INTRODUCTION:
An interview is an opportunity for an employer and job seeker to learn about each other. There are hundreds of interview questions that you may be asked, but there are three basic questions an employer is asking you:

1st Question—Do you have the skills and experience for the job?
• This is often the start of the job interview. An employer may use both open and closed-ended questions. A sample of an open-ended question might be “Tell me about yourself” or a closed-ended question might be “Did you use X computer program in your previous job?” There is no right or wrong answer.

2nd Question—Are you willing to do the job?
• An employer may be asking how this position fits in with your career plans. If you are interested in the position, you will need to demonstrate to a potential employer how the position meets your career goals. In addition, employers are also looking to see your commitment to stay and progress with company, learn new skills, and your understanding of the company’s mission.

3rd Question—Will you fit in with the company’s organizational structure?
• This question is often based upon an employer’s instinct about whether you’re the right person for the job. Prepare for this question by visiting the company’s website and researching the mission and vision statements. It is important for you to remember to be yourself since you are also evaluating whether you can see yourself working for the employer. Some factors to consider are the workplace atmosphere, supervision style, mission of the employer, and personalities of those you’ll be working with. For example, if you are someone who wouldn’t enjoy wearing a business suit and sitting behind a desk all day then you may not enjoy working at a bank as a loan officer.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:
• Tell me about yourself.
• Why do you want to work here?
• What do you know about our company?
• Why are you leaving your current job?
• How does this position fit in with your career goals?
• What did you enjoy/dislike about your previous job?
• Describe your ideal work environment.
• Do you prefer to work with people or things?
• What are your strengths/weaknesses?
• Do you prefer to work alone or with people?
• How would you describe your own personality?
• Why should I hire you?

Behavioral Based Interview Questions—
• This type of interview question asks the applicant to give an example of a skill or situation for example “Give me an example of how you handled a disagreement with your boss.” There is no wrong or right answer since each person will respond differently to the question. You should be prepared to answer behavioral-based interview questions since they can be a part of the interview.
A few examples of behavioral-based interview questions:

- Are you a good manager? Give an example.
- Did you ever fire anyone? If so, what were the reasons and how did you handle it?
- How have you increased profits, reduced cost, or saved time? Give an example.
- Would you describe a situation in which your work was criticized?
- What was the most difficult decision you ever had to make? Give an example.

Sample Questions for YOU to ask the employer:

- You should be prepared to ask the employer questions too. This is usually at the end of the interview when the interviewer will ask “Do you have any questions for us?” Never say ‘No”. By asking questions, you are demonstrating your interest and careful consideration whether you would like to work for this employer. This information may be used later to help you evaluate whether you should accept the job offer.

- Can you tell me about the duties of this position?
- What type of training is there for new employees?
- What do you enjoy/dislike about the company?
- Are there opportunities for advancement?
- What do you feel would be the challenges of this position?
- Who would be my supervisor? How would you describe your management style?
- What professional development opportunities would be available to me?
- How would you describe the work atmosphere here?

**Note:** Do not ask questions regarding salary, benefits, vacation time, etc. The employer has not extended you a job offer yet and asking these questions is inappropriate during the initial stage of the hiring process. **If an employer asks “What are your salary requirements?” Never give them an exact figure.** You may state “Based on my market research it is my understanding that this type of position pays $XX-$Yk. “I’d like to wait until we have reached a mutual agreement about the position before we discuss salary.” Once you have a job offer, you ask these types of questions. For information on benefits, you can speak with someone in the company’s Human Resources Department.

**PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW:**

**Research the Company**

Before you visit the employer, you need to know about the company and position you are applying. You can gather employer information in business directories, annual reports, company web site, or if you know someone who is already an employee ask them for their advice or opinions. If you do not have a job description, you should contact the employer for a copy.

**Some basic company information you should know about the employer:**

- Corporate Structure
- Location
- Job Description of the position you are applying for Career Path Potential
- Company’s Economic Situation(see annual reports)
- Company Reputation
- Competitors
- Products or Services Offered
Identify your Skills-
- Review your resume and be prepared to discuss your skills and experience to the employer. Pay close attention to the job description and the skills listed since you will need to discuss how your background relates to the position and when possible give examples of your work.

Arrange for References-
- Identify 3-5 people you can ask to be your references, they should be former supervisors or colleagues who know you well and can speak about your background. Provide your references with a copy of your resume, job description of position you are applying, and list any skills you specifically want them to talk about with an employer. If your reference is a professor, list courses taken, semester of class, and papers or projects that you worked on in their class. Remember to keep in touch with your references and let them know the progress of your job search. Your references might also be a good indicator if you are a final candidate for the position if they have been contacted by a potential employer.

Logistics
- When an employer calls you to schedule an interview, you will need to ask them for three pieces of information: “Who will you be meeting with?” , ”Where is the company located and how to get there?” and a telephone number to call for any last minute emergencies that require you to cancel the interview (you should do this as soon as possible or if you are not able have a friend or family member call for you).

Rehearsal-
- Practice your interview skills before you meet with an employer! Use this guide and also prepare a list of questions that you have for the interviewer. Employers use the interview, the only face-to-face contact, to determine whether to ask you back for a 2nd interview or extend an offer. If interviewing makes you anxious, practice your interview skills beforehand which will help put you more at ease so that you can put your best foot forward in the job search. Visit Career Services to inquire about practicing your interview skills in a mock interview.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

Arrive early and dress professionally-
- Remember you are meeting the employer in person and want to make a good 1st impression! If you don’t know where the company is located, get clear directions or drive by the office beforehand so you will know how to get there. An interview suit is required for a job interview.

See Helpful Handout, dress like a Professional
www.dcc.edu/departments/advising/counseling/handouts/

Note: If you don’t own a suit, now is the time to invest in at least 1 professional business suit or borrow one from a friend. There are several stories in the area where you can find a reasonable priced interviewing suit. It’s not a necessity to have a designer suit but that you look clean and presentable to an employer. If you need help finding professional attire please stop by Career Services and we can offer suggestions.

Be polite-
- Remember that everyone you meet in the company over the telephone or in person may be asked to evaluate you.
Speak in a natural conversational tone-
• Maintain eye contact with the interviewer. Try to avoid using “um, ah, like, and you know” when talking.

Posture/Body Language-
• Sit relaxed and watch for body movements that might show nervousness such as tapping your foot, a pencil, hair twisting, or overusing your hands or arms while talking etc. when you greet the employer, shake their hands firmly and look them in the eye.

Show the employer that you are qualified and interested in the position-
• Use examples during the interview to demonstrate how your previous experience and skills will benefit the employer. For example, do not say I have developed leadership skills instead say “I served as President of the Student Government Association which helped me communicate with others, serve as a role model for students, and delegate responsibilities.”

Never speak negatively about a former employer, boss or colleague-
• If you had a bad experience, remain positive and discuss what you learned about yourself or the skills you developed while working for your former employer.

Goodbye-
• Ask the employer when they expect to make a hiring decision. Collect a business card from the interviewer to help you draft a thank you letter later. This will assure that you have the correct information to send your letter.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW:
Follow up with a thank you email or letter.
• Within 24 hours send the interviewer a thank you email. Restate your interest in the position and address any concerns that may have come up during interview about your qualifications.

Evaluate the job offer-
• After the interview write some notes about the advantages and disadvantages of the position. If you decide to withdraw your name from the list of candidates, you should contact the employer right away. Remember it is a two-way street and you have the right to refuse a job offer.

If you decide to accept a job offer, Congratulations on your new job!
• Let the employer know right away. If you need time to evaluate your decision, it is appropriate to ask for some time. Depending upon the employer’s need to fill the position they will let you know when they need to hear from you. Once you’ve accepted the position ask the discussed. You should also place a copy of a letter accepting the job offer in your personnel file with the Human Resources Department.