



## THREE PHASES OF AN INTERVIEW

### Phase One: Pre-Interview

**You'll want to prepare a number of things in advance to be able to bring your best self to your interview. Aspects of the pre-interview phase applies to all types of interviews, including video and phone interviews, as well as in-person ones, too.**

- Research the company/department, as well as the people who are interviewing you.
- Prepare your questions for them and have those written out in advance.
- Contact your references and let them know they may be contacted; make sure they have the most recent copies of your resume and, if they are going to be contacted, provide them copies of the job posting. After they are contacted, send them "thank you" emails or hand-written "thank you" notes. If you are hired, consider treating them to lunch.
- Secure the details of the interview from the person who is arranging the interview: who will interview you, how long the interview(s) will last, the interview arrangements and any additional expectations they may have of you (for example, to do a presentation for the staff). Once in-person interviews resume, inquire about the parking arrangements.

### **Next you'll want to:**

- Write out and practice, practice, practice your skill statements. You'll want to get comfortable answering different possible interview questions, while keeping the context of the job posting in mind. Skill statements are a key component of a successful interview.
- Secure a "pad-folio" to take to the interview. A pad-folio looks like a leather binder and has a pad of paper in it, along with a pen. You can find them at office supply stores, as well as stores that carry both school supplies and home office items.
- Make sure that well in advance of your interview you check that your interview clothes still fit! Dress at least one step above what you would wear on the job.
- Get sleep the night before and eat healthy meals (a good practice in general and especially the day of your interview). Don't drink a gallon of coffee before the interview, which could result in shaky hands or a need to run to the bathroom.

### **For in-person interviews:**

- Remember that your interview begins the minute you leave your home to go to the interview.
- Pack a snack to have in the car or in your briefcase, if you know the interview will last for multiple hours.
- Arrive about 10 minutes early and introduce yourself to the front desk person, explaining that you are there for your interview. Be friendly! For online interviews, also log in 5-10 minutes early.
- When the interviewer comes to take you to the place where the interview will be conducted, thank them for the opportunity to interview. Initiate some upbeat small talk on the way to the room, such as "beautiful day" or "nice offices here."



## THREE PHASES OF AN INTERVIEW (continued)

### **Phase II: The Interview**

- The format generally follows this sequence: questions for you by the committee or the interviewer, questions you have for them, then the wrap up. Sometimes there may also be multiple interviews in one day with you meeting different people in the department or company. In person interviews may include lunch and/or a tour of the department/company.
- Take notes, if you need to, in order to stay focused or to remember important points.
- Allow yourself to slow down, especially for video-conferenced interviews, and take the time to really think about their questions. Breathe – you’ve got this – you’ve prepared!
- For “no barriers,” sit with correct posture, preferably with your feet on the ground, and don’t cross anything (at most, feet at the ankles). Don’t wave your pen around and remember to put it down when you aren’t writing.
- Use your skill statements to demonstrate your qualifications.
- Try to remember to say the name of the interviewer a couple of times through the course of the interview, if possible.
- It is okay to read your questions for them – no need to memorize them. It shows that you are prepared.
- During the wrap-up, ask them what the next steps will be, the timelines of their decision, and if you can contact them if you haven’t heard from them by that time (keeps the ball in your court).
- At the end of the interview, before you shake hands and thank them, summarize your key qualifications in a statement and indicate you are excited by the possibility of joining their team/company/department (if you genuinely are).

### **Phase III: Post-Interview**

- Send out your “thank you” emails immediately and definitely within 24 hours of the interview. Address any glaring weakness or questions that weren’t adequately answered (within reason, of course since your “thank you” email should be relatively short).
- For “lessons learned,” write out a journal entry of what went well and what you could improve.
- Process the experience with your career advisor or a “job search savvy” friend, especially if the interview did not go well.
- Keep momentum with your job search and don’t wait around for an answer, even if your references are contacted.