

MALONE CENTER FOR CAREER ENGAGEMENT

INTERVIEW PREPARATION GUIDE

Interviewing is your chance to convince an organization that you're the best fit for their opening. Sounds simple, right? Maybe not. We all know how nerve-wracking it can be to prepare and participate in an interview. However, with the right guidance and enough practice, you can make the most of this opportunity. We are here to help!

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW:

- **Reflect.** Spend considerable time getting to know yourself and what you have to offer. Think back on your experiences (both in and out of the classroom) and keep a running list of important accomplishments, projects, and even set-backs. We will return to this later!
- **Research the organization.** Review the website, the mission, recent initiatives and projects, etc. You will want to know as much as you can about who they are and what they represent. You can also find information on sites like Glassdoor, Vault, business journals, and Google. Knowing the organization thoroughly will help you stand out.
- **Practice.** Schedule a Mock Interview with a Career Advisor in the Malone Center for Career Engagement through Handshake. You can also come in just to discuss preparation strategies. At the very least, make sure to prepare answers to common interview questions ahead of time. To learn more about successful interviewing and practice answering questions, use our BigInterview platform (furman.biginterview.com). Sign up with your Furman email for free access to tutorials and practice interviews.

DURING THE INTERVIEW:

- **Dress appropriately.** Your first impression is critical. Refer to our "Guide to Interview Attire" for more information.
- **Body language.** Offer a firm handshake when greeting individuals and look them in the eyes while introducing yourself. Also, be sure to greet anyone who enters the interview space. This is your opportunity to introduce yourself and make a great first impression. Try to avoid nervous mannerisms such as fidgeting or bouncing your knee. Sit up straight, fold your hands neatly, and speak in a strong, confident tone of voice. This will get easier as the conversation progresses!
- **Listen.** Think through each question carefully. It's okay to take a moment to process before responding. You are also able to ask for clarification before answering.
- **Answer questions.** The main event! Typically, organizations ask general questions and behavioral questions. Emphasize specific examples, skills, and strengths from your past experiences. Utilize the S.T.A.R. method to help you answer behavioral questions.
- **Ask questions.** It's important to gain insight into the organization and the position. Displaying curiosity also communicates your interest in the opportunity. Demonstrate that you have researched the role and have a willingness to learn.
- **Be enthusiastic!** Positive energy and enthusiasm are the most important aspects of the interview. Show your excitement for this opportunity and speak in a positive manner regarding your past work experience, and don't forget to smile!
- **If you need any accommodations for the interview, reach out to Malone Center staff or the Student Office of Accessibility Resources for guidance.**

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PRACTICE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

Common Interview Questions:

Tell me about yourself.
What do you consider your greatest strengths?
What do you consider your greatest weakness?
Why do you want to work for this organization?
Why are you interested in this position?
What are your short-term and long-term career goals?
Describe your most significant accomplishment.

Behavioral Questions:

Tell me about a problem you have solved in a unique or creative way.
Tell me about a goal you set that you did NOT reach.
Describe a time when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with.
Give an example of a time when you showed initiative and took the lead on a project.
Give an example of how you manage your time. What factors do you consider?

Questions YOU can ask:

How would you describe the work environment? Culture?
What do you enjoy most about working for this organization?
Can you describe a typical day/week in this position?
I noticed on your website that your company does____, can you tell me more about that?
What is the timetable for making a hiring decision?
Are there opportunities for professional development and growth?

Make sure to avoid questions regarding salary, benefits, or topics that have already been covered in the interview.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW:

• Say Thank You. Make sure to send an email and/or a handwritten note to say thank you to the interviewers. Ensure that this is sent within 24-48 hours of the interview.

Dear _____,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to interview for the Marketing Coordinator position at Creative Endeavors, LLC. I really enjoyed my time with the staff and clients. It was great to get to know you better and I appreciated our productive conversations throughout the day. In particular, I was excited to learn more about the social media campaign you are working on. I believe my unique combination of skills and experiences would be of great value to the organization. Thank you again for your hospitality and the opportunity to visit in person. If you need any further information or have additional questions, please feel free to reach out.

Sincerely,

In your thank you note, reiterate your interest and try to bring up a specific connection you made with someone during the interview