

# INTERVIEWING

## *Preparation and Etiquette*

### Research the Organization

It is best to gain as much information as possible about the organization before your interview. This knowledge may give you an advantage over other candidates. As you conduct your research, seek answers to the following questions:

- What are the organization's products or services? What is unique about them? Who are their competitors?
- What does the annual report reflect?
- Has the organization recently experienced any acquisitions or mergers?
- Is the organization expanding services or products?
- Is the organization part of a larger (multinational) corporation?
- How quickly has the organization grown? How long has it been in operation?
- How involved is the organization with community or charitable organizations?
- What is the work atmosphere like at this organization? Conservative? Liberal?

### Interview Attire

A conservative, professional approach to dress for an interview will help you avoid being screened out before you get a chance to sell yourself in the interview. Appearance may be the reason you do not get a job offer. Follow the suggestions below for best results.

<i>Recommendations for Men</i>		<i>Recommendations for Women</i>		<i>Recommendations for All</i>	
• Dark dress shoes (no loafers)	• Dark, well-fitted suits	• Dark, well-fitted suit with matching dress blouse	• Skirt length no more than one inch above the knee	• No heavy cologne/perfume	• No visible tattoos
• Dark dress socks	• No long side burns or long hair	• Natural looking make-up	• Neutral colored hose	• No visible body piercing	• Fresh breath
• No earrings or other jewelry (wedding or class ring permitted)	• Well-groomed facial hair; cleaned and trimmed nails	• Dress shoes with moderate heel (no open toe shoes)	• Hair past shoulder length pulled away from face	• No brightly colored hair	• Freshly pressed clothing
• Conservative neck tie (no bright colors or loud patterns)		• Minimal conservative classic jewelry (no flashy, dangling earrings)	• Clear or conservatively colored nail polish, no chipped nail polish	• Freshly showered (no body odor)	• Dress watch

### Make a Positive First Impression

Confirm the interview time, place, and with whom you will be meeting, including titles. Be sure to get directions and ask about parking. Arrive about 15 minutes early so you are not rushed and have time to collect yourself. Show respect and courtesy to ALL employees with whom you interact, as they may be asked to provide input on the candidates.

### Relax, be Yourself, and Listen

Introductions and handshakes, dress, eye contact, enthusiasm and that initial small talk with the recruiter all help to create the first impression of you. Remember that an interview is a conversation. Many hiring decisions are made based on personality and fit, since several candidates may be qualified for the position. Follow the lead of the interviewer, do not interrupt, and be sure that you understand the question asked, or ask for clarification.

## Ask the Right Questions

DO NOT ask about salary and benefits until the employer initiates these topics. Inquiring about salary indicates to the employer that you are more interested in what the job pays than the work itself.

## The Closing

Let the employer know that you're excited about what you've heard and are still very much interested in the position, if you are.

Before leaving, be sure to thank the interviewer for his/her time. Find out about the next step in the hiring process and when decisions will be made.

To learn about how to effectively negotiate a salary, if offered a job, talk to a Career Coach at the Career Services Center.

## Thank You Letter

- The thank-you letter does make a difference and can help you stand out among prospective candidates. Make sure to send the letter within 24-48 hours after the interview.
- If you have previously corresponded with the employer by email, it is acceptable to also send your thank you "letter" via email.
- The letter/email should be addressed to the person(s) with whom you interviewed. Ask for your interviewers' business cards, or write down the interviewers' titles and the proper spelling of their names before leaving the interview site.
- Mailing in a handwritten note on a thank you card is also highly appreciated as that often conveys a more personal touch.
- Keep your letter brief and concise. Mention the date of your interview and your continued interest in both the position for which you interviewed and the organization.
- Reiterate your most important skills and qualifications, how you expect to contribute to the organization, and any unique points of interest discussed during the interview.
- Express your appreciation for the opportunity to interview and confirm follow up procedures.

## Sample questions for you to ask...

- How does this position fit within your organization's structure?
- How will I receive feedback about my performance, and how often?
- Where can a position of this type lead to within your organization?
- How did this position become available?
- What does your orientation/training process entail?
- What type of continuing education or training does the organization provide?
- What are you looking for in the ideal candidate?
- What are some of the challenges this organization/department faces?
- What do you like about working here?

## Common Reasons for Applicant Rejection

- *Poor appearance*
- *Poor diction and grammar*
- *Little enthusiasm, passive, indifferent*
- *Evaded answering questions*
- *Late for interview,*
- *Talked too much, rambled*
- *Lack of purpose, career goals*
- *Negative attitude*
- *Couldn't sell him/herself to the employer*
- *Overbearing, aggressive*
- *Unwilling to start at the bottom*
- *Lack of courtesy, proper etiquette*
- *Poor eye contact*
- *Lack of poise, lack of confidence*
- *Condemnation of previous employer*
- *Didn't ask for the job*
- *Talked about salary*

For more interviewing tips, visit [www.kent.edu/career](http://www.kent.edu/career)