

INTERVIEWING GUIDELINES

Over the years, the Internship Center has had contact with many organizations. The men and women who host interns have stated what they look for in the interview process. If you have been in contact with an organization as a result of a referral from the Internship Center, or as a result of your own efforts, and are seeking to arrange an interview, please take note of the following.

An interview is an important step in the placement process. Be appreciative when you are invited to interview, because it means that the organization has identified something about you worth pursuing. It is also your opportunity to learn more about the potential internship.

The organization's intent is to ...

- ✦ become acquainted with you.
- ✦ learn more about your abilities, talents, and school experience.
- ✦ share some of their expertise with you.
- ✦ help you understand who they are and what they do.
- ✦ provide you with guidance as to the particular career path in which you are interested.
- ✦ determine if your knowledge, skills, and abilities could potentially assist their organization.

Your intent is to ...

- ✦ become acquainted with the organization and to develop a courteous, professional relationship with your contact or supervisor.
- ✦ become more familiar with the goals, priorities, and values of the organization.
- ✦ understand how the organization utilizes interns.
- ✦ present yourself as a capable and worthy student.
- ✦ learn as much as possible about your career field of interest.

Key Thoughts to Remember

1. Answering Machines/Voice Mail

- ✦ Organizations may try to call you in your residence hall, apartment, or at home. If you have an answering machine and can record your own message, be careful.
- ✦ Don't be cute; you're introducing yourself to a prospective employer.
- ✦ Forget about music, jokes, or flippant comments.
- ✦ You should sound mature and straightforward.
- ✦ Write down all instructions you are given, and make sure you understand the arrangements: What is the person's name? Time of the appointment? Directions to the location?

2. Prior to the Interview

- ✦ Investigate the organization's website – look for products and services offered, annual reports, etc.
- ✦ Make sure you understand the arrangements: What is the interviewer's name and formal title? Time of the appointment? Directions to the location?
- ✦ Collect your thoughts about yourself: What particular abilities and skills you can offer? Your work experience? College coursework that is relevant? Have some good reasons why you want the position (not just because it's paid). What are your goals?
- ✦ Rehearse: It's okay to be nervous. If you are nervous, practice with a mirror, role play with a friend, or utilize the mock interviewing service of the Career Center.
- ✦ Other Preparations: Write down questions you have for the employer. Take along another copy of your resume. If appropriate, prepare samples of previous work to take with you.

3. Day of the Interview

- ✦ Don't risk being late; arrive 15 minutes early.
- ✦ Don't dress in strange, tight, or very casual clothes; dress in a conservative style (women: dress or suit; men: suit and tie). If you are unsure about a particular outfit, ask the professionals in the Internship Center.
- ✦ Leave most of your jewelry at home, and don't overdo the makeup or perfume.
- ✦ Be neat and well groomed.
- ✦ Don't chew gum.

4. During the Interview

- ✦ Make sure you treat secretaries and administrative assistants with respect and dignity.
- ✦ Be polite and proper. Establish eye contact and greet your contact by title and last name (e.g., Mr. Taylor, Ms. Pearson, or Dr. Richardson), smile, and give a firm handshake. Follow their cues.
- ✦ Engage in polite conversation prior to the formal interview. This may help alleviate nervousness.
- ✦ Speak well about school and employers for whom you have worked; don't complain about them.
- ✦ Be prepared with some questions of your own. Employers want students who are thinking and actively engaged in the process.
- ✦ Exhibit enthusiasm. Be attentive and interested.
- ✦ Be yourself. Don't suddenly try to change your personality and character. Maintain a sense of personal integrity.
- ✦ Maintain eye contact. Good eye contact conveys interest, trust, and respect.
- ✦ Listen. Don't get so wrapped up in formulating your own responses that you miss what the interviewer is saying. Be attentive.
- ✦ Be positive and don't criticize or ridicule others to make yourself look good. Keep the tone friendly and pleasant.
- ✦ Express yourself. Speak clearly and audibly. Leave slang language at home. Be confident. Share your goals, interests, and experiences that apply. Comment on work you want to do.
- ✦ Ask questions. Try to understand the organization. Ask how they have utilized interns in the past.
- ✦ Say thank you. At the end of the interview, express appreciation, say the name of the Interviewer, and again offer a handshake.

5. After the Interview

- ✦ Always write a thank you note, thanking the interviewer for his/her time and mentioning how you enjoyed meeting him/her. This gives you opportunity to restate a highlight from your conversation.
- ✦ If requested, provide grade transcripts, applications, licenses, work samples, portfolios, certificates or other items right away.
- ✦ Be ready to wait. You'll be anxious to receive an offer but be prepared to wait 2 or 3 weeks. There may be other candidates to interview and responsibilities to perform that will delay the hiring decision.
- ✦ Report to the Internship Center. Feel free to tell us how it went. By doing this, you keep us abreast of interviewing trends so we can better advise future interns. We can also help you evaluate your own interview experience.
- ✦ If you are offered an internship with them, call or write to thank them and to confirm all details such as: start date, end date, hours per week you'll be working, who your supervisor will be and their title (if you don't already know).
- ✦ If you are not accepted for a position, tactfully ask what kept you from being the strongest candidate; pay attention, because constructive criticism may help you in the future.

Questions to Expect From the Employer

1. What are your long range career objectives?
2. How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
3. What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
4. Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
5. Why do you want this job? internship?
6. Why should I hire you?
7. What do you consider to be your strengths? weaknesses?
8. How would you describe yourself?
9. What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
10. How has your college experience prepared you thus far?
11. What does success mean to you?
12. In what ways do you think you can contribute to this organization?
13. What achievements have given you the most satisfaction?
14. Do you work well under pressure?
15. Tell me about yourself.
16. How do you spend your leisure time?
17. What jobs have you held previously? What responsibilities did you have?
18. How did you like your previous job(s)? How did you benefit from it?
19. What are the characteristics of an ideal job for you?
20. Do you prefer to work with data, machines, people, or ideas?
21. Describe a situation where you worked through a challenge or solved a problem.
22. Describe a time when you worked as part of a team to accomplish a goal.

Questions You Might Want to Ask the Employer

1. How would you describe the mission of your organization?
2. What would my tasks and responsibilities be?
3. Is there a position description for the internship I am interested in?
4. How many hours per week would you ideally like an intern to work?
5. With whom would I work? How would I be supervised? Could I meet him/her?
6. Do you host other interns? If so, how are they utilized?
7. What kind of training or orientation do you provide?
8. Does the position require any special skills, experience, or education?
9. How does the department I would work in fit into the overall organization?
10. Do you have insurance covering interns? If so, how extensive is it?
11. Are there any special roles I should know about?
12. What is the general role and status of interns at the work site? How can I expect to be received?
13. How would my performance be evaluated?
14. Is there any type of compensation involved?
15. Are you willing to work with Messiah's Internship Center in this internship arrangement?
16. Do I need to fill out an application or provide you with any other documentation? If so, when are they due?

Questions You Should Ask Yourself

1. How well does this position relate to my career goals and academic background? Can I benefit from it?
2. Are my abilities suited to this organization?
3. Considering expenses, time commitment and responsibilities, is it practical?
4. Were the people there supportive and enthusiastic toward me and interns in general?
5. Does the work atmosphere appeal to me?