

THE INTERVIEW

RESEARCH THE POSITION

Make sure you understand the details, requirements, and responsibilities of the job you are applying for. This information can be typically found by reviewing the job description, recruiting information, and company literature. Additionally, conducting your own informational interviews can often provide valuable information. Finally, be able to relate your skills and qualifications to the stated job responsibilities.

RESEARCH THE ORGANIZATION

- How long has it existed?
- What does it produce?
- How large (or small) is the organization?
- What is its mission?
- Who does it serve?
- Where is it located?

Visit the organization's website or use the links from The Career Center's website (careercenter.illinois.edu) to help you research companies and organizations. The Career Center Library resources include employer directories, annual reports, and videos. Public libraries and your local Chamber of Commerce may have additional information on select organizations and companies. In addition, expand your search by conducting informational interviews.

PREPARE AND PRACTICE

Refer to the reverse side to familiarize yourself with possible interview questions. Develop specific examples that highlight your skills. Make sure that you can answer each question honestly and sincerely without sounding like you prepared them. Remember, this is not an exhaustive list of possible interview questions, but rather some general samples to help you begin thinking about what may be asked during an interview.

ANTICIPATE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

- Can you explain your low grade point average?
- Why did you change your major three times?

Do not try to avoid these questions or "beat around the bush." Explain the situation honestly and in a positive manner. Try to turn a weakness into strength, i.e. "Yes, my GPA is low, but this is because I worked thirty hours a week to put myself through school. While it was a difficult experience, I gained valuable time management skills in the process."

PREPARE QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR INTERVIEWER

- Describe your most successful employees.
- What training will I receive?
- What educational opportunities exist?

The end of the interview is usually reserved for your questions. Do not just ask generic questions, and do not ask questions that could easily be found on the company website. Ask questions that will help you determine if you are a good match for the position and organization, such as the questions above. This is your opportunity to interview the company!

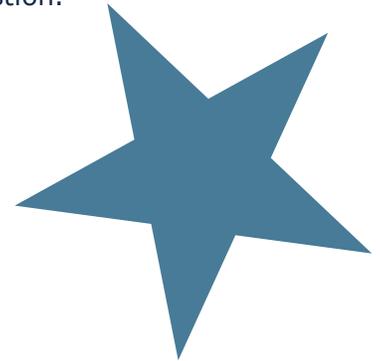
BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING

One of the most common tools used to assess competencies is the behavioral interview. The premise behind behavioral interviewing is for the employer to see how you may behave or handle certain situations that may arise. These structured interviews focus on experiences, behaviors, knowledge, skills, and abilities that are job related. Keep in mind that the interviewer is usually evaluating you against a profile of desired behaviors considered necessary for success.

RESPONDING TO BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: S.T.A.R. METHOD

The S.T.A.R. method is a way to structure your response to a behavioral question.

- **Situation:** Set the stage for the interviewer by providing an overview of the situation and any relevant background information. Be specific and succinct.
- **Task:** What goal(s) were you working toward?
- **Action:** Describe the actions you took to address the situation with an appropriate amount of detail. What specific steps did you take and what was your particular contribution?
- **Result:** Describe the outcome of your actions, and don't be shy about taking credit for your behavior. Your answer should contain multiple positive results whenever possible.



SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your long and short term goals?
- How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
- Why did you choose the career for which you are prepared?
- What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
- What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- How would you describe yourself to a stranger?
- How do you think a professor or employment supervisor would describe you?
- If you were hiring for this position, what qualities would you look for?
- Why did you choose your college major?
- Do you have plans for further college study?
- What personal strategies do you use to deal with stressful work situations?
- Tell me about a major problem you encountered and how you dealt with it.
- Describe a volunteer, work, or school experience where you held a leadership position.
- What have you learned from participation in extracurricular activities?
- What qualifications do you have that make you think you will be successful in this company?
- What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
- What is the biggest project you ever had to plan? How did you organize the situation?
- What do you know about our company?
- In what type of work environment are you most comfortable?
- Why did you decide to seek a position with this company?
- Do you have a geographical preference? Why?
- Will you relocate? Does relocation bother you?
- Are you willing to travel?
- Are you willing to spend at least six months as a trainee?