

INTERVIEW GUIDE

For Students Pursuing Design or Planning Positions

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Research the employer using their website, social media, industry magazines, and more. Familiarize yourself with who will be interviewing you and have a clear understanding of the position you are seeking.

Know yourself and be prepared to speak about your academic background, previous work experience, honors and achievements, specific skills, strengths, weaknesses, leadership experience, and career goals and aspirations.

Review your application materials to ensure the information you listed is fresh in your mind and be prepared to discuss the content. Have situations in mind that illustrate your points or give examples of your experiences. Remember: if you included something in your resume, cover letter, or portfolio, regardless of how long ago it was (i.e., a position you held a number of years ago, or a project from your very first semester), you have given your interviewer permission to ask specific questions.

Develop your own list of questions for the interviewer. Asking questions demonstrates your interest and enthusiasm about the organization and the position. Employers appreciate applicants who have done their homework.

Learn what salary range is appropriate for your level of experience. Have questions about the typical pay rate or salary for someone working in your desired position? Contact the Career Services office for advice!

Have your map & directions ready before the day of the interview. If necessary, plan for time to locate parking and consider potential walking time (including orienting yourself within a building) to get to the office.

THE INTERVIEW

Arrive 10 to 15 minutes before your interview. Call ahead if you are going to be late due to an emergency; you may be asked to reschedule. Once you have arrived, be both patient and alert while you wait for the interviewer. Avoid using your cell phone. If applicable, chat with the receptionist - not only is it a great way to get to know an employee, but it's an opportunity to learn more about the firm or company!

Offer a firm handshake upon meeting your interviewer and maintain eye contact. Remain standing until the interviewer offers you a seat. Be sure to remember the interviewer's name, and refer to him or her as Mr. or Ms. until instructed otherwise.

Be aware of your nonverbal communication! Your posture, eye contact, hand gestures, and facial expressions are all very important in conveying your interest in the position. Sit up straight in your chair. Use hand gestures to emphasize a point, but don't gesture wildly or nervously. Avoid tapping your fingers, bouncing a knee, or other nervous gestures.

Take notes (either physically or mentally) for reference when following up after the interview with a thank you letter.

WHEN ANSWERING QUESTIONS:

Avoid rambling, ensuring that your answers are succinct and to the point using specific examples.

Watch your grammar, being careful to avoid using slang and verbal fillers, including: um, ya know, kinda, sorta, like, I mean, what I'm trying to say, basically, a little, it's gonna, really, and more.

NEVER speak negatively about yourself, your employer, previous employers, or your coworkers/peers.

NEVER misrepresent or falsify your background or qualifications, including technical skills. It's better to be honest and emphasize that you are willing to learn, versus lying and getting called out for it!

Be self-confident. Dwell on your accomplishments rather than a lack of experience. View all interviews as a great opportunity not only to obtain a work position, but to develop your interpersonal and interviewing skills.

TO BRING OR NOT TO BRING...

BRING

Pen & paper for notes
Hard copy of your portfolio or work samples
Extra copies of your resume & references

LEAVE AT HOME

All food & beverages, including gum
Backpacks or large bags
Other people and pets

ADDITIONAL TIPS

Ask questions! Questions illustrate knowledge and interest in the firm and position.

Do not expect an offer on the spot for a professional position.

Ask the interviewer what the next step will be in the interview process.

Thank the interviewer for his or her time, offer another handshake, and **ask for a business card!**

HOW WILL I BE EVALUATED?

First impressions
General appearance
Knowledge of employer & position
Resume

Enthusiasm & interest
Listening skills
Portfolio
Presentation

Content of responses
Nonverbal communication
Design skillset
Questions you ask

HAVE QUESTIONS?

Contact the Career Services Office! We're here to guide you on your way to a successful career.