

 | **INTERVIEWING 101****Congratulations on getting an interview!**

You've made it past the resume screening process and landed an interview. Your next step, preparing for the interview, is a must. Interviewers can usually discern which candidates have done their homework and have taken the time to research the organization and position.

Getting Prepared

- Research.
- Search the company's specific website as well as other sites, such as reliable news sources that reference the company.
- From this search, you should be able to speak intelligently about the company and pose some questions to the employer about specific things you've learned.
- Research the people who will be interviewing you, if you are aware of who they are.
- Review the job posting to remind yourself of the skills, qualifications, and requirements the employer is seeking and that are necessary to successfully perform the role.

Practice

Answer commonly asked interview questions by writing them out and rehearsing them out loud. This technique is especially helpful for those who tend to get anxious or nervous. Common interview questions often include:

- Tell me about yourself.
- What do you know about this company/organization?
- Why do you want to work here?
- What are some of your greatest strengths/weaknesses?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?

- Tell me about a difficult situation and how you resolved it.
- How would you define a positive work environment?
- Why should we hire you?

Bring Questions

Make sure that you have at least three questions prepared to ask at the end of the interview. For example:

- What are some of the most important qualities to possess in order to excel in this role?
- What are some of the greatest opportunities and/or challenges currently facing this organization?
- What are the next steps in the interview process?

Note of Caution: Answer questions as completely and concisely as you are able, but be sure not to overdo answers in a way that may sound like you are "showing off" how much you know (or think you know). When interviewing, embellishment may backfire as those interviewing you likely possess much more knowledge about the questions than you.

What Not to Ask About

- Salary and benefits
- Vacation time
- Personal questions about the interviewer

A small green square containing a white leaf icon, identical to the one in the header.

INTERVIEWING 101

Map It

- Know where you are going ahead of time and how long it will take to travel to the interview site.
- Drive the route if your interview is in town and you are unsure where you are going.
- Sometimes GPS systems don't perfectly guide you to your destination, so be confident you know exactly where you are going and how long it will take you to arrive.

Prepare Your References

- Inform your references that you are interviewing for a position.
- Provide details of the position and who may be contacting them for a reference.

The Day of the Interview

Often times your interview begins even before you step foot into the building. Anyone you encounter at the interview site may be a part of the interview/screening process. Therefore, you should conduct yourself in a professional manner at all times. Some employers may even test your interaction with their employees by setting up situations or force you to deal with people before you enter the interview. Below is a list of general guidelines to stay professional:

- Arrive approximately 15 minutes early.
- Bring a professional padfolio (with a pen and paper) and copies of your resume printed on resume quality paper.
- Turn off your cell phone before you get out of your car.
- Greet others with a smile, eye contact, and a "Hello" or "Hello, how are you?"
- When entering the interview, wait to be directed to which seat you are to take and remain standing until the interviewer(s) sit(s). If there are others already seated in the room, it is acceptable to

sit down immediately once you are directed to a vacant seat. If you are standing near someone, it is appropriate to extend your hand for a handshake.

- Always maintain appropriate eye contact and smile appropriately.
- Be prepared to answer questions. It's okay to pause for a moment before replying. Do not interrupt others. Remember an interview is also an opportunity for you learn more about the position and determine if it is a good fit for you.
- Be positive. Employers are more likely to hire someone who smiles and remains both positive and enthusiastic during the interview process. Employers want employees who get along well with others, and are personable and approachable. Do not speak negatively about other jobs, bosses, or co-workers. Instead, focus on the things you liked about your previous job and concentrate on how those positive things can be beneficial to your new employer.
- Always follow-up with a thank you letter immediately after the interview.

Dress to Impress

The way you dress for your interview says a lot about you as a potential employee.

What does your appearance say about you? Low-cut shirt girl? Tacky tie guy? Don't be remembered for your fashion faux pas. Your clothes, as well as your overall appearance, should make a positive statement to others. Here are a few guidelines to follow when dressing for your interview.



INTERVIEWING 101

General Appearance

You should be freshly showered/bathed, have your hair neatly groomed, and your nails should be neat, clean, and trimmed. Stay away from heavy colognes or perfumes and make certain to hide tattoos and remove piercings when appropriate.

Guidelines for Men and Women

Suit. A two-piece matched suit in black/navy/dark grey is best. Ensure that it fits properly, is lint-rolled, and with all tags and loose threads removed. Coordinate your shirt or blouse to complement your suit. Shirts (and blouses where appropriate) should be pressed and tailored to fit.

Is a suit always appropriate attire for an interview? If you are entering into a job or worksite that does not require a suit, it may still be appropriate to wear one. Wearing a suit to the interview shows respect and that you are serious about the job. If you believe you are entering a company that would frown upon a suit, seek advice from Career Services, professors, or people you know who have been employed in the industry.

Shoes

Choose shoes that match/complement your suit and are close-toed, low-heeled, polished, and scuff-free.

Additional Guidelines for Men

- Wear dark dress socks that go to mid-calf so skin doesn't show when you are seated.
- Belts should match the color of your shoes.
- Tie styles come and go. Purchase one made of good quality fabric in a conservative solid color or small pattern.
- Keep jewelry to a minimum. A watch and wedding or class ring at most. Remove earrings.
- Any facial hair should be neatly trimmed/groomed.

Additional Guidelines for Women

- Skirt should fully cover thighs when seated. Skirts should have a proper form and complement your body; however, they should not be so tight as to not allow you to move comfortably.
- Underneath your suit jacket, wear a tailored blouse or finely knit shell. Do not show cleavage.
- Be conservative. Minimize the number of pieces you wear (e.g. a watch and a necklace).
- Keep makeup natural and light.
- It is recommend to wear hosiery that matches your skin tone.
- Shoes should match/complement your suit color. Heels typically should be no taller than 2 ½ inches.
- If you bring a purse, keep it small and simple, especially if you bring a briefcase/portfolio.

If you do not own professional interviewing attire, please note that MVCC holds an annual "Prepare for Success" event in the spring to help students obtain free, gently used professional attire. Contact the Career Services Office for the exact date.

Students in need of interview attire at other times throughout the year may also visit the C3 office located in the Learning Commons.