. If they don’t like what they see and sense, they may not hire you...regardless of your skills and abilities. How do you form a good impression? Focus your attention on three basic things...Appearance, Attitude and Manners.

APPEARANCE

The way you dress has an effect on the interviewer’s initial impression of you. Remember, always appear polished and it’s best to err on the conservative side. Follow these guidelines:

Women

- Suit or tailored dress in solid or subtle color, no extreme slits.
- Polished and closed-toe shoes, basic dark pumps with medium or low heels.
- Nails subtle color if polished, clean and not chipped.
- Make-up should be minimal.
- Clutch or small shoulder bag, choose between an attaché case or handbag (not both).
- Simple and basic jewelry. Nothing that dangles or is distracting.
- Always wear hosiery and keep color neutral.
- Light perfume, if any.

Men

- Navy, charcoal gray or black suit.
- Shined shoes. Tassel loafers, wing tip or lace shoes preferred.
- Clean nails.
- Conservative tie, simple, and neat.
- Avoid flashy cuff links, rings or neck chains.
- Over the calf dark socks.
- No strong fragrant cologne.

Both

- No smoking or chewing gum.
- One ring per hand.
- Quality pen, portfolio, briefcase and extra copies of your resume and letters of reference.

ATTITUDE

Your attitude makes a statement. If you act enthusiastic and eager, the impression is that you’re an enthusiastic and eager worker. If you act too timid or too quiet, it implies that you may need a lot of supervision. Some managers say that it can be even more important than experience.

MANNERS

Good manners are important. They show that you’re civilized and sociable. They show that you will represent the company well and work well with your colleagues. The first manner an employer will look for is punctuality; it is critical that you arrive on time to an interview!!

NEGATIVE FACTORS ON THE INTERVIEW & HIRING PROCESS



- Unprepared for interview -- lack of knowledge of the organ. and/or available positions
- Overbearing – over aggressive - conceited - superiority complex - know-it-all
- Inability to express self clearly – poor communication skills
- Lack of career planning - no purpose, goals or direction, not focused on what he/she wants to do
- Asks no questions about the job/company
- Lacks involvement in campus activities
- Does not belong to professional association associated with his/her major
- Poor communication skills - uses slang - improper grammar
- Lack of enthusiasm, doesn't smile, appears uninterested
- Poor appearance - inappropriately dressed for interview
- Lack of confidence - nervousness (to a fault) - ill at ease
- Overemphasis on money
- Poor academic record
- Expect too much too soon; unwilling to start at the bottom
- Makes excuses - evasiveness
- Lack of tact, courtesy & maturity
- Condemnation of past employers
- Poor eye contact
- Limp handshake
- Candidates who are merely "shopping around"
- Candidates who want job only for short time
- Lack of or little sense of humor
- No interest in organization or in industry
- Too much emphasis on whom one knows - trying to impress
- Unwillingness to relocate
- Strong prejudices
- Narrow scope of interests
- Little or no interest in community activities
- Inability to take criticism
- Late for interview without good reason
- Indecisive

INTERVIEW

DO'S

- Know yourself (skills, abilities, goals, interests, values, strengths/weaknesses, etc.)
- Know your potential employer (position you're interviewing for, primary products, services, etc.)
- Read company literature.
- Look professional.
- Be on time. (Arrive at the site 15 minutes early to check your appearance, compose yourself, etc.)
- Be clear, concise, and to the point.
- Send a thank-you follow-up. Get correct names and titles.
- Bring appropriate materials (resume, transcript, etc.) in a portfolio.
- Find out what the next step is.
- Find out when a decision is expected to be made.
- Give a firm handshake.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Prepare several insightful questions.
- Be positive & enthusiastic.
- Listen carefully.
- Market yourself.
- Think before you answer.
- Give concrete examples to support your points.
- Be assertive, not aggressive.

DON'TS!

- Don't be late.
- Don't ask about other applicants.
- Don't request salary information.
- Don't smoke.
- Don't chew gum/eat life savers, etc.
- Don't slouch.
- Don't criticize previous employers, professors, etc.
- Don't dress inappropriately. (You must dress to fit in.)
- Don't dominate the conversation.
- Don't invade the interviewer's physical space.
- Don't make excuses. (Give reasons instead.)
- Don't tell the interviewer what he/she doesn't need to know such as personal information.
- Don't patronize the interviewer.
- Don't ramble (Make your point and stop talking.)
- Don't try to be what you're not.
- Don't interrupt.
- Don't make assumptions.
- Don't apologize.
- Don't ask obvious or inappropriate questions (about vacation, sick leave, etc.)
- Don't be aggressive. (Be assertive.)
- Don't rely on other people's words or thoughts. (Use your own.)

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

- Do a good job in the pre-interview activities to insure a successful interview.
- Interview with a variety of organizations. Don't focus all your attention on the larger companies. Remember, the largest growth in the job market will be with small to medium size companies.
- Prepare for any and all contingencies. This means that you should consider all possibilities. Don't reject an employer or a position because you **think** you know something about the industry/job. Talk to the employer. Explore the opportunity. Remember, you are under no obligation to accept an offer if one comes your way.
- Look throughout the region, and to the extent possible, look at opportunities across the country. Flexibility will be key to any successful job search.
- Be persistent! If you haven't heard from an employer in a timely fashion, call them to find out what is going on.
- Interview with any and all organizations, using all resources available to you. Take on-campus interviews, develop your own leads, follow up newspaper ads, and develop your own network.
- Maintain an accurate record of all your interviews. Who did you interview with (organization and individual)? When and where did you interview (date and place)? What did you think of the interview? Was there anything of note which was said during the interview? Did you send the thank you?
- Most importantly, keep at it!



***Opportunity
is the place
where hard work
and preparation
meet.***