Guidelines for Job interviews

You have now reached the interviewing stage of the job search process. All of your efforts up to this point have been designed to obtain an interview. Now you must put your best effort forward in securing the position.

Interviewing is a mutual exchange of information. Open communication between the employer and the job candidate facilitates the effectiveness and productiveness of the interview.

As the applicant, you need to focus your energy on selling yourself. Your main objectives are to communicate information about your skills and qualifications clearly and accurately, connecting this information to the requirements of the job for which you are interviewing. In addition, it is important that you seek additional information about the position and employer. This process will benefit you in deciding if the position is an appropriate fit.

The interviewer's main objective is to assess how closely the candidate's qualifications match the requirements of the position and company. It is also important that he/she presents the organization in a positive manner, supplying accurate information to the prospective employee.

Preparing for the Interview

Successful interviews require preparation. Since employers are able to sense how prepared a candidate is, it is crucial that you commit sufficient time and energy to this process so you are able to articulate your best qualifications. Here are some suggestions:

1. Practice answering questions you may be asked in the interview. Thinking about your responses in advance will help you more effectively articulate the most important information you want to communicate. See Interviewing Questions.

2. Research the organization and position before the interview. Reading "the literature" will tell you all kinds of things about a company: its corporate personality, its job openings and what they're like, its benefits, on and on. Employers are very impressed by your initiative when you do this research.

3. Prepare questions to ask the interviewer that reflect your knowledge of the position and company. See Questions You Should Ask.

4. Know the routine of an interview. Schedule a mock interview in Career Services. Watch an interviewing video or find a friend who's had a few interviews and ask him/her what they were like.
5. Write down the time and place of your appointment, in addition to the name of the person interviewing you. Get good directions, and visit the site prior to the interview, if possible.

6. Wear professional attire that is appropriate for the position. First impressions are important.

7. Bring extra copies of your resume in a portfolio and have your papers arranged for easy reference (resume, references, transcripts, discharge papers, etc.).

**How to Act During an Interview**

1. Rule Number One: Don't act. Be yourself! For two good reasons. First because the only company a student is likely to be happy working for is a company that liked him/her just the way he/she is. And second because few students can play a role well enough to fool an interviewer anyway.

2. Don't Overdo It: Act naturally and professionally. You should be on time. Friendly and courteous but not too casual. And have your thoughts and questions well organized.

3. Open Up: Another thing we tell them is don't be afraid to tell the interviewer all about yourself. When asked a question, don't just answer "yes" or "no". Take the opportunity to talk about your goals and strong points. Often this may alert the interviewer to an attribute that didn't show up on the students' resume.

4. Tell It Straight: Finally, be completely honest. A lie is usually an attempt to hide some problem that will only get in the way of a good student/company later on. If a company does not meet your expectations, you probably should not work there.

**After the Interview**

1. Send a thank you letter or e-mail to the interviewer. This is an excellent opportunity to remind the recruiter of your qualifications.

2. Second or follow-up interviews may be held a few weeks after the initial interview. These interviews usually take place at the organization's office, may last several hours to a full day, and may involve testing and socializing.

3. You will not receive an on-the-spot job offer. Recognize that many organizations are also interviewing graduates at other colleges across the country and it may take weeks before hiring decisions are made.
4. If you don't get an offer after the first few interviews, don't be discouraged. Many well-qualified people go through numerous interviews before finally being hired. With each interview you are gaining valuable practice and expertise for handling the next one.