Job interviews and career fairs are opportunities to show prospective employers that you really know your stuff. All you need is a little preparation and your interview will be a breeze.

This section contains guidelines that will help you interview with confidence.

Career Fairs

Before the Career Fair:

- Know which businesses are going to be there.
- Come with questions you would like to ask employers.
- Bring several clean copies of your resume, protected in a folder.
- Make sure you have proofread your resume and it contains updated contact information.

At the Career Fair:

- Remember to maintain eye contact.
- Dress appropriately—like going to an interview.
- Let employers know that you are serious by having a firm handshake.
- Ask questions about the position or department you are interested in. Be genuinely interested.
- Take time to make an impression on the employers at the booth. Stop and get information about their company. Don’t just see how many resumes you can give to employers.
Career Fairs (cont.)

After the Career Fair:

- Send a Thank You note to follow-up about one to two days after the job fair.

Before the Job Interview

Research the Company and the Position:

- Why research a company prior to the interview?
  - It is important that the interviewer knows that you have researched the company. This will show the interviewer that you are truly interested in their company. It will also show that you are thorough in what you do.
  - When the interviewer asks if you have any questions, you can ask knowledgeable questions.
  - It will help you explain what you can do for the company.

- What do you try to find out about a company?
  - Who their competitors are.
  - Where the company is located.
  - Recent news about the company.
  - What products and services they offer.
  - Financial information, including salaries.

- Where do you look for this information?
  - You can research a company online, through current and past employees, and through faculty.
Before the Job Interview (cont.)

Prepare for Questions the Interviewer May Ask:

- Have a practice interview with a friend or spouse.
- Practice asking the questions you will ask the interviewer.
- Prepare an art portfolio to take to the interviewer, if applicable.
- Practice answering questions from your resume and other commonly asked questions.
- Prepare a list of references to take to the interview along with extra copies of your resume.
- Look over your resume for any questions that could possibly be asked from the information given.

The Interview

Pre-Interview:

- Relax— remember you are prepared for this interview.
- Be at least five minutes early. This shows the interviewer your dependability and professionalism.
- Go to the restroom, get a drink, fix your hair, and wipe off your shoes (if they need it) before announcing yourself.
- Be very professional and nice to the receptionist and/or secretary. They have more influence than you realize.
- Throw away any gum you may have been chewing!
The Interview (cont.)

The Interview:

- Greet the interviewer with a smile and a firm handshake (not a bone crusher or wet fish handshake).
- Sit on the chair, not on the edge of the chair or so relaxed in the chair that you look like you are going to slide out of the chair.
- Sit with your back straight, not like a board, just straight. Many students stop breathing when they sit with their back straight. It is important that you keep breathing. If you pass out it will leave a lasting impression, just not the one that you want to leave.
- Lean slightly forward, but not enough to be noticed. This makes a subconscious impression on the interviewer that you’re interested in what he/she has to say.
- Show self-confidence.
- Look the interviewer in the eyes at all times except when you are thinking about a question the interviewer has asked you. During this time you may look away, but do not look at the ceiling. When you look at the ceiling it makes your eyes turn all white and is not flattering.
- Answer the questions in a clear voice.
- Listen carefully to what the interviewer is asking. If you listen carefully you will hear cues about what the interviewer thinks is important.
- When the interviewer asks a question that you need to think about, state that you need a moment to think or something like that. You may not say “uh,” “rrr,” or any other sound that makes you sound unintelligent.
- The interviewer will always try to ask a question that you are not prepared for. This is to test how quickly you can think. If the interviewer asks a question that you know is this type of question, but you know your answer, do not answer quickly. Ask for a moment to think. Then give your brilliant answer. If you answer the question quickly then he/she must come up with another question you’re not prepared for.
- Do not ask questions that raise red flags.
- Ask questions you have prepared in advance.
- Explain how you would be a benefit to the company.
The Interview (cont.)

The Interview: (cont.)

- Do not do the following negative body language:
  - Slouch.
  - Gnaw on you lip.
  - Cross your knees.
  - Fake or force a smile.
  - Swing your foot or leg.
  - Fold or cross your arms.
  - Pick at invisible bits of lint.
  - Scratch or rub your head or ear.
  - Frequently touch your mouth or face.
  - Play with your hair or piece of clothing.
  - Fake a cough because you don’t know the answer and need time to think.
  - Allow your gums to get too dry and have your upper lip stick to the dry gum. If you feel your gums getting dry close your mouth and run your tongue over your gums. A lip stuck to the gum is gross looking.

- Verbally thank the interviewer when the interview is over and shake his/her hand. Remember the handshake needs to be firm.
Common Behavioral Interview Questions:

Many companies have started using behavioral questions during their interviews. This type of question is designed to show the interviewer how you will react in certain situations. For more information on behavioral interviewing strategies, go to the following website:

http://www.quintcareers.com/behavioral_interviewing.html

Here are some example behavioral interview questions:

- “Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.”
- “Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.”
- “Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.”
- “Tell me about a time you were able to successfully deal with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you.”

More example behavioral interview questions can be found at the following website:

http://www.quintcareers.com/sample_behavioral.html

Other great interviewing resources can be found at the following website:

http://www.quintcareers.com/intvres.html

These links are regularly updated to reflect current trends in the interviewing process.
Common Job Interview Questions:

The following are common traditional interview questions with suggestions on how to answer them. Be prepared to answer all of these questions:

- “Tell Me about Yourself.” Make a short overview of your education, professional achievements, and professional goals. Then give a brief explanation of your qualifications and the contributions you could make to the company.

- “What is your work experience?” Your answer needs to show how your experiences will help you contribute to this company. The following questions will help you answer this question:
  - What did you learn from past jobs?
  - What were your most important or largest responsibilities?
  - What skills did you achieve or use in past employment that you will use in the new job?
  - What did you like or dislike about your past jobs? Be careful about explaining the things you disliked in the past. You do not want to come across as never happy or negative.

- “Why do you want to work here?” This may be the most important question that is asked. Make sure you answer it clear and enthusiastically. Your answer needs to show the interviewer that you’re very interested in their company. Tell what you know about the company and the job through your research. Never answer with the word “money.”

- “What are your qualifications for this job?” Answer this question in a way that shows you have the qualifications needed for this job. The following questions should help you to answer this question:
  - What is your greatest accomplishment?
  - What can you do that someone else can’t do for the company?
  - What qualifications or skills do you have that are directly related to this position?
  - Can you imagine examples from previous jobs where you’ve shown initiative, creativity, problem solving, troubleshooting, leadership, etc?
Common Job Interview Questions: (cont.)

- What motivates you in your work?
- What qualities does this company want in their employees?
- What is important to you about a job? What do you need in a job?

- “What are your best skills?” Your research of the company should have helped you discover what skills the company is looking for. List those skills along with examples of your proficiency in these skills.

- “What is your major weakness?” Students have a hard time with this question. You need to give a weakness then turn that weakness into a strength. Show that you realize you have a weakness along with how you’re overcoming the weakness or compensating for it.

- “Do you prefer to work by yourself or with others?” Your research of the company should have shown you what they are looking for. Be honest in your answer but give examples of how you have worked in both situations.

- “What are your career goals?” Show that both your plans and the company’s goals are compatible. Show him/her that you do plan ahead. Show that you want to continually increase your skills and abilities. Be specific about how you plan to obtain your goals. The following questions can help prepare you for this question:
  - Where do you want to live?
  - What is your ideal job position?
  - What hours do you want to work?
  - What makes you feel successful?
  - What will you do to achieve success?
  - How will this job help you obtain your goals?
  - What do you expect to learn or achieve in this job?
  - What would you like to be doing five years from now?
  - Do you want to travel and how much travel do you want to do with your job?
Common Job Interview Questions: (cont.)

- “What are your hobbies or activities outside of work?” Most companies want to hire someone that is well rounded. These activities will also show people skills, analytical skills, creativity, determination, stamina, and being part of a team.

- “What salary are you expecting?” Try not to answer this question but put the question back on to the interviewer. You should have already researched the going salary for the position. Do not give your lowest amount but what you think is a good salary for the position.

- “What is the lowest salary you will work for?” This is the most unfair question an interviewer can ask. Try not to answer this question directly. Try to deflect the question with a question. I would be concerned if a company did not want to pay me what I was worth but only the smallest amount they could. The following are examples of ways to answer this question:
  - “It all depends on the job description, work schedule, where the job is located, and the benefit package.”
  - “I don’t know. What are you planning on paying the best candidate?”
  - “What your top pay is for this job is where my lowest begins.”
  - If the interviewer keeps pressing for an amount give him/her not your lowest amount but the middle to high amount.

- “Do you have any questions for me?” The wrong answer to this question is “NO”. You will have questions to ask. Your research of the company will help you with the questions you need to ask. At this time show the interviewer that you understand the job requirements and the company.
The Interview (cont.)

Questions to Ask During the Job Interview:

You should have prepared five to six questions to ask the interviewer. These questions should show that you have researched the company and the job position. Do not ask questions that raise warning flags. Do not ask questions about the salary, but you can ask questions about the benefit package. The following are examples of questions that you can ask:

• To whom does this position report?
• What is a typical day for this position?
• How will my performance be evaluated?
• Why did you want to work for this company?
• How often are performance reviews given? By whom?
• What makes your company different from its competitors?
• How does the world of U.S. economy affect your company?
• How would you describe your company’s management style?
• How is the work environment affected by the management style?
• What other positions and/or departments will I interact with most?
• Can you describe for me what a work week really is like for this position?
• Does your company encourage its employees to pursue additional education?
• What characteristics best describes individuals who are successful in this position?
• How much decision-making authority and autonomy are given to new employees?
• Can you tell me how your career has developed at this company? Would I have similar opportunities?
• I am a hard worker and can prove my value to the company. Where in the company will I be in five years?
Illegal Interview Questions:

The questions that you are asked on the application, in the interview, or during the testing process must be related to the job for which you are applying. If you are asked an illegal question you have three options: answer the question, refuse to answer the question, or respond with an answer as it applies to the job. Table 1 can help you understand what is or is not an illegal question and how you can respond.

**Table 1: Illegal Interview Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Illegal Questions</th>
<th>Legal Questions</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Origin/Citizenship</td>
<td>Are you a U.S. citizen? Where were you/your parents born? What is your “native tongue”?</td>
<td>*Are you authorized to work in the United States? *What languages do you read, speak, or write fluently? (This question is okay, as long as this ability is relevant to the performance of the job.)</td>
<td>I am authorized to work in the United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>How old are you? When did you graduate from college? When is your birthday?</td>
<td>*Are you over the age of 18?</td>
<td>I am legally old enough to perform this job. I am over the age of 18. I am a college graduate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital/Family Status</td>
<td>What’s your marital status? Who do you live with? Do you plan to have a family/ When? How many kids do you have? What are your child care arrangements?</td>
<td>*Would you be willing to relocate if necessary? *Travel is an important part of the job. Would you be willing to travel as needed by the job? (This question is okay, as long as ALL applicants for the job are asked it.) *This job requires overtime occasionally. Would you be able and willing to work overtime as necessary? (Again, this question is okay as long as ALL applicants for the job are asked it.)</td>
<td>I can travel and work the schedule that this job requires.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliations</td>
<td>To what clubs or social organizations do you belong?</td>
<td>*Do you belong to any professional or trade groups or other organizations that you consider relevant to your ability to perform this job?</td>
<td>I belong to the following organizations that will enhance my ability to perform this job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>How tall are you? How much do you weigh?</td>
<td>*Are you able to lift a 50-pound weight and carry it 100 yards, as that is part of the job? (Questions about height and weight are not acceptable unless minimum standards are essential to the safe performance of the job.)</td>
<td>I am physically able to perform the task required for this job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabilities</td>
<td>Do you have any disabilities?</td>
<td>*Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job with or without reasonable accommodations? (This question is okay if the interviewer thoroughly described the job.) NOTE: As part of the hiring process, after a job offer has been made you will be required to undergo a medical exam. Exam results must be kept strictly confidential, except medical/safety personnel may be informed if emergency medical treatment is required, and supervisors may be informed about necessary job accommodations, based on the exam results.</td>
<td>I do not have any condition that would prevent me from performing the essential functions of this job. I do have a condition that will require reasonable accommodations to perform the essential functions of this job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrest Record</td>
<td>Have you ever been arrested?</td>
<td>*Have you ever been convicted of ____? (The crime should be reasonably related to the performance of the job in question.) *Are you bondable?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>If you’ve been in the military, were you honorably discharged?</td>
<td>*In what branch of the Armed Forces did you serve? *What type of training or education did you receive in the military?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Types of Job Interviews

**Screening Interview:** to weed out unqualified candidates.

- Focus on skills, experiences, and accomplishments.
- Only answer the questions they ask, don’t volunteer additional information.
- Look over your resume for anything that could be conceived as an inconsistency; the interviewer will be looking for them.
- The interviewer will ask questions regarding your qualifications to make sure they are what you stated in your resume.
- Don’t try to develop a rapport. In this type of interview it is more important to establish your skills than your rapport.

**One-On-One Interview:** to show how you and your skills will benefit the company.

- Try to establish a rapport with the interviewer.
- Show how your skills will benefit the company.
- Show that you will work well with the company’s employees.

**Stress Interview:** to show how you work under stress.

- Answer each question calmly and confidently.
- Be ready for the interviewer to be sarcastic, argumentative, and/or rude. He/she wants to intimidate you.
- Don’t take what the interviewer says or how he/she says it personally.
- Ask for clarification of a question if you need it. Do not let the interviewer pressure you into giving an answer before you are ready.
- At some point the interviewer will not say anything and will just look at you. This is an attempt to unnerve you. Don’t let it unnerve you, just sit silently and wait for him/her to ask a question. If several minutes pass by, ask if he/she needs you to clarify your last answer.
Types of Job Interviews (cont.)

**Lunch Interview**: to show how you function in the luncheon setting. Since many business deals are made at lunch or on the golf course, it is important that you can perform well in either setting.

- Review the proper luncheon etiquette before you attend any interview.
- Two interviewers will go to lunch with you. One will ask you questions while the other eats, then they switch. You will not have the time to eat all of your lunch.
- They will always ask you a question when you have food in your mouth.
- There are several large corporations that will not hire you if you salt or pepper your food before you taste it. It shows that you are not willing to try new things.
- It is very important that you hold and use your silverware properly. Never hold your spoon like a shovel, hold it like a pencil.
- When you leave for the luncheon be prepared for the interviewers to ask to take your car. They are looking to see what condition it is in inside and outside. It is important that your car be clean inside and outside. If they give you a rental car they will give it to you the night before. Make sure you clean it up before you go to the interview. They will assume that your office will look like your car in appearance.
- Remember this is a business lunch and you’re still being interviewed!

**Committee Interview**: to show the committee (employees who you will work under) that you will be a benefit to the company.

- You should speak directly to the person asking the question.
- In this setting you can be asked to demonstrate your skills in problem solving, performance, and/or analytical skills.
- The committee is looking at your ability to apply your knowledge and skills to real-life situations.

**Group Interview**: to show your leadership potential as a manager and your ability in dealing with the public.

- It is important that you talk clearly and confidently.
- The goal is to see which prospective employees interact with others, and which ones use their knowledge and reasoning powers the best.