

STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW

Here are some guidelines to help you make the most of your interview. We've included tips about what to do before, during and after your interview.

Before the interview

- + **Know the position and the organization:** Review the position description and make a list of all the job requirements. Research the organization—you'll find a lot of information on the organization's web site—use this information to make a list of what the company's vision/mission, services/products, organizational structure, organizational culture, history and recent news.
- + **Know your qualifications:** Review your experience, skills and accomplishments—you can refer to your assessment of past work experience, education, skills and accomplishments (need help? Ask a Co-op and Career staff member). For each item on the list you made about the requirements of the position and the organization, make notes on specific examples from your experience that address the needs of the organization.
- + **Consider what the interviewer may ask you:** Draw up a list of possible interview questions you think you might get asked and make notes on how you will respond to them. Know your information but allow yourself to be natural—avoid preparing rehearsed or memorized answers. Prepare two or three questions to ask at the end of the interview.
- + **Know the logistics of the interview:** Find out how much time is scheduled for the interview. Find out whether you will be interviewed by one person or a panel (if possible, find out who your interviewers will be, including names and position titles). Find out if there is a written test or demonstration of skill that will be required as part of the interview. Know exactly where and when the interview will take place (if you are unfamiliar with the location, you may want to make a "dry run" a day or two before to make sure you know how to get there).
- + **Get ready to go:** Choose your outfit. Gather together the documents you will take (e.g. your portfolio). Give yourself plenty of time to get there—aim to arrive 5 to 10 minutes early—being on time should be the easy part!

During the interview

- + Engage in the interview
- + Make eye contact and shake hands firmly when you arrive and meet the interviewers
- + Pay close attention to the names of the people you are introduced to
- + Listen carefully to the questions, asking for clarification if you need to
- + Try to make eye contact equally with all the panel members as you answer the questions
- + Do your best to stay focused and on topic when providing your answers
- + Be honest if you do not know something
- + Use the STAR method to help you talk about your past experiences
- + Pay attention to the flow of the conversation so you can get a sense when the interview is drawing to a close
- + As the interview is ending, make sure you know when the interviewers will be making their decision. If not, ask!

After the interview

- + Make notes about what you learned and the questions you had difficulty with
- + Send a thank you note to the interviewers
- + If you do not hear from the interviewers by the time they told you they would be in touch, contact them to inquire about the status of the selection process
- + If you do not get offered the position, ask the interviewers if they would be willing to provide you with feedback on your interview
- +

EXERCISE: PREPARE FOR AN INTERVIEW

Use this checklist as you prepare for your interview. You can practice preparing for an interview even if you don't have one lined up. Need help? Contact a Co-op and Career staff member.

Before the interview

Research

- + Have you reviewed the job description thoroughly?
- + Have you reviewed the organization's website?

Skills review

- + Have you reviewed your experience and skills in relation to what you know about the position and the organization?

Question preparation

- + Have you drawn up a list of questions that you think the interviewers might ask?
- + Have you thought about how you will answer these questions?

Logistics and travel

- + Do you know when and where the interview is happening?
- + Do you know how many people will be interviewing you?
- + Do you know how much time is scheduled for the interview?
- + Do you know if there will be a test or skill demonstration?
- + Have you decided what you are going to wear?
- + Have you gathered together the documents that you are going to take?

After the interview

Performance review

- + Have you made notes about what you learned during the interview?
- + How well do you feel you answered the questions?
- + Did you stay on topic and provide relevant information?
- + Did you use the STAR method when appropriate?
- + Did you make appropriate eye contact?
- + Was there a good match between the words you were saying and your body language?

Follow up

- + Have you sent a thank you note to the interviewers? If you did not get the position, have you asked for feedback?