

INTERVIEW PREP

Congratulations on landing an interview! This means the employer is interested in discussing your skills and qualifications further to find out if you are the right fit. Now it is time to prepare, practice, and present your best self.

Preparation

Research

- Thoroughly research the organization and individual(s) with whom you are interviewing. Visit the company homepage to find out the company's mission, vision, goal, history, news, products, services, and past and present projects. Google and LinkedIn can be helpful, too!
- Are there MCC alumni working at the organization? Visit the company's LinkedIn page to find more about current employees.
- Are there trends in the industry? Research possible challenges and opportunities in the field.

Create a list of your accomplishments

- Prepare a list of your accomplishments. Interviewers often ask candidates to discuss past experience in terms of skills and abilities. For example, "Tell me about a time when you worked closely with a team." Remember to remain positive during a conversation with a potential employer, but be honest and never misrepresent.
- Identify examples from coursework, labs, projects, internships, jobs, volunteer work, clubs, or other co-curricular activities that are referenced on your resume.
- PAR Method. Project + Action = Result. Frame your answers to an interview question using this format. Make sure the examples reinforce skills and abilities you want to highlight for an employer for that position.

What type of interview is it?

- Behavioral interviews require you to talk about how you have handled specific situations. Be prepared to discuss your credentials and past experiences. See our list of possible interview questions on the back of this guide.
 - See the *Commonly Asked Interview Questions* handout for more information.
- Employers ask about past behavior because these can predict future behavior.
- Use the PAR Method (mentioned above) to discuss your experience. If you would change or adjust your approach to a situation, it is ok to say so!
- Technical interviews require the candidate to demonstrate a particular skill set or knowledge.
 - See *Technical Interview* handout for more information.

Practice

- Schedule a mock interview with Career Services to get feedback on your answers and delivery.
- Video record yourself to note body language and if you use unnecessary language such as "umm" or "like" too often.
- Practice your answers multiple times, but not so much that they seem stale or rehearsed during an interview.
- Select appropriate attire to wear to the interview and make sure it fits properly.
- **Video Interview?** Find a quiet, clean space with good lighting. Test your camera and microphone beforehand. For more tips, watch this video: "How to Look Good in Skype Interviews" – <http://youtu.be/rQwanxQmFnc>

The Interview

Present your best self

How you present yourself tells the employer a lot about how you approach your work.

- Arrive early. You might step into the restroom to collect yourself before you begin.
- Deliver a firm (but not bone-crushing) handshake, make eye contact, smile, and try your best to remember names.
- Bring a portfolio that contains a pen and pad, extra copies of your resume, cover letter, and list of references.

- Prepare a list of questions to ask the employer about the position, organization, and industry that are not readily found on the website.
- Keep good posture and limit hand gestures and body movements, if possible.
- Collect business cards of those you meet in order to follow up with a thank you note.
- Be polished. Wear appropriate interview clothing for the setting. Avoid colognes/perfumes and distracting accessories. Pull your hair away from your face and limit visible tattoos and piercings.
- Do not have gum or mints in your mouth during an interview.
- Turn your phone completely off.
- Don't smoke before the interview.

Follow up & Thank You Notes

- Send a personalized thank you email to each individual who participated in the interview within one day of the meeting. The note should include any information that was requested from you and a mention of something specific from your conversation. Keep it short, friendly, and enthusiastic about the opportunity. You shouldn't expect to receive an answer to your thank you email, so don't ask a question that requires a reply. Use this to sell yourself one last time.
- Follow-up two weeks after the interview to ask for an update on their process.
- If you interviewed with multiple employers, and have decided to accept an offer, graciously let the other employers know you would no longer like to be considered for the position.

Possible Interview Questions

- Tell me about yourself. (Most frequently asked.)
- What do you consider to be your greatest strength?
- How would your references describe you?
- Describe a time when you were in a stressful situation. How did you handle it?
- What is your greatest accomplishment?
- Why did you choose your major/MCC?
- Do your grades accurately reflect your ability?
- What have you learned from participation in co-curricular activities?
- Where do you want to be in 5 years? In 10 years?
- What job-related skills have you developed?
- What do you hope to learn from this position?
- Give an example of a time you worked in a team.
- Give an example of a time you took initiative.
- Give an example of a time you worked with a firm deadline.
- How do you balance multiple responsibilities at once?
- What type of supervision style do you work best in?
- What type of environment are you most comfortable in?
- Tell me about a time you solved a problem.

Sample Questions for the Employer

- How and when will my performance be evaluated in this role?
- How is success measured in this department?
- What are potential challenges one might encounter in this position?
- What are the team's and/or organization's strengths?
- What is the work environment/culture like?
- What do you like most about the organization?
- What characteristics does a successful person have in this organization?
- What is the timeframe for making a hiring decision/what are the next steps for this process?
- Ask targeted and industry specific questions that display your knowledge of the field.