Interviewing Strategies
For Graduate Students

Presenters:

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What Gets the Interview?

- Degree
- Value around the degree
  - Prior Experience
  - Accomplishments
  - Internships/co-ops
  - Course choices
- Personal Qualities
- Disciplined Job Search
- Marketing Yourself (to everyone!)
- Resume (but not by itself)
- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Linked In)
- Can Do, Will Do, Fit
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAN DO</th>
<th>WILL DO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talent</td>
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<td>Skills</td>
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<td>Experience</td>
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<td>Training</td>
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<td>Credentials</td>
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<td>Certifications</td>
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<td>Passion</td>
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<td>Interests</td>
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<td>Preferences</td>
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<td>Development</td>
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<td>Resilience</td>
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<td>Motivation</td>
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<td>Flexibility</td>
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Personality Traits
Values
Work Setting/Culture
Incentives/Rewards
How Best Managed

FIT
Organizational & Personal

Targeted Ideal Work

(CAN DO) Talent
(WILL DO) Passion

Targeted Ideal Work

FIT
Organizational & Personal
PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW
Interviewing Goals

Your personal goals:
- Market yourself successfully; show your value.
- Determine whether you will enjoy and do well in the company and the job.
- Gather information to make a sound decision.

Employer’s goals:
- Evaluate how well you fit the job.
- Determine your value to the company.
- Decide who continues to be interviewed.
- Sell the company to you if you are a strong candidate.
Before the Interview - Preparation

- Before the job search begins, change your voicemail/email so it sounds/looks professional.
- Get directions to the interview site – check for clearance.
- Research the company/organization - get information regarding products, locations, growth record, responsibilities, and recent news. Lack of Knowledge about the company can be a deal-breaker.
- Make several copies of your resume and your references.
- Dress conservatively and professionally, preferably a business suit for both men and women or your most professional attire if you do not own a business suit.
- Don’t forget the “Total Communication Package”
Before the Interview (Contd.)

**Total Communication Package**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone of Voice</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Verbals (Body Language)</td>
<td>52%</td>
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**Halo Effect:**

The first 15-20 seconds of a new encounter can define the tone and expectations of all that follows.
# Before the Interview (Contd.)

## Know the Type of Interview

<table>
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<th>Screening</th>
<th>Selection</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>Primary Purpose:</strong> To Screen You Out</td>
<td><strong>Primary Purpose:</strong> To Confirm Prior Positive Impressions</td>
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<tr>
<td>- ByPhone</td>
<td>- On-site/In Person</td>
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<td>- Career Fair</td>
<td>- Talk with other Managers/Employees</td>
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<td>- Individual or Panel</td>
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<td>- Can be 1 hour to full day in length</td>
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<td>- Remotely</td>
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**Screening**

- ByPhone
- Career Fair
- Information Session
- On-campus Interview
- Remotely

**Selection**

- On-site/In Person
- Talk with other Managers/Employees
- Individual or Panel
- Can be 1 hour to full day in length
Before the Interview – Preparation (contd.)

• Take a binder/portfolio to take notes if necessary and to carry your resume, references, and examples of your work (if applicable).

• Anticipate questions and practice your answers.

• Be prepared to talk about all of the information provided on your resume; everything on your resume is fair game.

• Prepare questions to ask the employer.

• Rehearse answers with a friend or career counselor.
INTERVIEW DAY
Interview Day

• Arrive 10-15 minutes ahead of time.
• Interview starts in the parking lot.
• Turn off your cell phone.
• Treat the receptionist/secretary with respect.
• Reduce “clutter”
• Be aware of the “Total Communication Package”
During the Interview

- **Presentation & Presence**
  - Maintain eye contact (without staring) and shake hands firmly
  - Sit up straight and maintain good posture
  - Eliminate non-words such as “uh” or “um”
  - Match facial expressions and rate of speech with the employer

- Your goal: Demonstrate value and show how you are a solution to their “problem”.
- Pausing before you answer a question is OK.
- Ask for clarification or restatement of questions at any time.
During the Interview – contd.

- Be honest if you are unable to answer a question. Offer a thoughtful way you would seek an answer.
- Display enthusiasm for the position.
- Look for opportunities to highlight strengths and match to job requirements. Use examples to illustrate.
- Show that you embrace the company culture.
- Restate your interest in and enthusiasm for the job.
- Inquire about next steps in the process and when you may be hearing from the employer.
- Thank the interviewer(s) for their time.
- Ask for business cards to use with a follow-up.
Basic Interview Questions

Top Six Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself
2. What are your strengths?
3. What are your weaknesses?
4. What do you know about our company?
5. Why should we hire you?
6. What are your salary requirements?
Let’s Practice!

- Groups of three
- Rotate through the roles of Interviewer, Interviewee, and Observer
- **Eight minutes** for each interview and **two minutes** for feedback from Interviewer and Observer using the guide.
Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself (e.g. your student status, major, focus of your research, how you became interested in your area of research)
2. What do you consider to be your primary strengths? (Include 2 “technical” and 1 “personal” examples)
3. What are your weaknesses (one area in which you are still growing or developing professionally)
4. Tell me about a time when you were not able to achieve a goal or outcome despite your best efforts
Feedback Guide

Take 90 seconds for feedback:

1. Firm handshake?
2. Eye contact?
3. “Fillers” (um’s and “uh’s”)?
4. Did they use examples to illustrate an answer?
5. Length of the answer
6. Other body language? (fidgeting, nervous hands/feet)
Debrief the Practice Experience
No-no’s & Challenges
Interviewing Taboos

- Initiating discussion of salary/benefits during the first interview.
- Arriving too early or being late.
- Chewing gum or fidgeting during the interview.
- Making inappropriate small talk. Follow the interviewer’s lead.
- Constantly taking notes.
- Asking the recruiter for a date.
- Discussing religion, politics, or potentially controversial issues.
- Making negative comments about former job.
- Smoking just before the interview.
- Wearing heavy perfume/cologne.
- Having questionable information on your social networking sites.
CHALLENGES

Dealing with Behavior-Based Questions
- Designed to make you think on your feet.
- Will ask for examples or give scenarios.
- Show ability to make good judgment calls.
- Example: “How would you deal with a co-worker who’s poor job performance is affecting the quality of your work?”

Handling Rejection
- Don’t take it personally (hard to do!).
- Be clear about what you have and don’t have control over.
- Learn from the experience.
AFTER THE INTERVIEW
Following Up

- Send a brief thank-you note to each employer you spoke to within 24-48 hours after the interview. Express your gratitude for the opportunity to interview, reaffirm your interest in the position, re-coup any gaps that remain from the interview.
- Evaluate your personal performance to make improvements for future interviews.
- Follow-up with a telephone call if you have not heard from the employer within a specified timeframe. If you are unsure about what to do, talk to a career counselor.
- Don’t stop your job search – keep moving.
Other Interviewing Resources

- www.ncsu.edu/career
- Job & Internship Search Guide (online or hard copy)
- UCC Resource Library
- Your Career Counselor

Appointments: Call 919-515-2396

2100 Pullen Hall (next door to Harris Hall) – Dan Allen Dr.