

INTERVIEWING



- Letters and resumes may help obtain interviews, but good interviewing skills can turn an interview into a job offer.
- Interviews are designed to encourage the applicant to talk. Questions should not be answered with a simple “yes” or “no.” Because the interviewers want you to talk, they will generally be warm and open. This should not be misinterpreted as a symbol of their interest in you as an applicant. Interviewers will be evaluating not only the quality of your answers, but also whether or not you think in an organized fashion, speak clearly and with enthusiasm.

WHAT TO DO BEFORE AN INTERVIEW

- Research the organization and the position for which you are applying.
Demonstrate to the employer your knowledge of the organization (e.g. mission, products, services, etc.). Follow the organization on Handshake, LinkedIn, and Twitter and check out the organization on Glassdoor.com. A lack of research on your part may indicate to them that you are not truly interested in the company.
- Prepare for questions you are likely to be asked.
Review the “Interview Questions” handout. Participate in a practice interview.
- Think about what you want the interviewer to know about you.
Share experiences that demonstrate your skills/interests and that match the employer’s needs. Articulate a goal in a meaningful way (avoid vague statements, such as “I want to help people” – add specific examples/details) and knowledge of how the position aligns with your goals.
- Know the specifics of the interview.
Location, time, duration, number of people interviewing you, etc. Fewer surprises on the day of the interview means less stress.
- Prepare 5-7 questions to ask the interviewer (see below).
Ask questions that demonstrate your knowledge of the position and the organization. This will help you determine if the position/organization is a good fit for you. It also garners information you can use to demonstrate your fit. For example, if you ask about typical projects and the employer mentions a project similar to one of your experiences, reflect back to the employer your similar experience before asking the next question.

QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING AN INTERVIEW

- What are some typical projects than an intern/employee would work on in this internship/job?
- What do you like about working here? What experience best prepared you for working here?
- What kind of supervision will I receive and how will my performance be evaluated?
- Thinking back to people who have been in this position previously, what differentiated the ones who were good from the ones who were really great?
- How would you describe the work environment in the organization?
- What is the biggest challenge I’d face in this internship/position?
- What type of career paths do people typically follow within this organization?
- I was reading about _____, (e.g. an article that describes something the company just released/did recently) and am interested in learning more about it. Can you tell me more?
- Please describe your timeline to fill the position.

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SJU OFFICE

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HOW TO PERFORM DURING THE INTERVIEW

Non-Verbal Communication

- Wear professional business attire.
- Arrive 10 to 15 minutes early. In an emergency, call to inform them of any delay.
- Smile and use a firm, confident handshake.
- Use direct eye contact.
- Maintain good posture and don't fidget.
- Bring extra copies of your resume (on resume paper).
- Take time to formulate answers before you speak.
- Be sure to listen carefully to each question and answer it with specific examples.

Verbal Communication

- Above all, be yourself. Respond to questions directly and honestly. If a question is unclear, request clarification before answering.
- Avoid expressions like, "you know," "um," and "like." Instead, do a practice interview to learn how to incorporate pauses instead.
- Be prepared to highlight your experiences and skills that relate to the position. Use the EAR technique (see Interview Questions' handout).
- You are not required to answer questions of a highly personal nature. If an interviewer asks about race, religion, nationality, sexual orientation or marital status, stay calm and ask why/how it is relevant to the position.
- Always leave the interview knowing the next step in the process (i.e., more interviews, timeline for filling the position)
- Ask questions.
- Ask for a business card so you have the employer's contact information to use when sending a thank you note or any follow-up.

Phone/Skype Interviews

- Some interviews may be conducted via phone (usually screening) or Skype (due to distance or other considerations). Your preparation will include much of what's already been described including these additional tips.
- Understand the technology and test all settings and connections prior to the interview; be sure your phone/computer is charged.
- Image/Interview Environment: Dress professionally, check the background of what the interviewer will see (Skype) and remove all distractions (roommates, pets, music, etc.) so that your focus will be on the interview.
- Have a Plan B ready in case the technology fails.

WHAT TO DO AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Send a thank you note or email to each interviewer within 24-48 hours of the interview or sooner, depending on when subsequent decisions will be made. Thank the interviewer for his/her time, reiterate your interest in the position, and restate/highlight a key trait or skill(s) you'd like to emphasize from the interview.
- Follow up with a phone call. If you do not hear from the employer within the stated timeline, it is appropriate to call and ask for an update on the process. Be patient, but stay active and take the initiative to follow-up with the employer.

OTHER HELPFUL TIPS

- Use the "Interviewing Questions" handout to help prepare for an interview.
- Schedule a practice interview with XPD staff.

When the interview is over and you are asked "Is there anything else that you would like to say at this time?" —

How do you respond?

- Reiterate your skills/abilities and your "fit" for the position and share any additional information you have not had an opportunity to discuss. Restate your interest in the position.