

USM Career Services & Professional Life Development

Stages & Topics in Interviewing

STAGES

1. First Impressions

INTERVIEWER TOPICS

Introduction and greeting
Small talk about traffic conditions, the weather, the record of the baseball team.

INTERVIEWER LOOKS FOR

Firm handshake, eye contact
Appearance and dress appropriate to the business, not campus setting
Ease in social situations, good manners.

2. Your Record

EDUCATION

Reasons for choice of school and major. Grades: effort required for them. Special areas of interest. Courses enjoyed most and least, reasons. Special achievements, toughest problems. Value of education as career preparation. Reaction to teachers. High school record, SAT scores.

Intellectual abilities
Breadth and depth of knowledge. Relevance of courses to career interest
Special or general interest. Value placed on achievement. Willingness to work hard. Relationship of ability to achievement. Reaction to authority, ability to cope with problems. Sensible use of resources (time, energy, money), High energy level, vitality, enthusiasm, leadership ability
interest in responsibility, willingness to follow directions, ability to get along with others, seriousness of purpose, ability to motivate oneself, to make things happen, Positive “can do” attitude, diversity of interests.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Natures of jobs held
Why undertaken
Level of responsibility reached
Duties liked most and least
Supervisory experiences
Relations with others.

Awareness of world outside the classroom. Social conscience, good citizen.

ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS

Role in extracurricular, athletics, social service activities
Personal interests—hobbies, cultural interests, sports

3. Your Career Goals

Type of work desired
Immediate objectives
Long term objectives
Interest in this company
Other companies being considered
Desire for further education/training
Geographical preferences and limits
Attitude toward relocation
Health factors that might affect job performance.

Realistic knowledge of strength and weaknesses. Preparation for employment. Knowledge of opportunities. Seriousness of purpose, career-oriented rather than job-oriented. Knowledge of the company. Real interest in the company. Work interests in line with talents. Company’s chance to get and keep you.

4. The Company

Company opportunities
Where you might fit in
Current and future projects
Major divisions and departments
Training programs, educational benefits.

Informed and relevant questions. Indication of interest in answers. Appropriate but not undue interest in salary or benefits.

5. The Conclusion

Further steps you should take (application form, transcript, references); Further steps company will take; Cordial farewell.

Candidate’s attention to information as a sign of continued interest.



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Career Services & Professional Life Development

Transferable Skills

Career Services and Professional Life Development provides students with opportunities to understand more clearly and navigate more comfortably the interrelationship between school and work and the self-managed life long learning it requires. One avenue is through the identification of **Transferable Skills**, those additional personal characteristics or habits that an individual develops through life experiences. The following list of transferable skills will guide you in identifying those skills you possess in addition to ones you may want to develop or strengthen.

Communication Skills

Oral - speaking effectively
Written - being clear and concise
Listening Objectivity - able to paraphrase

Decision Making & Problem Solving Skills

Problem Solving - developing solutions
Critical Thinking - thinking outside the box
Foresight - anticipation, needs assessment
Reasoning - forming conclusions, inferences or judgements
Identify Issues - applying criteria, analyzing & interpreting

Management & Administration Skills

Leadership - setting an example
Motivation - inspiring others
Delegation - identifying and selecting people for tasks
Budgeting - allocation of assets
Conduct Meetings - negotiating and mediating
Presentation - ability to use various media

Research & Investigation Skills

Identifying problems, needs, and solutions
Designing Experiments - testing and validating data
Technology - use of and knowledge of a variety of sources
Evaluations - developing questionnaires & models
Laboratory Techniques - proper use of

Interpersonal/Human Relations Skills

Networking - developing interactions with peers, supervisors and subordinates
Team Player - appreciating contributions of others
Emphatic - generating understanding and trust
Tact- expressing one's self appropriately
Diplomacy - ability to deal with others

Flexibility Skills

Creative - originality and expressiveness
Innovation - unique ways of solving different problems
Adaptable - accommodating multiple demands and seeing alternative courses of action
Conceptualize - deriving ideas from inferences

Information Management Skills

Synthesize - organize facts, concepts, and principles
Catalog - compile, rank and itemize information
Manipulate Information - evaluate against appropriate standards
Computer Knowledge - understanding computer ideas
Sorting - data and objectives

Planning & Organizing Skills

Effective Time, Energy, and Resource Management
Visualization - predicting future trends and patterns
Initiation - implementing projects and ideas
Scheduling - setting and reaching goals
Prioritizing - arranging according to importance
Accountability - follow through with plan or decision
Dimensional Sight - illustrating, displaying, and creating

Personal Development Skills

Motivated - going beyond the expected
Commitment - deciding for the common good
Independence - working without guidance
Confidence - having a positive personal attitude
Poise - composure; free from affectation; balanced
Energy - displayed enthusiasm
Knowledge - proficiency in field of study



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Behavioral Based Interviewing

The premise of **Behavioral Based Interviewing** is that the best predictor of future behavior or performance is past behavior or performance in similar circumstances. **Behavior Based Interviews** follow a pattern of probing questions that lead the applicant to elaborate on past behaviors/performances. **Behavior Based Interviewing** allows an employer to make hiring decisions based on a combination of performances and transferable skills in addition to technical skills.

Sample Questions:

Communication

"Tell me about a situation when you were able to successfully communicate an idea, even when your audience may not have liked what you were saying." "Have you ever had to 'sell' an idea?" "Did they 'buy' it?" "How do you ensure that someone understands what you are saying?"

Decision Making & Problem Solving

Give me an example of a situation in which you made up your mind too rapidly. Describe an occasion when you included others in your decision. What has been the toughest decision you have made in your career? How did you come to it?

Management and Administration

Give an example of your ability to build motivation in your co-workers. How did you get them to do so? What has been your most difficult one-on-one meeting? Describe when you have worked the hardest and felt the greatest sense of achievement.

Research and Investigation

Describe a project where you were required to research and investigate alternative course of actions. What was the process you used? What was the outcome?

Planning & Organizing

How do you determine what gets top priority in scheduling your time? If your schedule is suddenly interrupted, what do you do? Describe a time when you were required to do many things at once under a deadline. How did you handle it?

Adaptability & Flexibility

How do you get around obstacles that prevent you from doing something? Describe a time when you had to modify or change your actions in order to respond to the needs of another person or situation. Give an example of a unique or different approach you have used in order to get things done. Tell me about a time when you turned around a stagnant or failing project into a success.

Human Relations & Interpersonal

Describe a situation in which you were able to effectively read another person and guide your actions by your understanding of their needs or values. Have you ever worked with someone you didn't like? Describe a situation where you wished you had acted differently with someone at work.

Information Management

Give me an example of a time when you did not have the information to make a decision. How did you go about getting the information you needed? Exactly how would you handle evaluating data?

Initiative, Effort and Valuing

Give an example of a project or responsibilities that you've taken on. Why did you assume them? Give an example when you did more than was required. What ways have you found to make your job easier or more rewarding? How would you define 'success' for someone in your chosen career? Tell me about an important goal that you have set in the past and how did you reach it?

Recruiters are looking for more than just a one word answer. An effective way to answer behavioral based questions is to utilize the **STAR** method. The **STAR** method gets your point across precisely and clearly.

Situation: - Briefly explain the background and surrounding details. Two or three sentences at the most.

Task: - What needed to be done and what responsibilities did you assume?

Action: - What were the actions you took? How did you "attack" the situation?

Results: - Quantify the result/outcome of your actions. Give specifics.



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Informational Interviewing

Informational Interviewing is very much like investigative reporting - you have to ask the right questions to get the right answers. What follows are some suggested areas of questioning that are appropriate for an Informational Interview. Remember, the object of the meeting is to learn as much as you can about a job or career field to help you decide if it is a good choice for you. Naturally, the more questions you ask, the more information you will obtain.

- How did you get into this area?
- What is your background?
- Why did you decide upon this career field?
- How does the position differ from what you expected when you started?
- What do you expect your future career path will be like?
- What are your typical daily activities?
- Who do you interact with during a typical day?
- What do you like most about the job? What do you like least? Why?
- How much on-the-job training takes place? Classroom training?
- What would be the perfect background for someone coming into this field?
- How would you describe your work environment?
- What types of decisions do you make on your job?
- Who supervises and evaluates you? Who do you supervise and evaluate?
- How often is formal evaluation done?
- What important changes are taking place in your industry?
- How will these changes affect your position and others within your organization?
- How much growth is taking place in your industry and career field?
- Are there peak and low periods? When and for what reason?
- Is there travel involved? Where and how frequently?
- What advice can you offer someone seeking to break into the field?
- What are the three top skills needed in your position?

Don't forget to thank the person for the time spent with you and be sure to send a follow-up thank you note. Remember, this is not an employment contact and the issue of your own personal job hunt should not be mentioned unless the other person asks specifically about it. Also, make it a point to ask the person for the names of other people who can give you information and permission to use his or her name when contacting those people.



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