Effective Interviewing for PhDs

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### Who is in the room? (30 second introduction)

**Current PhD Students**

- **Name**
- **PhD Program**
- **Year in the program or Semester you will graduate**
- **Type of position(s) you are preparing for by earning a PhD**

**Postdocs**

- **Name**
- **PhD Program, When and Where you Earned it**
- **Unit in which you are completing your postdoc and when it will end**
- **One sentence about your research**
- **Type of position(s) you will pursue after this postdoc**
Today’s Session

- Interview Basics (10 minutes)
- ACTIVITY (20 minutes)
  - Identify Your Top 5 Transferable Skills
  - Specific Times you Used Them
- Interviewing with STARR method (30 mins)
- Interviewing Resources
- This session is a starting point!
Career Self-Management Competencies

1. **Know yourself** (interests, skills, and values). Communicate convincingly about your transferable skills and strengths.

2. Able to **name the specific type of jobs** you are looking for within specific **industries** and understand the qualifications and typical career paths.

3. Keep up with discipline/industry trends. **Continue to develop required skills.**

4. Effectively build, maintain and utilize your professional **network** at all stages of your career. Use it for gaining information, job search assistance, and identifying opportunities.

5. Manage a professionally branded and **effective online presence.**

6. **Know sources of postings.** Understand application processes & timelines.

7. Able to **draft, edit and tailor documents** (CV, resume, cover letters, email correspondence, letters of acceptance and decline...).

8. Master the art of **effective interviewing.**

9. Able to effectively **negotiate and accept/decline offers.**

10. Accepts responsibility for ongoing career and professional development. Maintains **positive mindset and demonstrates resilience.**
Basics: Application to On-site Interview

- **REALITY**: An employer can receive 100-200+ applications for a position. May screen electronically, individually or by committee.

- **Materials** (resume, cover letter, other documents) must be tailored for position. **Goal is to get you to next step of the process.**

- **Screening interview** (phone, online, at a conference). 10-20 candidates. Short. 30-45 minutes. **Goal is to get an invitation for an onsite interview.** May involve a group or case interview depending on position.

- **On-site interview**. Different lengths, different formats. Usually bring 3-4 candidates on site. **Goal=offer.**
## Skills Employers Want

Figure 1: Attributes employers seek on a candidate's resume

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>80.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to work in a team</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills (written)</td>
<td>70.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-solving skills</td>
<td>70.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills (verbal)</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong work ethic</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>65.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical/quantitative skills</td>
<td>62.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility/adaptability</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical skills</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)</td>
<td>58.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Spotlight for Career Services Professionals
Transferable Skills Activity

1. Check all skills you have.
2. Narrow to 10
3. Narrow to top 5
4. Come up with a STRONG example of when you used three of your top 5 skills
Using the STARR method

**S**=Situation, explain the context of a specific instance

**T**=Task, what you were supposed to accomplish

**A**=Action, what you did to accomplish the task

**R**=Results, use numbers, outcomes

**R**=Relate it to the position, connect it back to the job you are interviewing for now
Activity: Practicing STARR

In pairs practice your response to this question. Speak, get feedback, try again, switch roles.

**Interviewer:** “What strengths do you bring to this job?”

- LISTEN for STARR
- One thing you did well was…
- A suggested improvement is….

**Interviewee**-incorporate feedback and try it again!
More Practice

Tell me about a time you overcame an obstacle.

**Interviewer:**

- LISTEN for STARR
- One thing you did well was...
- A suggested improvement is....

**Interviewee**-incorporate feedback and try it again!
More Practice Questions

Tell me about yourself.

What salary are you seeking?

What questions do you have for us?
InterviewStream

InterviewStream has been updated to remove Adobe Flash from our recording processes in the Chrome and Firefox browsers. If you are using Chrome or Firefox, please clear your browser cache to use our new RTC recorder.

Welcome, Susan

Welcome to University of Maryland's most interviewing program. If you don't have a webcam on your computer, you may schedule a half-hour appointment anytime to conduct your virtual mock interview in the University Career Center, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

Assignments

Assignments are given by your instructors. Register for Assignment D in the Assignments section.

Messages

Password Recovery Utility

Welcome to InterviewStream!

Overview

Overall, the interview is a great opportunity for you to show your skills and experience in a more informal environment.

Resources

Interview Guide

Watch My Interview

Mobile Interview

Advancing graduate education. Enhancing the graduate student experience.
INTERVIEW TOPICS

KEY QUESTIONS
- Tell me about yourself.
- Why should we hire you?
- Can you walk me through your resume?
- Why do you want to work here?
- What are your three greatest weaknesses?
- What are your weaknesses?
- What are your three greatest strengths?
- What are three positive things your last boss would say about you?
- How would your peers describe you?
- What can you do for us that other candidates can't?

INTERVIEW TIPS
- How do I make the best first impression?
- Using Silence in an Interview to Your Advantage
- What if I don't have much experience?
- Things You Need to Find out About the Company You're Interviewing With
- What if they ask me an impossible question?
- Addressing Hard Feelings About a Previous Employer
- What is the best way to present yourself in an interview?
- What do I do when there is silence?
- How can I give a strong answer without being too long-winded?

INTERESTING TOPICS
- Research
- Preparing for an interview
- Non-Verbal Communication
- First Impressions
- Breaking the Ice
- Making Sure There Is a Mutual Fit Between You and a Company
- While Waiting in Reception
- What salary are you seeking?
- Self-Assessments and Peer Interaction
- Should I follow up after the interview?
Interview Preparation

- review company/organization website and social media to understand structure, mission, projects and current issues
- find interviewees on LinkedIn to review their backgrounds. Develop questions.
- carefully read/review itinerary/travel
- prepare interview clothes & materials are
- do salary research
- PRACTICE, PRACTICE, RELAX
Use Career Website & Careers 4 Terps

● Website: careers.umd.edu
  ■ events calendar, resources, TerpGuide
● C4T (link on upper left)
  ○ Interview Stream (practice/feedback)
  ○ schedule appointments with me
  ○ register for events
  ○ VAULT career library
  ○ Job Postings (search agent/emails)
Other resources

- [TLTC](#)
- [CIRTL](#)
- [Training @ Maryland](#)
- [UCLA Career Preparation Toolkit](#) for Graduate Students and Postdocs