GUIDEBOOK

Interview

CENTER FOR CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Rusk Building, 3rd Floor
www.sfasu.edu/ccpd
936.468.3305 • ccpd@sfasu.edu
CCPD is here to help you develop your interviewing skills. Find out more about the many opportunities we have available to aid you before your big day. All of these services can be accessed via Jobs4Jacks at [http://www.sfasu.edu/ccpd/400.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/ccpd/400.asp).

**MOCK INTERVIEW**

Mock interviews with CCPD staff are available to those that are interested in constructively perfecting their interview and communication skills. A CCPD team member will conduct a mock interview that will last about 30-45 minutes in length. Following the mock interview, the staff member will provide you with valuable feedback and allow you to ask any questions you may have. The entire mock interview takes about 1 hour.

To request a mock interview:

1. Login to your Jobs4Jacks account
2. On your homepage, select the Mock Interview button
3. Fill out required information and submit
4. You will be contacted by a CCPD team member to schedule your mock interview

**INTERVIEWSTREAM**

InterviewStream software uses the information you provide to create realistic interview scenarios that are custom tailored. InterviewStream uses Video Capture, which allows you to capture your responses to interview questions using a webcam. This feature enables you to see exactly how you will look and sound to a prospective employer. With InterviewStream you’ll be able to practice, develop and perfect your interview skills as often as you’d like, while working at your own pace.

To practice using InterviewStream:

1. Login to your Jobs4Jacks account
2. Click on InterviewStream on the left hand side of the page of the homepage
3. **Make sure to allow pop-ups!**
4. Click on Conduct Interview
5. Click on Take Premade Interview
6. Choose your Interview
7. Begin internet and webcam test (takes just a few seconds)
8. Interview begins! Respond to questions

**ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS**

Each year, companies from Texas and across the nation visit SFA to interview students and alumni for internship and full-time professional positions. Students and alumni who are interested in signing up for on-campus interviews must register with Jobs4Jacks.

To view the interview schedule:

1. Login to your Jobs4Jacks account
2. Put your cursor over On-Campus Interviews and select Interview Schedule
3. Click on the Schedule ID to see the specifics of the position and how to apply

Preselect Schedules require you to request to interview by submitting your resume before the Request Period Closed date. Employers select qualified candidates using application, resume and Jobs4Jacks profile.

Open Schedules allow you to directly choose an open interview timeslot.

**INTERVIEW APPOINTMENTS**

Have questions about interviewing that you would like to ask? Make an appointment to sit down with a CCPD team member to have your interview questions answered. From dressing for the occasion to discussing sticky situations, the team...
member will aid you in making your way through the interview process. Log in through your Jobs4Jacks account to request an appointment today!

**INTERVIEW CAREER GUIDES**

We have several resources on our website devoted to interviewing. Whether you are determining what to wear to an interview or how to negotiate your salary, our website has a resource to assist!

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<td>Research Yourself</td>
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<td>What Will They Ask?</td>
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<tr>
<td>The ‘S’ Word: Salary</td>
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</table>
Mock Interviews

Stephen F. Austin State University | Center for Career and Professional Development

CCPD is here to help you develop your interviewing skills. Find out more about the many opportunities we have available to aid you before your big day.

Mock interviews with CCPD are available to those interested in constructively sharpening and enhancing important interview skills, by creating a situation as close to the real interview as possible.

ABOUT MOCK INTERVIEWS
A mock interview is a practice interview conducted by a professional CCPD team member, in which the interviewee is asked questions typical of those in an employment or professional school admissions interview. At the conclusion, the interviewer will provide feedback and suggestions.

What is the format of a mock interview?
1. Introduction. After exchanging greetings, the interviewer will briefly explain the mock interview process and what to expect. You will be able to ask any questions you have before the mock interview will begin.
2. Interview. The question and answer segment of the mock interview will begin.
3. Personal critique. After the last question, the interviewer will ask for your thoughts on how the interview went. This is your time to critique yourself and address areas of weakness and strength.
4. Professional critique. After your critique, the interviewer will supply you with further feedback. Areas critiqued will include answer content, nonverbal behaviors, interview attire, etc.

If you are seeking a more generalized exercise, you may want to utilize InterviewStream.

To request a mock interview:
1. Log into your Jobs4Jacks account
2. On your homepage, select the Mock Interview button
3. Fill out required information and submit
4. You will be contacted by a CCPD professional team member to schedule your mock interview

Be prepared to bring your resume when you arrive to your interview.

You may determine ahead of time a position (e.g. Management Trainee) or career area (e.g. accounting) for which you would like to be interviewed and provide this information on the request for so that questions can be directed to your area of interest. CCPD will do our best to accommodate your request.

MOCK INTERVIEW FAQ
What do I wear? What should I bring?
You will need to dress in appropriate professional attire when participating in a mock interview.

Where do I go for my mock interview?
CCPD is located on the 3rd floor of the Rusk Building, directly off the elevators. Check in at the front desk, and the interviewer will greet and accompany you to the mock interview area.

What kind of questions will be asked?
You can find a list of common interview questions in the handout What Will They Ask?

What should I take away from a mock interview?
It is important that you take a mock interview seriously as a tool in developing your interview skills. At the end of the mock interview, you will be given tips, suggestions and feedback. It is vital to your development to take and apply the advice to your interview regime to ensure success in your next interview.

Don’t forget to brush up on all your interviewing skills by utilizing the Interview Guide on our website!
## Non-Verbal Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Verbal Communication</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Needs Improvement</th>
<th>Not Demonstrated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eye Contact</strong></td>
<td>Maintain natural &amp; friendly eye contact and match with appropriate facial expressions. Conveys interest. Don't stare.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appearance</strong></td>
<td>Hygiene; dress/appropriate attire</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparedness</strong></td>
<td>Prior company research; know job description; know yourself as it relates to the job; document preparation; review and practice potential interview questions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sociability/personality</strong></td>
<td>Overall warm and friendly tone, but professional</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self confidence</strong></td>
<td>Ability to handle difficult questions; poise</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mannerism</strong></td>
<td>Listening; sitting straight and leaning forward; good posture</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Verbal Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal Communication</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Promptness; introduction of self; handshake; presentation of documents</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conversation</strong></td>
<td>Ability to clearly and concisely structure sentences; Be brief and stick to the subject</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relevant experience and skills through message content</strong></td>
<td>Overall ability to communicate past experience(s) and skills utilizing the S.T.A.R. method (Situation-Task-Action-Result)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Core Competencies

- **Communication**: The ability to write, speak, and listen well to others.

- **Teamwork/Collaboration**: The ability to work together and effectively use the strengths of each individual to meet a common goal.

- **Decision Making (Leadership)**: The ability to recognize, understand, and define problems and effectively choose between different options to implement change.

- **Problem Solving/Analytical Skills**: The ability to evaluate and understand options and the effects of decisions.

- **Innovation and Creativity/Initiative**: The ability to develop new ideas or methods to complete tasks/projects.

- **Technical Knowledge**: The ability to use common applications and technical software specific to career.

- **Organization**: The ability to effectively plan the work of a group and to provide structure to a project so that goals are clear & understood.

- **Influence**: The ability to motivate, convince, or persuade a group to do something.

- **Global Issues/Cultural Competence**: The ability to stand back from yourself and become aware of cultural values, beliefs, and perceptions and how they are relevant to global issues and interact effectively.

### Emphasize strengths

- Turning negative questions into positive answers; knowledge of self
- Proper grammar: Avoids slang and/or filler words (ex: ummmm, like, etc.)
- Ambition and attitude: Conveys motivation and initiative; convincing interviewer that you want this job and you can do the work

### Overall Mock Interview Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Mock Interview Performance</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
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If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Career Services at 936.468.3305 or careerservices@sfasu.edu.
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ABOUT INTERVIEWSTREAM
InterviewStream software uses the information you provide to create realistic, customized interview scenarios. InterviewStream uses Video Capture, which allows you to capture your responses to interview questions using a webcam. This feature enables you to see exactly how you will look and sound to a prospective employer.

With InterviewStream you'll be able to practice, develop and perfect your interview skills as often as you'd like, while working at your own pace.

WHAT TO EXPECT
It is a different experience talking to a webcam without being able to see the interviewer. However, the goal of InterviewStream is to be able to critique yourself in a private environment, before you are actually sitting in front of an interviewer.

WHAT TO CONCENTRATE ON
InterviewStream gives you the ultimate opportunity to critique yourself. Concentrate on critiquing these areas when watching your answers to interview questions, and make sure to apply your knowledge to the real deal!

- Posture
- Eye Contact
- Nervous behaviors (e.g., fidgeting, rambling, etc.)
- Gestures
- Fillers (e.g., Um, so, hm, uh, like, you know, etc.)
- Content in answering questions

PRACTICE USING INTERVIEWSTREAM
To practice using InterviewStream via computer:
1. Login to your Jobs4Jacks account
2. Click on InterviewStream on the left hand side of the page of the homepage
3. Make sure to allow pop-ups!
4. Click on Conduct Interview
5. Click on Take Premade Interview
6. Choose your Interview
7. Begin internet and webcam test (takes just a few seconds)
8. Interview begins! Respond to questions

To practice using InterviewStream via mobile application:
Android
1. Log into your Jobs4Jacks account (http://www.jobs4jacks.sfasu.edu) or register for an account if you have not already done so.
2. Your mobile browser may open a “mobile version” page, if so, click to “view full site”
3. Click on InterviewStream on the left hand side of the page
4. Click on Mobile Interview
5. Download InterviewStream onto your mobile device
6. Note step 2 on the Mobile Interview page: Username and Password
7. Click on I'm Practicing
8. Choose your Interview
9. View the interview questions and begin interview
10. Once interview is complete, feel free to view your interview!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>iOS</th>
<th>Safari</th>
<th>Google Chrome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.  Download InterviewStream onto your mobile device</td>
<td>1.  Log into your Jobs4Jacks account (<a href="http://www.jobs4jacks.sfasu.edu">http://www.jobs4jacks.sfasu.edu</a>) or register for an account if you have not already done so.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.  While the app is downloading, access a desktop computer or laptop</td>
<td>2.  Your mobile browser may open a “mobile version” page, if so, click to “view full site”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.  Log into your Jobs4Jacks account (<a href="http://www.jobs4jacks.sfasu.edu">http://www.jobs4jacks.sfasu.edu</a>) or register for an account if you have not already done so.</td>
<td>3.  Click on InterviewStream on the left hand side of the page</td>
<td></td>
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<td>4.  Click on InterviewStream on the left hand side of the page</td>
<td>4.  Click on <strong>Mobile Interview</strong></td>
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<td>5.  <strong>Make sure to allow pop-ups!</strong></td>
<td>5.  Download InterviewStream onto your mobile device</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.  Open the InterviewStream App</td>
<td>7.  Click on <strong>I’m Practicing</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.  Click on <strong>I’m Practicing</strong></td>
<td>8.  Choose your Interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.  Choose your Interview</td>
<td>9.  View the interview questions and begin interview</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. View the interview questions and begin interview</td>
<td>10. Once interview is complete, feel free to view your interview!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Once interview is complete, feel free to view your interview!</td>
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There are many different types of interview methods and techniques. Every job is different, so be prepared! As you progress through the interview process, you will experience one, a combination or all of these.

### CASE INTERVIEW
- Demonstrates your problem-solving skills
- Interviewer will outline a situation or provide you with a case study and ask you to formulate a plan that deals with the problem
- You do not have to come up with the ultimate solution; interviewer is looking for how you apply your knowledge and skills to a real-life situation
- Speak and reason aloud so interviewers have a full understanding of your thought process
- Before answering, be prepared to ask numerous questions for clarity and information purposes

### CRITICAL THINKING INTERVIEW
- Demonstrates your common sense, creativity and problem solving skills
- Interviewer is not necessarily looking for an exact right answer

Example: “How many jellybeans will fit in a 747?”
“Does the plane have seats in it? As that would affect how many I could fit in. Also, when do I need this information and what will we use it for? What size jellybean? Can I ground them up or melt them to get more in? Do we want to get more in? Does it have to take off and land? Can I fill up the fuel tanks?”

### GROUP INTERVIEW
- Interview with several other candidates at the same time
- You want to be seen as a team player
- The interviewer will ask questions of no one in particular in hopes that a “leader” will emerge
- Include everyone in the group; if a quieter person hasn’t said much, ask them their opinion
- Praise others; give credit to others who have good ideas
- Designed to uncover the leadership potential of prospective managers and employees who will be dealing with customers
- Goal is to see how you interact with others and how you use your knowledge and reasoning to influence others

### HYPOTHETICAL INTERVIEW
- Demonstrates your problem-solving skills
- You must be able to think on your feet and analyze the situation while keeping in mind the company’s culture and values
- Concentrate on showing a logical thought process in developing your answer. There is sometimes no one right answer, but there are definitely wrong ones

Example: “What would you do if 2 out of 3 people did not show up for their shift?”

Steps to problem solving:
1. Gather relative information
2. Evaluate your information
3. Prioritize the information
4. Propose and weigh possible solutions
5. Choose and propose your solution
6. Discuss how you would evaluate the effectiveness of your solution

### MEAL INTERVIEW
- Interviewer will be evaluating your social skills and manners in this casual, more relaxed setting
- If you haven’t done so yet, make a point to familiarize yourself with the basics of **Etiquette**
- Use the interview to develop common ground with your interviewer

### PANEL INTERVIEW
- Interviewed by several people at the same time
- When a question is asked, you want to direct 50% of your eye contact to the person that asked the question and the other 50% to the other members of the panel
- Put your group management and group presentation skills on display and find a way to connect with each interviewer
- Try to get everyone’s business card so that you can write each one of them a **thank you letter**

### SERIAL INTERVIEW
- You will meet several people throughout the day, usually back-to-back. One person will interview you, then pass you to the next person, and so on throughout the day
- Can be physically and mentally stressful because they can often take the entire day
- Remember that each time you are passed onward your chances of being hired improve

### STRESS INTERVIEW
- The employer is interested to see how you handle pressure
- You feel as if you are being interrogated rather than interviewed
- The trick is to stay calm and composed while addressing their concern or answering the question

**Example:** “Your extracurricular activities sound shallow.”

### BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW
- The basic premise is that your past behavior is the best predictor of your future actions
- To answer, you must describe in detail a particular event, project or experience and how you dealt with the situation and what the outcome was
- Behavior-based questions generally begin with “Give me an example of…”, “Tell me about a time…” or “Describe…”
- Recall recent situations that show favorable behaviors or actions, especially those involving coursework, work experience, leadership, teamwork, initiative, planning or customer service
- Be sure the outcome or result reflects positively on you (even if the result itself was not favorable)

**STAR Method**

S. Describe the **Situation** you were in or
T. Explain the **Task** you needed to accomplish
A. Describe the **Action** you took and
R. Reveal the **Results** of your experience

**Example:** Tell me about a time when you were on a team and a member wasn’t pulling his/her weight.

“I had been assigned to a team to build a canoe out of concrete. One of our team members wasn’t showing up for our lab sessions or doing his assignments. I finally met with him in private, explained the frustration of the rest of the team and asked if there was anything I could do to help. He told me that he was preoccupied with another class that he wasn’t passing, so I found someone to help him with the other course. He not only was able to spend more time on our project, but he was also grateful to me for helping him out. We finished our project on time and got a ‘B’ on it.”

Find other behavior-based interview questions throughout the **What Will They Ask?** guide.
On-Site Interview

While an on-site interview is still an interview, it is now your job to evaluate. Determine if your expectations are met regarding the job, company culture and values, organizational structure, lifestyles (both at work and leisure), employee interaction and work environment.

PREPARING FOR YOUR VISIT

Contacts
Record the name and phone number for your point of contact and information on who will be meeting you when you arrive.

Schedule of events
Verify the date, start and end time of the interview and get specific directions on where to meet. On-site interviews usually last the better part of a day, so plan to visit only one company. Ask for an itinerary of the day’s events that provides the name, title and areas of responsibility of the persons with whom you will be meeting. Try to understand how each person relates to the others and determine questions to ask each.

Travel arrangements and expenses
Employers will usually pay your expenses; however, verify who will cover expenses and arrangements (ex. hotel, airfare, etc.). If the organization is paying for your trip, keep an accurate account of your minimal expenses (ex. meals, tips, cab fare, etc.). Some companies reimburse you at the time of your visit; others will mail it to you.

THE DAY OF YOUR VISIT

During your on-site visit you will meet many employees: Human Resources representatives, your potential supervisor, possible co-workers, and members of middle management. It is vital to be polite to everyone you come into contact with, be it the security guard, receptionist, an employee in the restroom, a waitress or other candidates.

Psychological tests
Some firms use psychological testing. These are usually written tests and are designed to evaluate your suitability for a particular type of assignment.

Meals
On-site interviews often include meals or receptions, so consider it part of the interview. Try to find common grounds of interests (ex. SFA, tennis, travel, etc.). Stay away from controversial or political topics. And of course, make sure to brush up on your etiquette!

Close the interview
Do not leave the interview without closure. If you’re interested in the position, let the interviewer know. Also, never leave the interview without thanking the employer for the opportunity and inquiring about the next step in their process.

AFTER YOUR VISIT

If you do receive a verbal offer, you may wish to accept on the spot or you may wish time in which to make a decision. If the latter is the case, do not hesitate to say so. Always ask for a written confirmation. Such a letter will probably cover fringe benefits, moving arrangements, starting date, etc. It is good to give the company a time frame in which you will make a decision.

Thank you letter
When you return home, take time to write a thank you letter to everyone who spent time with you that day.

Employer response
If you do not hear from the employer within three weeks, then you may want to contact them to inquire about your status.
Bring, brrring! Your future is calling! Be ready for a telephone interview from the moment you apply for a position. Many times a company will ask you questions the first time they contact you to begin assessing your qualifications. Phone interviews may also be used for other reasons, such as geographic obstacles.

Keep a list with you of the positions you have applied for, the companies they are with, the job descriptions and any other pertinent information. The fact that the interviewer cannot see you is a challenge but also a huge benefit: use your notes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do</th>
<th>Don’t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do be well prepared.</td>
<td>Don’t conduct a phone interview in your car.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do ask to reschedule the interview for another time if you are unable to interview when you receive the call.</td>
<td>Don’t eat, smoke, drink, chew gum, surf the Web, IM or text during the phone interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do use a land line to avoid the possibility of a cell phone call being dropped or poor reception.</td>
<td>Don’t take other calls while on the phone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do find a quiet, secluded location.</td>
<td>Don’t give in to nervous habits that will create amplified noise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do ask family members and friends not to disturb you during the interview.</td>
<td>Do not interrupt the interviewer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do turn off all distractions: radio, TV, other phones, etc.</td>
<td>Don’t have a ring back tone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do wear something professional.</td>
<td>Don’t talk to someone else while on the phone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do have a professional voicemail message.</td>
<td>Don’t snuffle, sneeze or cough. If you can’t avoid these behaviors, say, “excuse me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do expect minor miscommunications, such as speaking at the same time. These are hard to avoid in telephone interviews. Use normal courtesies in resolving them.</td>
<td>Don’t feel like you have to fill in the silences. If you’ve completed a response, don’t start babbling. Instead, ask a question of your own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do write down the names of the interviewers as introductions are made.</td>
<td>Gather your tools by the phone:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do have a confident and enthusiastic voice, conveying energy with inflection.</td>
<td>• Resume and cover letter you sent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do smile as much as possible – the tone of a smile brings about enthusiasm.</td>
<td>• Job description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do keep the conversation going with prepared questions.</td>
<td>• Research you have conducted on the company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do speak directly into the phone so that you can be heard clearly.</td>
<td>• Questions to ask about the company and position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do sit in an upright position or stand (but do not pace) while talking – your voice will sound stronger.</td>
<td>• A loosely written outline of points to make or items to cover as you talk about the position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pen and paper to take notes during the interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Comfort items: tissues, water, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You know how to do it. You have spent time gathering information to complete a paper for a class or to find an apartment. Now you are looking for an employer where you may spend the next 2-5 years. As you learn more about an organization you begin to get a sense of the employer and improve your chances of being selected for the job you want. Now, take the time and do your homework... research!

### Where to locate employer information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company literature</td>
<td>Annual reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortune Magazine</td>
<td>Industry magazines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall Street Journal</td>
<td>Subscribe to RSS* feeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American’s Corporate Families</td>
<td>Job fairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information sessions</td>
<td>Receptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials within CCPD</td>
<td>Libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees of the company (especially SFA alumni!)</td>
<td>Chamber of Commerce Member Directory (state and local)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*RSS (Rich Site Summary) allows users to easily stay informed by retrieving the latest content from websites and delivering it to one central location. Use this in your job search by subscribing to the employer’s website, news about the employer or industry, changes in the job economy, etc. The RSS icon looks like this: 📰*

### Employer information to know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job description(s)</td>
<td>personnel policies and benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee evaluation process</td>
<td>Cost of living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries/Compensation forms</td>
<td>Organizational structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent major changes</td>
<td>Current challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidiaries</td>
<td>Major activity of company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customers</td>
<td>Reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating divisions</td>
<td>Top executives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company size</td>
<td>Philosophy and objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stock prices (if relevant)</td>
<td>Travel/Relocation expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth: history and anticipated</td>
<td>Awards/Recognitions received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name, age, location and number of plants, offices and stores</td>
<td>Associations, philanthropies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** Consider the source of any information – not everything you read on the Internet is accurate!

## Incorporating Your Research into the Interview

Simply being informed about an employer does not guarantee a successful interview unless you use that information effectively. Knowledge of products and opportunities is only helpful if you know how to tactfully weave that knowledge into the interview.

### Method #1: Answering questions

During the interview, most employers will ask “Why do you want to work for our organization?” Spouting out memorized facts will not convince the employer of your interest and/or knowledge. An effective way to show that you’ve done research is to relate your skills to those in the job description and those valued by the organization as based on your research.

**Example:** Why do you want to work for this company?

“As I understand the job, there’s plenty of opportunity to be involved in both the planning of marketing strategies and the actual selling. Besides using my communications skills and knowledge of chemicals in direct selling, I believe I am creative when it comes to marketing.”

### Method #2: Asking questions
Another way to incorporate information is through the \textit{questions that you ask the interviewer}, usually near the end of the interview. Request information only on topics you really want to know more about, and avoid being too detailed or projecting a "know-it-all" attitude. Ask questions that encourage the employer to expand on information gained during the interview process or through your research.

\textit{Literature}: “Today’s large store manager usually has gained experience in district or regional staff work.”
“In viewing some of the background that your large store managers have, regional staff work is mentioned. Could you describe some of the responsibilities of staff work?”
Who knows you better than you know yourself? No one! You must be your own spokesperson and capitalize on what it is you have that the employer is seeking. Do this by reviewing the job description and relating what the position is looking for with what skills you have to offer. Expand your thinking to areas outside of work experience: extracurricular activities, classroom projects, athletics, volunteer work and internships.

Review the following areas thoroughly in preparation for your interview.

**CAREER GOALS AND INTERESTS**
Projecting a sense of your career direction demonstrates planning and forethought. You may not know exactly what you will be doing in the next 5-10 years, but you can articulate what you want to do professionally along with possible career paths.

**ABILITIES AND SKILLS**
Employers seek many of the same abilities and skills whether they are in business, government or education. Know the abilities and skills you have developed through coursework and experiences. Prepare to discuss the aspects of your background that qualify you for a specific position.

**STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**
Know your strengths and weaknesses and be prepared to discuss them. When asked about your strength(s), this is your opportunity to prove that you have the most important strength required for the position. Don’t blow it by offering some off-the-wall strength that isn’t even on the recruiter’s checklist.

Everyone has a weakness and it’s okay to admit it! Discuss a weakness that you have worked to improve upon. For example: “I tend to have trouble delegating tasks to others, but I’ve realized that teamwork is a much more effective way to get the job done than trying to do it all myself.” However, do not offer a weakness that could be a deal-breaker (ex. Bad with numbers, and it’s an accounting position).

**SUCCESSES AND FAILURES**
Employers will ask questions regarding your past performance and experience, whether it be negative or positive. When discussing a failure, end with how you learned from the situation. Success can also be treacherous ground, so make sure not to sound too cocky.

“Describe your duties and responsibilities in terms of quantities and accomplishments, when possible. For example, “As you’ll see on my resume, when I was Treasurer of XYZ Club, I managed a budget of $10,000.”
Did you know that it only takes 20 seconds to formulate an opinion? You have an extremely small window for creating the best first impression regarding your appearance! The general rule when it comes to dressing for interview success is to be conservative, neat, clean and well-groomed, and dressed to the industry standards.

**Interview Attire**

**Men**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suit</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two-piece, dark blue or gray (avoid brown suits or sports coats). Button your American-cut jacket when you stand. Match belt with shoe color; no belt with suspenders.</td>
<td>Conservative black, dark blue or gray tailored suit or suit dress. Skirt length: Top of knee down and avoid extreme slits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shirt</td>
<td>Long sleeved, white or pastel made of cotton or cotton blends. Wear an undershirt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoes</td>
<td>Polished leather dress shoes that match the suit. Black lace-up shoes, cap toe and wing tips are the most conservative. Wear over the calf socks that blend with your suit, preferably the same color or darker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewelry</td>
<td>Conservative and to a minimum; watch or bracelet, necklace and one ring. No earring(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair</td>
<td>Professional looking and short. Shave; trim and brush facial hair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>The tie should be contemporary but conservative silk. Should coordinate with your suit and shirt. Tie should hit at the middle of your belt buckle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>Eyeglasses should be clean, modern looking and not tinted. Clean, well-manicured fingernails. Minimal cologne/perfume, if any. All clothing should be neatly pressed. Empty pockets. No visible body piercings or tattoos.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What to bring to an interview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extra (about 10) resumes</th>
<th>Extra (about 10) reference lists</th>
<th>Prepared list of questions to ask</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black pen and notepad</td>
<td>College transcript(s)</td>
<td>Portfolio and/or briefcase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All application documents you submitted for the position</td>
<td>Writing samples and/or portfolio showcasing relevant work</td>
<td>A good attitude, enthusiasm and a smile!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What NOT to bring to an interview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cell phone</th>
<th>Mom, Dad, spouse or children</th>
<th>Gum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Backpack</td>
<td>Cigarettes (including the smell)</td>
<td>iPod</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Try on your interview outfit beforehand and be sure it fits well and feels good.

Give yourself five minutes of checkup time in front of a mirror to ensure your hair is neat and your tie or scarf is knotted properly.
Most interviewers will make a decision about you in the first 30 seconds of the interview, so it is vital to create a great impression. Preparing well in advance of your interview will ensure confidence and professionalism on your big day.

### One week prior

- **Research the organization**
- Begin preparing a list of relevant issues to ask the interviewer
- **Research yourself.** Know your experience, skills, education, strengths, weaknesses and be able to relate them to an interviewer’s questions and the position
- Review the job description thoroughly and identify core competencies of the job from which questions might be derived
- Develop and practice your Two Minute Commercial
- Anticipate possible interview questions; prepare and practice answers
- Talk with a CCPD staff member about interviewing techniques
- Complete a Mock Interview in CCPD

### The day before

- Get plenty of sleep. Refrain from staying up too late or partying. Alcohol and smoke aromas linger, even if you can’t smell them
- If you are not sure where the interview is taking place, do a practice run. Check the gas tank or bus schedule to minimize delays. Also, assess the parking situation. Will you have direct access to parking, or have to pay?
- Review your research and resume. Make notes on the skills you acquired in each job or activity. Think about what makes you stand out from other job candidates
- Confirm time, date and location of the interview as well as the interviewer’s name, title and status in the organization
- Select and try on your attire according to Interview Attire
- If interviewing in the morning, make sure to set two alarms

### Interview day

- Get up in plenty of time so you won’t have to rush
- Eat a high-protein, high-carbohydrate breakfast to boost your energy
- Review your resume and notes
- Practice answering potential questions while getting ready. This will help you feel comfortable with the process
- Check the Internet to be prepared for the small talk concerning the day’s events
- Check the weather forecast incase you might need to bring an umbrella
- Schedule your time to arrive at the interview location at least 15 minutes prior to your interview
- Come prepared: Extra resumes, reference lists, transcripts, notepad and pen, and any documents/items that illustrate your skills. Carry a small portfolio or briefcase.

### Fifteen minutes before

- Stop by the restroom for touch-ups. Check for animal hair, shoulder flakes and static cling. Sweaty palms? Wash and dry your hands
- Be personable, professional and polite to everyone you meet, from the security guard to the receptionist. You never know who is providing input for the selection
- While waiting, sit up straight and be attentive, but don’t look stiff. And, pop in a breath mint
### The introduction

When you see the interviewer coming your way, immediately stand, smile, make direct eye contact and extend your hand for a firm handshake.

In a positive and enthusiastic manner, introduce yourself: “Ms. Moneybags, I’m Carl Candidate; it’s great to meet you. I’m very excited about our interview!”

### During the interview

**Be yourself**

Wait for the interviewer to be seated first, then sit in the chair in a straight position, leaning forward slightly. Do not cross your legs.

Try not to convey nervousness. Playing with items, swinging legs, smoothing hair, fidgeting or cracking knuckles will distract from your presentation.

Maintain eye contact with the interviewer(s) and occasionally nod your head.

Build rapport through small talk (e.g. weather, sports) and avoid controversial topics.

Do not interrupt the interviewer. Listen to the questions carefully and do not respond until the question is asked fully. Pause slightly to gather your thoughts.

Speak with confidence and enthusiasm.

If you do not know an answer to a question, do not pretend you do.

Take your time answering questions; be thoughtful in your answers.

Assume a calm and poised attitude. Display confidence.

### Closing the interview

Ask about the next step in the process and when you can expect to hear from them.

Say you want the job, if you do, and show sincere interest.

Ask for a business card and thank the interviewer for their time and for considering you.

### After the interview

Write down your impressions. List the names of people you met. Did you forget to mention something in your background you would like to include in a thank you letter?

Send a thank you letter or email to the people you met within 24-48 hours.

Evaluate the interview. What questions were most difficult? Make notes for yourself about how you can improve your interviewing skills.

If you have not heard from them by the date given, contact them.

Keep searching for employment.
When it comes to interviewing, there are many things to keep in mind, but there are also some things that you just don’t do. Refer to the list below to make sure you are not committing any interview faux pas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do</th>
<th>Don’t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do practice by completing a mock interview in CCPD</td>
<td>Don’t interview unless you are interested in the job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do research the organization as well as your individual strengths, goals, traits, etc.</td>
<td>Don’t go to an interview without having done your research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do come prepared: Extra resumes, reference lists, transcripts, notepad and pen, and any documents/items that illustrate your skills</td>
<td>Don’t smoke before an interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do arrive 10-15 minutes early and be professionally dressed</td>
<td>Don’t arrive unprepared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do find ways to minimize your Interview Jitters</td>
<td>Don’t appear disheveled or flustered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do address the interviewer as “Mr.” or “Ms.” and even “sir” or “ma’am”</td>
<td>Don’t have a weak or overpowering handshake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do offer a firm handshake, display enthusiasm and smile</td>
<td>Don’t rely on your application/resume to do the selling for you, you will need to be convincing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do wait until you are invited to sit, then place hands in your lap</td>
<td>Don’t rush into your answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do represent you as a product: be yourself</td>
<td>Don’t indicate that you aren’t sure what you want to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do listen intently and provide clear and concise answers</td>
<td>Don’t talk about personal issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do use the interviewer’s name in the conversation</td>
<td>Don’t mention salary or fringe benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do use buzzwords from the job description</td>
<td>Don’t take notes during an interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do speak clearly, in a friendly tone and with good grammar</td>
<td>Don’t ask for coffee or refreshments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do be polite to everyone and remember their names</td>
<td>Don’t make up excuses for Sticky Situations; instead, face them and move on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do be aware of your eye contact, body language and posture</td>
<td>Don’t criticize others (ex. past employers, associates or yourself)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do be positive, confident and assertive</td>
<td>Don’t make answers too lengthy or brief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do ask relevant questions</td>
<td>Don’t give in to nervous habits (ex. tapping feet, fidgeting with hands, twirling hair, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do ask for a business card for follow-up and send a thank you letter</td>
<td>Don’t be overaggressive, overbearing or cocky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do ask for the next step in the hiring process; know when and from whom you should expect to hear next</td>
<td>Don’t pretend to know an answer you are not familiar with or make false claims about past job performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do close interview with gratitude for his/her time and enthusiasm for the job</td>
<td>Don’t act as though you would take any job or are desperate for employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do evaluate the interviewer and the company he/she represents</td>
<td>Don’t be unprepared for typical interview questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the interview, make notes right away so you don’t forget critical details</td>
<td>Don’t ask “How did I do?” at the conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An interview is a dialogue and provides an opportunity for you and the interviewer to learn more about each other. You will probably be observed on how you react to certain questions and how you are able to “think on your feet” when answering. Preparation is essential to answer the common questions listed below.

1. Tell me more about yourself. Elevator pitch; preparedness
2. How would you describe yourself? Preparedness
3. Tell me something that shows your ability to work hard and stay committed to a job or assignment. Ambition and Attitude
4. If you could, pick a key benefit from your college education that you feel prepared for you field. Preparedness
5. Talk about one strength and one weakness that you possess? Emphasize strengths
6. Give me an example of a time when you tried to accomplish something and failed. Emphasize strengths
7. Describe your presentation skills and experience. Communication
8. Provide a specific instance where conflict occurred (on the job, in a team, etc.). How did you deal with it? What was the outcome? Teamwork/Collaboration
9. Please describe a situation in which you were required to make a decision in a short amount of time. Decision Making (Leadership)
10. Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgement and logic in solving a problem. Problem Solving/Analytical Skills
11. Tell me about a time when you used your creative abilities to communicate a complex idea visually. Innovation and Creativity/Initiative
12. Give me an example of a time management skill that has proven successful for you. Organization
13. Describe an instance in which you were able to persuade an important person over to a new way of thinking. Influence
14. Tell us about a time when you had to adapt to a wide variety of people by accepting/understanding their perspective. Global Issues/Cultural Competence
15. In some positions, it is necessary to be a thorough meticulous reader and in other situations, it is important for one to be able to quickly scan through large amounts of information quickly. Describe your most significant scanning experience. Communication
16. Have you ever been in a situation where a team member was not holding p his or her end of the project? What happened? Teamwork/Collaboration
17. Tell me about a situation when you had to “stand up” for a decision you made even though it made you unpopular. Decision Making (Leadership)
18. Solving a problem often necessitates evaluation of alternative solutions. Give me an example of a time when you actively defined several solutions to a single problem. Did you use any tools such as research, brainstorming, or mathematics? Problem Solving/Analytical Skills
19. Describe an experience where you were able to work with a group to produce creative solutions and what role you took in that process. Innovation and Creativity/Initiative
20. Describe in detail a project that you designed, implemented, evaluated and completed. How did you define and measure the success of this project? Organization
21. Tell me about a time in your life when you’ve had to influence a peer or supervisor to do something that they don’t initially believe in. Influence
22. Describe how you have worked in a diverse environment: what types of diversity have you encountered? How did you feel about these and how has this affected your experience and understanding of others? Global Issues/Cultural Competence
23. Why do you feel you are a good candidate for this position? Ambition and attitude
24. Do you have any questions for me? Preparedness
TIPS FOR ANSWERING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Be yourself. Demonstrate a sincere interest in the position. Project energy and enthusiasm. Be natural in your answers and avoid memorizing your responses.
- Listen carefully and respond accordingly. Give specific examples, brief and to the point, and avoid being overly general.
- Treat the interview as if it were a conversation. Picture yourself speaking with someone you’ve known for years, not a total stranger you just met.
- Keep answers focused on skills needed for the position. Avoid personal or irrelevant information.
- When answering behavior-based questions, use the STAR method: S – Situation, T – Task, A – Action you took, R – Result of your actions.
- Don’t try to bluff your way through a question. Ask for clarification if you are unsure of a question. If you still do not have an answer, explain that you have not experienced this exact situation, then substitute a similar and related experience.
- Never criticize a previous employer. Keep all explanations professional in nature.
- Be confident and comfortable talking about yourself. It may be hard at first, but talk about yourself the way your grandmother might talk about you.
- Don’t toot your own horn too much. Avoid bragging and coming across as too cocky.
- Avoid “fillers” (ex. Um, so, hm, uh, like, you know, etc.) by taking a moment to collect your thoughts before responding.
- Use language that puts you on their team: “As a member of your team, I would...”
- Answer questions with a completed structure. That is, an introductory statement, the body of the answer and a strong concluding statement that summarizes your response.
- Work-related examples are always best when answering questions. However, if relevant, valuable experience gained in other areas or activities can be substituted. Think internships, organization involvement, leadership roles, team projects, team athletics, part-time jobs and volunteer work.
- Place a positive spin on potentially negative questions.
Think about it. A recruiter is not interested in the fact that you have a 13-year old brother or that you are a Greek Week champion. A recruiter is interested in what motivates you, how you will work with others, your enthusiasm, competitiveness and other job-related traits.

This dreaded question will likely find its way into almost any interview. In order to provide an interviewer with an adequate answer, you will need to develop a two minute commercial to "sell" yourself.

**WHEN TO USE THE TWO MINUTE COMMERCIAL**

- “Tell me about yourself.”
- “Why should I hire you?”
- Networking
- Informational interviews
- Job fairs

**PARTS OF THE TWO MINUTE COMMERCIAL**

**Brief statement about yourself (15 seconds)**

This part is used to give the interviewer relevant information concerning you personally and your educational background. Mention professional interests, extracurricular activities and any travel or study abroad opportunities. **Do not include personal information such as marital status, children, etc.**

**Work experience and accomplishments (30-45 seconds)**

This is the most vital part of the two minute commercial. This is the time for you to relate your skills, accomplishments, goals and results that indicate why you are the best candidate for the position. Include related work experience, coursework and projects, leadership experience and community service involvement.

**Why you are here (30-45 seconds)**

This is used either at the beginning or end of your two minute commercial, depending on the question asked by the employer. In this part, speak with enthusiasm as to why you are seeking the position. Address skills you can bring, what you know about the company and why you are the best person to hire.

**EXAMPLE**

My degree is in finance and I will be graduating this December. While attending college, I worked 25-30 hours a week. I spent the last 4 semesters working in a cooperative education position for Hastings in their accounting and finance department. I was able to get "hands-on" experience in cost accounting, cash-flow analysis, budget development and assisted in preparing client proposals. Through these job experiences, I have been given the opportunity to polish my customer service skills, as well as gain technical skills. I have strong planning and documentation abilities and am analytically oriented.

My career goal is to work for a bank and eventually become a loan officer. I believe I have the key traits for success in banking. I have good common sense, can juggle multiple tasks, have a positive attitude and excellent communication skills. I think my greatest strength is my capacity to get along with a wide variety of people and personalities.
Sticky Situations

As the interviewer turns to talk about your qualifications, be prepared to deal with aspects of your background that could be construed as negative. Here, interviewers are looking for one of the following: a reason to hire you or a reason to eliminate you. In order to answer these questions, it is up to you to convince the interviewer that although these points appear negative, positive attributes can be found in them. Review the situations and possible answers below to help answer some of your sticky situations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Why did you leave your last job?</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You were fired</td>
<td>To be honest with you, I just did not fit into the organization. Finally, my supervisor and I decided it was best for me to leave. While this was a difficult experience, I feel your organization would provide a much better fit and I am ready to begin again to do the caliber of work of which I am capable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Why weren't your grades higher?</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part-time job</td>
<td>Initially I had a hard time balancing a part-time job with coursework, but as I developed stronger time-management skills, I was better able to handle a tremendous number of responsibilities. Now I'm ready to take on multiple tasks and deadlines to get the job done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excessive partying</td>
<td>I wish I could tell you why I didn't work my hardest that first year, but that person is so different from who I have become. Fortunately, I can say that today I am hard working and the grades in my most recent courses reflect this.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>I see here that you weren’t involved in any extracurricular activities. Why?</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time job (Fully supporting yourself financially)</td>
<td>As you’ll see, I financed 100% of my college expenses with a full-time job. Through balancing my schoolwork and an 8-5 job, I didn’t find a whole lot of extra time for extracurricular activities like I would have liked. However, I did gain many valuable skills from my job that I will be able to apply to this position, including many qualities that other college graduates might not yet have developed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>I’m concerned about your lack of work experience.</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concentrated on studies</td>
<td>I wanted to give as much effort as possible to my studies. I came from a high school in a small town where I received all A’s, but this didn’t prepare me well for college. So I studied hard. I have, however, found time to help tutor my friends and participate in the college program at my church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR discuss your other experiences: internships, organization involvement, leadership roles, classroom team projects, team athletic sports and volunteer work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Why have you switched jobs so often?</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working in temporary positions (internships, summer jobs, campaign work, etc.)</td>
<td>I did hold many different jobs during college, as you’ll see on my resume. This is largely in part to the fact that I was living at home during the summers, and having to find new employment upon coming back to school in the fall. In addition, you will also see my internship listed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Various federal, state and local laws regulate the questions an interviewer can ask you. To report illegal questions in an on-campus interview, contact the Interview Coordinator immediately. Otherwise, file a report through your local Equal Employment Opportunity Office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illegal</th>
<th>Legal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Nationality | • Are you a US citizen?  
| | • Where were you/your parents born?  
| | • What is your “native tongue”?  
| Age | • How old are you?  
| | • When did you graduate college?  
| | • What is your birthday?  
| Arrest Record | • Have you ever been arrested?  
| Marital/Family Status | • What’s your marital status?  
| | • Who do you live with?  
| | • Do you plan to have a family?  
| | • How many kids do you have?  
| | • What are your child care arrangements?  
| Affiliations | • To what clubs do you belong?  
| | • What is your denomination?  
| | • What religious holidays do you observe?  
| Personal | • What is your maiden name?  
| | • How tall are you?  
| | • How much do you weigh?  
| Disabilities | • Do you have any disabilities?  
| | • Please complete the following medical history.  
| | • Have you had any recent or past illnesses or operations? If yes, list and give dates.  
| | • How’s your family’s health?  
| | • When did you lose your eyesight?  
| Military | • If you’ve been in the military, were you honorably discharged?  
| | • In what branch of the Armed Forces did you serve?  
| | • Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job with or without reasonable accommodations?  

**FACING THE ILLEGAL QUESTION**

You have several options when faced with an illegal interview question.

1. **Answer.** Realize that you are providing information that is not relevant to the job and could harm your candidacy by giving a “wrong” answer.
2. **Refuse.** You’ll be within your rights, but run the risk of coming off as uncooperative.
3. **Respond.** Examine the intent of the question and respond as it might apply to the job. For example, an interviewer asks, “Are you a US citizen?” Answer with, “I am authorized to work in the US.”
Most questions interviewers ask serve a purpose... and it isn’t necessarily lit up in neon! Listen carefully to all questions during the interview and consider “What is this question really asking?” Following are common interview questions and suggestions on how to respond.

Tell me about yourself.
See the Tell Me about Yourself handout to develop your unique answer.

Why are you interested in working for this company?
Here is a golden opportunity to showcase the research that you have performed prior to the interview. Be sure to state how what you have learned about the company relates to your career pursuits.

Describe your best/worst boss.
If possible, speak about your best boss. If you must speak about your worst boss, place a positive spin on it. For instance, “I had a manager who was often very vague in his instructions. However, because of this, I learned the value of good communication.”

What would you consider your strength?
Here is your opportunity to prove that you have the most important strength required for the position. Don’t blow it by offering some off-the-wall strength that isn’t even on the recruiter’s checklist.

What is your greatest weakness?
Everyone has a weakness and it’s okay to admit it! Discuss a weakness that you have worked to improve upon. For example: “I tend to have trouble delegating tasks to others, but I’ve realized that teamwork is a much more effective way to get the job done than trying to do it all myself.” However, do not offer a weakness that could be a deal-breaker (ex. Bad with numbers, and it’s an accounting position).

Give me an example of a problem you encountered and explain how you solved it.
To answer behavior-based questions such as this one, use the STAR method: S – Situation, T – Task, A – Action you took, R – Result of your actions.

Describe an experience in which you (contributed to) (led) a team.
You will need to develop answers for both sides of this common situation. Again, use the STAR method.

Why did you attend Stephen F. Austin State University?
Offer a response that is logical and shows that you made the decision. Don’t indicate that external forces directed you to SFA: “I didn’t have the money for Baylor, so I settled for SFA.” Make it about the decision.

Have you always lived in Texas?
Generally, the recruiter is asking you if you will relocate. If the job is in Florida, explain how you vacation every year in Destin and love the city. Find a way to “connect” yourself to the city or region in question.

What are your long-term goals?
Trick question alert! The recruiter is hoping that you will tell him/her what you REALLY want to do. Gently redirect your response to the next two to five years and how you could contribute to the company.

Why should we hire you?
Provide a detailed answer, much like your two minute commercial. Summarize points you may have mentioned in your interview, and/or introduce something of value the interviewer did not come across during the interview. Remember, this is your last chance to sell yourself!
As an interview candidate, you will find yourself being asked a variety of questions by the employer to learn more about how your prior experience and skills meet the needs of the employer and position. Therefore, “the proof is in the pudding,” as they say. It’s great to identify that you have a skill, or a certain characteristic, but telling the employer a detailed story of how you developed the skill will portray a more vivid justification of your experience. As a result, this will allow the employer to better understand how your skills support the needs of the position. So, how do you become a better storyteller to elaborate on your skills? The S.T.A.R. Method is a great way to begin wrapping your mind around your past experiences and generate stories with a nice, easy flow for the listener. See below for a detailed explanation of how this candidate responded to the following question:

**Give an example of a situation that you were involved in that resulted in a positive outcome.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Situation</strong></th>
<th>Tell the employer about what was going on. Describe a situation that you experienced.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“During my internship, I was responsible for managing various events.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task</strong></td>
<td>What did you need to do in the situation? Describe a task, or a few, that needed to be identified and addressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I noticed that attendance at these events had dropped by 30% over the past 3 years, I wanted to improve these numbers.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
<td>Talk about what you actually did to achieve the task. What action was taken to appropriately handle the situation and task to showcase core competencies from past employment opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I designed a new promotional packet to go out to local businesses. I also included a rating sheet to collect feedback on our events and organized a focus group.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result</strong></td>
<td>Identify what happened in the end. Discuss the achieved result relaying the outcome of the situation, task, and action. By following this structure, you will be able to better articulate not only that you have a skill, but how you developed or actively used the skill in the past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We implemented some of the wonderful ideas we received from the community, made our internal systems more efficient and raised attendance by 18% the first year.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At some point, as the interview draws to a close, the interviewer will ask if you have any questions. Having at least 4 to 5 well-thought-out questions will impress the interviewer and indicate that you have done your research. Your questions should show a sincere interest in the employer, their needs and how you can fulfill those needs.

1. How often are performance reviews given?
2. What kind of assignments might I expect the first six months on the job?
3. Has there been much turnover in this job area?
4. What characteristics do the achievers in this company seem to share?
5. Will I have the opportunity to work on special projects?
6. Is there a lot of team project work?
7. Identify a typical career path in your organization for someone with my qualifications.
8. How is an employee evaluated and promoted?
9. What are the challenging facets of this job?
10. What are the company’s strengths and weaknesses?
11. How would you describe your company’s personality and management style?
12. Tell me the work history of your top management.
13. What is the next step in the hiring process for this position?
14. What are the goals for this position for the next year?
15. Is this a new position or would I be replacing someone?
16. What do you like most about your work here?
17. I am aware that the company’s growth rate has been _______. Do you anticipate that the company will meet this rate again this year?
18. Does your company encourage further education?
19. What products/services are in the development stage now?
20. Is your company environmentally conscious? In what ways?
21. In what ways is a career with your company better than one with your competitors?
22. Can you tell me more about your latest developments in ______?
23. With the recent changes in the economy, what are the main challenges facing your company?
24. Why did you decide to work for this company?
25. What opportunities for professional development are offered?
26. Based on what you have seen of me so far, where do you think I could contribute most effectively?
27. Is there anything you perceive as a weakness in my background?
28. Who would you consider to be your major competitors?
29. What exciting or challenging directions do you anticipate over the next few years?
30. How do you measure an individual’s success in your organization?

**TOPICS TO AVOID**

You should not initiate discussion on certain sensitive topics such as:
- Layoffs
- Office space
- What the company can do for you
- Salary, vacation, leave and other compensation/benefits issues
- Religion, political views, educational background, past work experience, sexual orientation or race/ethnicity of the interviewer
A potential employer may invite you to a meal as part of the interview process. This is the employer’s way of getting to know you in a more social setting to see if you will fit into their company culture. Practicing professional etiquette indicates to potential employers that you are a mature, responsible adult who can successfully represent their company.

BEFORE THE MEAL
- If arriving separately, arrive a few minutes early.
- Wait to sit until the host/hostess indicates the seating arrangement.
- If you are unsure about a price range, ask your host what dish they would recommend, or go with an item that is in the mid-price range.
- When ordering, select something easy to eat, such as boneless chicken or fish.
- Place napkin in lap before eating or drinking anything.
- Practice proper posture; sit up straight and elbows off the table.
- Place napkin on chair seat and push chair under table when excusing yourself.
- Wait to eat until everyone has been served.

EATING
- Begin with utensils from the outside in. The dessert utensil is usually above the plate.
- Dip soup away from you; sip from the side of the spoon.
- Pass salt and pepper together – even if asked for only one.
- While speaking, utensils should be resting on plate.
- Don’t chew with your mouth open or blow on your food.
- Bring food to your mouth – not your head to the plate.
- When you are finished with the course, place your fork at 4 o’clock on the plate, tines down and your napkin beside the plate.
- If a small bowl with water is on the table, or appears with dessert, wash the tips of your fingers in it. Dry them on your napkin.

“Alcohol should be avoided at any point of the interview process.
Always rise when being introduced.
Be courteous and polite to everyone, especially the server.”
It's perfectly normal to get the jitters before an interview. However, knowing how to combat these nerves before they overwhelm you will mean success once the spotlight is on you!

**PREPARE, PREPARE, PREPARE**
The key to reducing nerves is to prepare for the interview as much as possible. Research possible interview questions and write out main points you would like to address. Try on your interview outfit beforehand and be sure it fits well and feels good. Research the company and position so you are informed. Complete a mock interview in CCPD so you feel warmed up and ready ahead of time.

**OBSERVE**
Every interview is a two-way street. While the company is interviewing you, you are also obtaining information about the company and position. Focusing on your own observations rather than on how well you’re measuring up to the interviewer will help you relax and give your mind a better outlook throughout the interview process.

**KEEP UP THE CONVERSATION**
An interview is best approached as a conversation between two nicely dressed people. Treat every question as you would one at a dinner party. Answer carefully with thoughtfulness and in a conversational tone. Make sure to ask the interviewer questions of your own to uphold your side of the conversation.

**QUIT CARING**
You feel nervous because you care about the result of the interview. Using reverse psychology, tell yourself why this particular interview isn’t that important. Remind yourself of other job opportunities or treat it like a practice interview. If you can convince yourself the interview isn’t life or death, it likely won’t feel that way anymore.

**PROVE THEM RIGHT**
An interviewer has reviewed your resume and pre-screened you before the initial interview. This means that they believe you have what it takes to be successful in the position. An interview is your chance to prove them right. So why not do just that?

**VISUALIZE SUCCESS**
Visualizing interview success is a great way to imagine the interview in a way that will generate a positive aura you can carry with you into the interview.

Visualize preparing for the interview. When arriving, use your senses to determine the setup: light, colors, objects. Hear the interviewer’s gentle voice greeting you. You feel calm and confident as you introduce yourself. With each question you provide descriptive, intuitive answers. You sense the close of the interview and imagine the interviewer welcoming you aboard!
Recognize what employers want in their candidates. They want “can do” and “will do” employees. Utilize this information and the following factors to benefit you throughout the entire interview process, from researching the organization to negotiating salary.

In evaluating candidates, employers consider the following factors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Evaluation measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appearance and behavior</td>
<td>Do you have good grooming, manners and body language?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you maintain good eye contact?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>Are you skilfully able to express your ideas when responding to the interviewer’s questions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependability and loyalty</td>
<td>How have you displayed dependability and loyalty within your education, extracurricular activities or work experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm and attitude</td>
<td>Do you exhibit a positive or negative attitude? Are you genuinely interested in the employer, job and industry?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular activities</td>
<td>Were you involved in quality extracurricular activities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographical preferences and restrictions</td>
<td>Are you willing to relocate and travel, or are you restricted to an area in any ways?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals and ambitions</td>
<td>What do you want to do in your professional life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>What would you consider your academic achievements?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interests</td>
<td>What do you enjoy doing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal skills</td>
<td>Are you able to successfully communicate your ideas to others?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of employer</td>
<td>Did you visit the company’s web page? Did you research media coverage or financial information on the company?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have you checked your facts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Is your major relevant to the position?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maturity</td>
<td>What about your overall sense of balance in life? Can you make value judgments and decisions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-solving skills</td>
<td>Are you able to intuitively and logically solve problems?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>Do your references provide positive recommendations of you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special aptitudes and skills</td>
<td>Do you have any special aptitudes or skills relevant to the job?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work experience, ethic and record</td>
<td>Job accomplishments? Did you help the employer see the connections to the position for which you are applying?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Sample Evaluation Form

**Scale:** 1 – Very Good, 2 – Satisfactory, 3 – Needs Improvement

#### 1. Personal Appearance / First Impressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrived on time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greeting, eye contact, handshake, enthusiasm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitting position/posture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General appearance, grooming, dress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments**

#### 2. Responses to Interview Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparedness, maturity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of opening verbal presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to describe past work experience, activities, education and training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to explain skills, weaknesses, abilities, values and relate to position sought</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to explain personal goals, interests and desires and relate to position sought</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to give examples in response to behavioral/situational questions; used STAR formula</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to explain possible questionable factors such as low GPA, frequent job changes/gaps, lack of activity in field of interest, little school involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrated key skills: initiative, leadership, communication, teamwork, problem-solving</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of candidate questions about the position/program/organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of closing statement: why you? Close of interview (next step, sincere appreciation)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3. Communication Skills/Attitude

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to listen attentively to questions, respond to questions being asked and ask for clarification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poise under pressure and ability to turn objections in positive points</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of speech or conversation (voice, tone, volume, pitch, speed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical mannerisms (facial expressions, gestures, posture, nervous habits)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of enthusiasm, interest in the job</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answered questions concisely yet thoroughly; no prompting needed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of confidence (being natural and at ease)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4. Additional Comments

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Rusk Building, 3rd Floor • 936.468.3305 • CCPD@SFASU.EDU • WWW.SFASU.EDU/CCPD
Congratulations! You’ve been offered a job! Whether it’s one offer or more, your euphoria is sometimes quickly replaced by anxiety about the decisions that lie ahead. Careful evaluation of your job offer(s) and some serious thought as to how well the position and the organization meet your needs can enable you to make the best choice for yourself.

First, get the offer in writing.

**YOUR OPTIONS**
- **Stall.** Express appreciation for the offer and ask for time to think about your decision. Agree on a reasonable time frame to get back to them with your decision.
- **Accept.** Prepare your Letter of Acceptance (and, if applicable, Letter of Regret or Letter of Withdraw).
- **Reject.** Prepare your Letter of Regret.

**CONSIDER WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU**
How well the employer’s values match your own is key to making a good decision. Rank the following work values using this scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Job</th>
<th>The Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duties and responsibilities</td>
<td>Technologically innovative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match for values/interests/skills</td>
<td>High involvement in research and design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalities of supervisors/colleagues</td>
<td>Management styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of work assignments</td>
<td>Opportunities for growth and advancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for individual achievement</td>
<td>Layoffs and restructuring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to outstanding colleagues</td>
<td>Reputation and image of employer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to work independently</td>
<td>Financial stability and growth prospects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity and frequency of travel</td>
<td>Salary, benefits and compensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtime</td>
<td>People in top-level positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to apply education</td>
<td>Personnel policies and flex-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social significance of job</td>
<td>Training and continuing education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working environment and conditions</td>
<td>Required relocations and transfers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure and pace of work; turnover</td>
<td>Public or private employer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual stimulation</td>
<td>Well-established vs. fledgling company</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Industry</th>
<th>The Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growth history</td>
<td>Proximity of graduate schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future need for goods and services</td>
<td>Opportunity for partner’s career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependence on the business cycle</td>
<td>Climate; environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependence on government policies and programs</td>
<td>Cost of living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term future potential</td>
<td>Community life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record of layoffs or downsizing</td>
<td>Distance from home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once you have ranked the values, star the ones ranked 1 or 2. Now you have a picture of what is important to you in a job and can utilize this information when evaluating a job offer.

**EVALUATING JOB OFFERS**
When evaluating your job offer, there is one critical question you should keep in mind: How closely does the offer match your career goal? Additionally, three factors play an important role in job satisfaction: position, organization and supervisor.
Review what you have learned about each of these factors and use the following questions to help evaluate the offer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Position</th>
<th>The Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why is it available?</td>
<td>Is the organization growing or downsizing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long has it been open?</td>
<td>Is the organization a result of an acquisition or a planned expansion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What happened to the previous employee?</td>
<td>Has this growth affected its performance? How will it affect you and your position?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would your specific responsibilities be?</td>
<td>Who are its competitors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are position’s goals realistic and attainable?</td>
<td>What is the tenure of its management?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you successfully perform the duties of the position?</td>
<td>Is the management team new hires or people promoted from within the organization?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your growth potential in this position?</td>
<td>Does the organization have a high retention rate, or do they have an attrition problem?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can this position fit into your long- and short-term career goals?</td>
<td>Are the values of the organization compatible with your own?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do the daily work activities appeal to you?</td>
<td>The Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are your salary and benefit requirements met?</td>
<td>How long has he/she been in this position?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there opportunity for advancement?</td>
<td>To whom does he/she report?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will you be developing new skills and expanding your experience?</td>
<td>What was his/her previous work experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are job demands compatible with your lifestyle?</td>
<td>What is his/her growth potential?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you think you can work well with him/her?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you have a sense of management style?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Negotiate**
Are there issues you want to negotiate, which would bring the offer closer to your goal?
Areas you may be able to negotiate include signing bonus, moving expenses or start date.

**Weighing multiple offers**
How do you choose which job is right for you? Start by developing an all-inclusive pro/con list for each offer. Consider all features of each: salary, benefits, corporate culture, commuting time, flexible work arrangements, tuition reimbursement, on-the-job learning opportunities, etc. You may also use the evaluation tool on the following page.

Then determine what is really important to you. Use the work values evaluation on the previous page to help determine your priorities.

**After reaching a decision**
When you have made a decision, write your Letter of Acceptance (and, if applicable, Letter of Regret or Letter of Withdraw). After accepting an offer, you are ethically (and sometimes legally) obligated to take that job. Reneging on an offer you have accepted is unethical and unprofessional.
CHOOSING THE BEST OFFER
Evaluating job offers is not a simple process. Many factors need to be considered in making your final decision. In order to gain a better picture of these factors and where they fit into each organization, answer “yes” or “no” to the questions below for each offer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of skills</th>
<th>Offer #1</th>
<th>Offer #2</th>
<th>Offer #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will your skills, interests, course work, work experience be utilized to their greatest extent?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commute</td>
<td>Offer #1</td>
<td>Offer #2</td>
<td>Offer #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the trip to and from work within satisfactory limits?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Offer #1</td>
<td>Offer #2</td>
<td>Offer #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there sufficient job training to meet your needs?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advancement</td>
<td>Offer #1</td>
<td>Offer #2</td>
<td>Offer #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there an opportunity for upward mobility and advancement within the organization?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Offer #1</td>
<td>Offer #2</td>
<td>Offer #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the position carry the prestige you require?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job security</td>
<td>Offer #1</td>
<td>Offer #2</td>
<td>Offer #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the position carry long-term employment stability?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Offer #1</td>
<td>Offer #2</td>
<td>Offer #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the benefits package satisfactory?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>Offer #1</td>
<td>Offer #2</td>
<td>Offer #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the salary offered satisfactory?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>Offer #1</td>
<td>Offer #2</td>
<td>Offer #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do the hours of work agree with you?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Offer #1</td>
<td>Offer #2</td>
<td>Offer #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the physical environment appeal to you?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Offer #1</td>
<td>Offer #2</td>
<td>Offer #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the location conducive to your lifestyle?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress code</td>
<td>Offer #1</td>
<td>Offer #2</td>
<td>Offer #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you comfortable with the dress standards?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-workers</td>
<td>Offer #1</td>
<td>Offer #2</td>
<td>Offer #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will you enjoy being with the people with whom you will be working?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Offer #1</td>
<td>Offer #2</td>
<td>Offer #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you motivated and satisfied by the position?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company</td>
<td>Offer #1</td>
<td>Offer #2</td>
<td>Offer #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you comfortable with the values of the company?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Offer #1</td>
<td>Offer #2</td>
<td>Offer #3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total number of “yes” responses:
Congratulations, you’ve just been offered the job of your dreams! Accepting a job offer is an exciting end to your current job search. Show your appreciation to the organization by sending a letter of acceptance. In addition, you may need to send Letter(s) of Withdraw.

Your letter of acceptance should be sent out 24 hours after employer contact, or immediately upon reaching your decision. Hard copy is more formal than email; however, when speed is necessary, use email.

WHAT TO INCLUDE
- Be specific regarding the starting date, salary and supervisor’s name.
- List and detail all items agreed to in the offer (benefits, moving expenses, signing bonus, etc.).
- Acknowledge if employment is contingent on any event such as licensing, passing physical examination, etc.
- Tell of plans and anticipated arrival date.
- Express appreciation to contact person and anyone else who has been helpful.
- Indicate enthusiasm for the job and the opportunity with the company.

LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE EXAMPLE

Beyoncé G. Knowles

3636 Grammy Boulevard
Nacogdoches, Texas 75965

936.555.5343
bknowles@mail.com

January 28, 2016

Mr. James Bond
Advertising Director
Royal Casino
7 Diamond Drive
Lake Charles, Louisiana 65000

Dear Mr. Bond,

I am writing to confirm my acceptance of your employment offer of January 26 and to tell you how delighted I am to be joining Royal Casino in Lake Charles. I understand that my initial assignment will be working for Mr. 50 Cent in the Advertising Division at a salary of $33,000 per year.

As we discussed, I will report to work at 8:00 a.m. on May 15 and will have completed the medical examination and drug testing by the start date. Additionally, I shall complete all employment and insurance forms for the new employee orientation.

I look forward to working with you and your fine team. I appreciate your confidence in me and am very happy to be joining your staff.

Sincerely,

Beyonce Knowles

Beyonce Knowles
Thank you Letters

Stephen F. Austin State University | Center for Career and Professional Development

After you’ve interviewed, it’s not over! Thank you letters demonstrate respect, make you stand out and showcase your communication skills. Make sure each thank you letter is unique: personalize the company information and your specific fit. Many employers have confessed to being influenced positively by receiving a thank you letter from a candidate, so start writing!

Your thank you letter should be sent out 24 hours after interview. Hard copy is more formal than email; however, when speed is necessary, use email.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Express appreciation for the interviewer’s time and consideration
- Reiterate why you are the best person for the job
- Reinforce any topics or unique conversations that you had during the interview that might make you stand out from other candidates
- Communicate your interest in the employer and position, and anticipation in receiving word regarding their decision

THANK YOU LETTER EXAMPLE

(USE SAME HEADING FROM RESUME AND COVER LETTER)

January 28, 2025

Mr. Donald Trump
Personnel Director
Trump’s Trumpets
163 Trumpet Lane
Houston, Texas 75000

Dear Mr. Trump,

Thank you for taking the time to conduct an interview with me during your recruiting visit to Stephen F. Austin State University on January 27. The management trainee program you outlined sounds both challenging and rewarding and I look forward to your decision concerning an on-site visit.

As mentioned during the interview, I will be graduating in May with a Bachelor degree in Management. Through my education and experience I’ve gained many skills, as well as an understanding of retailing concepts and dealing with the general public. I have worked seven years in the retail industry in various positions from Salesclerk to Assistant Department Manager. I think my education and work experience would compliment Trump’s Trumpets management trainee program.

I have enclosed a copy of my college transcript and a list of references that you requested.

Thank you again for the opportunity to interview with Trump’s Trumpets. I am very interested in becoming a part of your management team. I can be reached at 555-999-2323 should you need additional information.

Sincerely,

Britney Spears

Enclosures: transcript, references
A decision to decline an offer is usually based on the fact that another offer is a better fit for your interests and goals. If you choose to decline a job offer, do so courteously, in writing, after making a phone call. Never say anything negative about the employer, even if you had a negative experience. Maintain professional, courteous relations.

Your letter of regret should be sent out 24 hours after employer contact, or immediately upon reaching your decision. Hard copy is more formal than email; however, when speed is necessary, use email.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Express your appreciation for their time, effort and consideration.
- Mention aspects of the position or company that were appealing to you.
- Indicate that it has been a difficult decision for you and decline graciously.
- Briefly explain the reason for your choice, sticking to the facts and not apologizing.

LETTER OF REGRET EXAMPLE

Jessica Ann Simpson

Current: 214.555.6539
123 Blonde Ambition Place
Nacogdoches, Texas 75965

Permanent:
357 Romo Road
Dallas, Texas 75043

January 28, 2016

Mr. Austin Powers
Personnel Director
Gold Member
13 Basil Street
Houston, Texas 75000

Dear Mr. Powers,

I would like to thank you once again for the fine offer which you made to me for the position of Management Trainee with Goldmember. While I believe firmly in the mission of your organization and appreciate the challenging opportunity you offer, I have had another offer which I believe more closely matches my current career goals and interest.

Therefore, although it was a difficult decision, I must inform you that I find it necessary to decline your offer. I am accepting a position with Silverspoon in Dallas. Their training program will enable me to pursue my management interests immediately and to attend graduate school in the area.

I appreciate your interest on my behalf and wish to express my thanks again for all of your courtesies.

Sincerely,

Jessica Simpson

Jessica Simpson
The decision to send a letter of withdraw is usually coupled with the fact that you have received and accepted a job offer elsewhere. However, you may decide that a company is simply not a good match for your career interests, and wish to withdraw your application for that reason. Either way you slice it, it is important to inform the company of your discontinued interest in a position. Never say anything negative about the employer, even if you had a negative experience. Maintain professional, courteous relations.

Your letter of withdraw should be sent out 24 hours after employer contact, or immediately upon reaching your decision. Hard copy is more formal than email; however, when speed is necessary, use email.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Express your appreciation for their time, effort and consideration.
- Indicate that you would like to withdraw your application.
- State your decision and provide an explanation.
- Briefly explain the reason for your choice, sticking to the facts and not apologizing.

LETTER OF WITHDRAW EXAMPLE

Justin (JT) Timberlake

707 Nsync Road • Lufkin, Texas 77432 • 936.555.4088 • justin_timberlake@mail.com

January 28, 2016

Nancy Drew
Executive Sleuth
Mysteries-R-Us
89 Whodunit Avenue
Houston, Texas 75000

Dear Mrs. Drew,

I am writing to inform you that I am withdrawing my application for the Management Trainee position with Mysteries-R-Us. As I mentioned in my interview with you, I have been exploring several employment possibilities. This week I was offered a Management Trainee position with Hardy Mysteries and, after careful consideration, I decided to accept it. The position provides a very good match for my interests at this point in my career.

I want to thank you very much for interviewing and considering me for your position. I enjoyed meeting you and learning about the innovative mysteries you are solving. You have a fine company and I wish you and your staff well.

Best wishes,

Justin Timberlake

Justin Timberlake
The S Word - Salary

Stephen F. Austin State University | Center for Career and Professional Development

Be aware that there is often little flexibility with starting salaries for entry-level employment. If you approach salary as something that you and the employer will agree on as mutually beneficial, your chances of salary negotiation success are greatly enhanced. It is important to be confident, enthusiastic, professional and polite as you enter the ring.

WHEN TO DISCUSS SALARY
Do NOT discuss salary (unless the interviewer broaches the subject) until you have been offered a position. However, if you are asked about salary within an interview (typically not the first), there are several ways you can answer.

How to answer the salary question
Option 1: Turn the question back to them. Example: “My salary requirements are negotiable as I am looking for the best overall opportunity for me. However I am curious, what is the hiring range that you have for this position?”

Option 2: Give them a salary range. Be prepared to back up your request with specific information about your qualifications and experience. Also be sure you’ve done your research on industry salary standards.

If the salary is not specified at the time of a job offer, it’s time to ask.

KNOW YOURSELF AND YOUR NEEDS
Monthly expenses
List all your anticipated monthly expenses in a table (like the one below) to give you an idea of what salary you need to maintain your desired lifestyle. Make sure you consider the possible differences in cost of living. Use Budgeting Basics to discover your projected monthly expenses.

NOTE: Your paycheck after taxes is approximately 28 percent less than your gross monthly salary.

Your market value
What makes you competitive and marketable? There are no clear-cut guidelines for assessing your market value. Based on company research, your education and experience, and your skills and capabilities, you should be able to personally assess what you are worth.

RESEARCH SALARIES
In order to negotiate a strong offer, you must know current average salaries within the market. When you base salary requests on reasonable, factual data it strengthens your negotiating position. When researching average salaries for your field, develop a salary range, including a low, middle and high figure.

NEGOTIATING SALARY
When negotiating for the best possible salary and benefit package, it is important to continue showing the employer how hiring you will improve the organization’s bottom line, services, image, etc. Remind the employer of transferrable skills you have that may save the company money.

Example 1
If the employer offers you $35,000 and you believe you deserve $38,000, ask for $40,000 and then work backward toward your target salary.
Example 2
If your research indicates that the average salary for the position is $38,000, you might give the employer a range of $38,000 to $45,000. Aim for the top.

Consider benefits
Don’t focus solely on salary, because most employers offer a range of other benefits, sometimes worth as much as 30-40 percent in addition to your actual salary. Negotiable benefits include stock options, hiring bonuses, moving stipends, employee discounts, tuition reimbursement, vacation and sick leave. Perks include company cars, club memberships, parking, expense accounts, cell phones and laptops.

Know when to say when
If you feel like the employer is getting frustrated with your proposals or states that is all they can do for you, stop and evaluate what is on the table. When the company comes back to you with their final offer, be prepared to evaluate the offer and make a decision.

PRACTICE
Rehearse the presentation in advance using another person as the employer. If you make mistakes in rehearsal, chances are that you will not repeat them during the actual negotiations. If this all seems like a lot of work, remember that if something is worth negotiating for, it is worth preparing for.

PUT THE OFFER IN WRITING
After you have successfully negotiated the salary and benefits package, it is vital that you put your agreements in writing. Write down the terms such as salary, benefits, perks, job title and starting date. This will provide a record in case there is a question in the future.