

Coastal Carolina University

Develop Your
INTERVIEWING Skills

Career Services Center

Indigo House

www.coastal.edu/career

Overview

- What is the purpose of an interview?
- What are the different types of interviews?
- What are the stages of an interview?
- What are some common interview questions?
- How should I dress for an interview?
- How should I prepare for an interview?
- Where can I find out more information?

Purpose

- **Employer**
 - Evaluate your skills and experience to determine if you are the best fit for the position
- **Candidate**
 - Learn more about the position and the organization to determine if it is a good fit for you

Purpose cont.

An interview is a two-way process to determine whether the *investment* is worth the *return* on the investment

- **Employer**

- Investment of salary, benefits, training
- Expected return of employee contribution to organizational goals and mission

- **Candidate**

- Investment of time and energy
- Expected return of salary and satisfying work environment

Types of Interviews

- **Phone**
 - Typically used as a screening interview
 - Sit in a quiet, well-organized location
 - Focus on professional tone and voice
- **Video**
 - Sit in a clean and well-lighted location
 - Test technology before scheduled interview
- **On-site**
 - Can last from an hour to a whole day
 - Often includes a series of interviews with several interviewers

Types of Interviews cont.

- **Screening**
 - Typically used to narrow candidate pool
 - May be conducted by phone or video
 - Typically brief, about 30 minutes
- **One-on-one**
 - Most typical type of interview

Types of Interviews cont.

- **Panel**
 - Includes several interviewers
 - Make eye contact and build rapport with each interviewer
- **Group**
 - Involves several candidates in one interview
 - Often used when several hires are going to be made
 - Used to determine how candidates interact as a team

Stages

1. The Introduction

- First impressions are critical
- Build rapport

2. The Dialogue

- Builds on first impressions
- Interviewer has the floor
- Your turn to ask questions

3. The Closing

- Summarize and reiterate enthusiasm
- Final Impressions

Common Interview Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why did you decide to apply for this position?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- What is your greatest strength? Weakness?
- How has your education prepared you for this position?
- What do you consider your greatest accomplishment and why?

Common Interview Questions cont.

Be prepared to answer:

- Why are you choosing this career?
- What do you know about this industry?
- Why are you interested in this position?
- What do you know about this company?

Explain how this position fits your *career goals* and demonstrate that you are the best fit for the position

Behavioral Interview Questions

- Tell me about a time when you showed initiative and took the lead on a team project.
- Give me an example of an important goal you have set and what steps you took to achieve it.
- Tell me about a time when you had to adjust to changes over which you had no control.
- Tell me about a problem you have solved in a unique or unusual way.

Behavioral Interview Questions

- The **STAR** Method
 - **Situation** – Discuss the situation or problem you encountered
 - **Task** – Describe the tasks that the situation required you to complete
 - **Action** – Tell the steps you took and the obstacles you had to overcome
 - **Results** – Highlight outcomes, accomplishments, skills learned, etc

“Tell a story”

Questions to Ask

- What do you like most about working for this company?
- What type of training is provided for new employees?
- What are the greatest challenges working in this position/department?
- What are the opportunities for growth and advancement?
- Who is my supervisor and how will I be evaluated?

What not to ask:

- What is the salary for this position?
- What will be the benefits and vacation time?

Illegal Questions

Employers may NOT inquire information about the following:

- Age or date of birth
- Marital status
- Parental status
- Race/Ethnicity or Nation of origin
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- Disabilities irrelevant to the position

You are NOT required to answer any question that you feel may affect your interview. Politely express to the interviewer that the question makes you feel uncomfortable and you would prefer not to discuss personal information.

General Interviewing Tips – Before

- Employer research
 - Review the employer's website to find information on the company's services, mission, culture, etc
- Prepare questions in advance
 - Evaluate your strengths and weaknesses, skills, interests, values, goals, etc
 - Prepare answers to common interview questions by identifying your top experiences, skills, and characteristics
- *Practice, practice, practice!*
 - Career Services **Mock Interview**

General Interviewing Tips – During

- Make a good first impression
 - Arrive early
- Consider your nonverbal communication
 - Firm hand-shake, eye contact, smile, posture, avoid nervous gestures
- Be attentive
- Focus on the positive
 - Show confidence and enthusiasm
 - Turn your weaknesses into strengths that need development
 - Do not be negative or critical of previous employers

General Interviewing Tips – During

- Think before you speak
 - It is okay to pause for a few seconds before answering a question or to ask the interviewer for clarification
 - Avoid filler words like “Um,” “Ah,” and “Like”
 - Avoid indecisive phrases like “I think,” “I guess,” “Probably,” and “Pretty good”
 - Time your answers - responses should be about 1-2 minutes

Dress for Success

Men

- Two-piece suit in a dark color (black, gray, navy)
- White dress shirt
- Simple pattern or color tie
- Black shoes and belt

Women

- Two-piece skirt or pant suit in a dark color
- White or light-colored blouse
- Hosiery/nylons
- Heels no more than 2-3 inches

Before

Extreme Interview Makeover

After

- No Research
- No Questions

- Researched Company & Industry
- Prepared Questions



Dress for Success cont.

- Make sure suit is a conservative style and fits appropriately
 - Don't wear clothes too tight or revealing
- Jewelry and accessories should enhance rather than distract from your outfit
 - Hide excessive piercings and tattoos
- Keep everything neat and clean – make sure clothes are ironed, stain-free, and in good condition
- Always carry emergency items such as umbrella, “fix-it” items such as a lint-roller or brush, and breath mints
- Turn off cell phone

Carry a Portfolio

- Several copies of your resume
- References
- Letters of Recommendation
- Samples of your work
- Notepad
- Prepared questions

General Interviewing Tips – After

- Thank the interviewers for their time
- Request business cards or contact information from all interviewers
- Indicate you look forward to hearing from them
- Send a *Thank You note* within 24 hours
- Follow-up to check on the status of the hiring decision (based on hiring timeline discussed during the interview)

Career Services Resources

- Mock Interviewing
- www.coastal.edu/career/jobprep.html
- Individual Counseling Appointments
- Job Postings on Chants JOBLINK
- Career Center Library

Career Services – Indigo House
Monday – Friday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
(843)349-2341

Questions?

