

These tips will help you understand what you need to do in advance to prepare for an interview, how to formulate your answers to questions during the interview, and how to follow up with the interviewer.

WHEN SETTING UP THE INTERVIEW, ASK THESE QUESTIONS TO BETTER PREPARE

- What is the length and format of the interview? (*i.e. interviews can be in-person (one-on-one or in a group) or via phone or webcam--see handout on Virtual Interviewing*)
- Who will be participating in the meeting? (*i.e. one or more people, titles*)
- Will there be a test component? (*i.e. written test, current events, skills based, common in technical interviews*)

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

How to Prepare:

- Identify your main strengths, review your resume, and think of specific examples that highlight your strengths
- Review the position description in detail and note how your skills connect to the position/organization
- Research the organization including recent news/accomplishments, history and mission, and website information
- Prepare 7-10 questions of your own for the employer (*see end of this handout for example questions*)
- Find out the location for the interview and be sure you know the route and building before you go. Do not rely solely on your GPS, take into account the time of day and potential traffic/construction
- Watch videos in Candid Careers on interviewing tips (located under the Career Center tab in the SHU Portal) and visit glassdoor.com to research salary ranges

What to Bring:

- Travel light, do not carry many items with you, and be sure to turn your cell phone off and put it away
- Bring copies of your resume (and any other application materials you submitted), a list of references, business cards (if you have them), a professional padfolio notepad and pen (to jot down important information and to refer to the questions you wrote down to ask), and anything else the interviewer requests
- If you have a portfolio with writing, photography, design or other samples of work, bring it with you

How to Dress for an Interview:

- Wear a clean suit. Choose neutral colors: blue, brown, black or gray. Remember, no one will judge you for showing up in a suit, but it may not look good if you are the only one not wearing a suit. You are being compared to other candidates, not the attire that is common for the organization
- Wear closed toed shoes, even in the summer. For women, your skirts should at least reach your knee
- Be mindful of your appearance by keeping jewelry minimal, covering tattoos, and maintaining personal hygiene

DURING THE INTERVIEW

First Impressions Count:

- Arrive 10-15 minutes before your appointment time. Maintain professionalism from the time you arrive
- Give a firm handshake, make eye contact, and smile
- Watch your body language. Pay attention to posture, hand placement, and the volume and tone of your voice

Answering & Asking Questions:

- Answer questions in a way that describes you and what value you can bring to the employer
- Be ready for questions about your prior experiences, or those that focus on how you might handle difficult situations (you can use examples from your work history, clubs/activities, volunteer experiences, classes, etc.)
- Keep your answers positive when talking about other students, co-workers, and previous employers
- Ask what the next step is in the process and avoid asking questions regarding benefits or salary
- Get business card(s), shake hands, give eye contact and thank the interviewer(s)

Behavioral Interviews (STARS Technique):

- Behavioral interviews are based on the idea that past performance is the best predictor of future performance. Questions may be phrased as "Tell me about a time when...". The **STARS** formula is an organized and specific way to answer these types of questions:
 - S**ituation/event: What was the setting/ situation were you in?
 - T**ask: What did you need to solve? What was the task you faced?
 - A**ction: What did you do? What role did you take to respond or solve the task?
 - R**esult: What happened based on your action?
 - S**kills/ Strengths: What skills were developed as a result?

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Send a “Thank You” note within 24 hours via email. Some candidates also choose to mail a hand written note.
- If you have not heard from the employer by the date he/she indicated, call or email the appropriate contact person. Tell them when you interviewed and for what position and that you are “inquiring about the status of the position”

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS THAT YOU MAY BE ASKED DURING AN INTERVIEW

Questions about YOU:

- Tell me about yourself. (this is the #1 question asked in most interviews)
- Why are you interested in working here? What attracted you to this organization?
- What are your strengths? (give 2 or 3 and be ready to back them up with examples)
- What would you consider your weakness? (describe what you have done to improve)
- Why did you choose your major?
- What can you do for us that other candidates can't?
- What do you know about this industry?
- What do you want me to know about you that isn't on your resume?
- What interests you or impresses you about our organization?
- How did you become interested in this field or organization?
- How do you want to improve yourself in the next year?
- What kind of goals would you have in mind if you got this job?
- If I were to ask your last supervisor to provide you additional training or exposure, what would he/she suggest?
- Why should we hire you?

Questions about your experiences:

- What is your proudest accomplishment?
- Tell me about your extracurricular activities during college. What did you gain from these experiences?
- Tell me what you learned from your volunteer or work experiences.
- Tell me about your leadership experience. What was the last project you led, and what was its outcome?
- Describe the job or the activity that has had the greatest impact on your career goals.
- What specific skills have you acquired or used in previous jobs that relate to this position?
- What kinds of tasks and responsibilities motivate you the most?

Questions about your behavior (remember to use the STARS technique):

- Have you ever been on a team where someone was not contributing? How did you handle it?
- Tell me about an important goal you set in the past, and the steps you took to reach that goal.
- Tell me about a time where you had to deal with conflict on the job.
- Describe how you would handle a situation if you were required to finish multiple tasks by the end of the day.
- Tell me about a time when you used your quantitative or analytical skills.
- Describe an experience in which you showed initiative.
- Describe a time when you had to make an ethical decision and explain how you arrived at your decision.
- Give me an example of when you failed at something and what you learned from that experience.

QUESTIONS YOU MAY WANT TO ASK THE EMPLOYER AT THE END OF AN INTERVIEW:

(Always save at least 2-3 questions for the end)

- What do you enjoy most about working for this organization?
- What does it take to be highly successful in this organization?
- What do you consider the five most important day-to-day responsibilities of the job?
- Tell me about your organization's culture.
- What is the next step in the hiring process?

*For more sample interview questions focused in your field or to schedule a practice interview, speak with a career advisor.
Appointments can be scheduled by visiting Bayley Hall room 209 or calling 973-761-9355.*