Interview & Professionalism for STEM Students

Engineering Career Resource Center

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Interview Preparation

Research the company ([Glassdoor](#), Indeed, Wikipedia, news articles, company website)

- Focus on their strengths, values, and company culture.

Day of the Interview:

- Sleep [6-8 hours] , Eat [a healthy breakfast or lunch] , Dress Professionally [at least a grade above the normal dress for the job], Give yourself time [aim for arriving at the location 15 minutes early, walk in the door 5-10 minutes early – no earlier. Being late is an opportunity ***killer***].

- Review your resume and say your [elevator pitch](#) out loud.

- Be Confident! [power pose] - *Amy Cuddy's TEDTalk*

Types of Interview Questions

Traditional Interview Questions [They require you to relay factual, career-focused information to the employer.]

       Examples:

       "Why did you chose to study _____?"

       "What do you see yourself doing five years from now?"

       "Describe the best teacher you have ever had."

       "What are your research interests?"

       "What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?"

Behavioral Interview Questions [designed for the employer to gain insight into your past performance, education, & experiences to get an idea if you are a right fit for the job.]

Types of INTERVIEWS

Phone
- Find a quiet place with a clear connection
- Professional Ring-back & voicemail
- Smile.

In-person
- Handshake
- Take notes (bring a folder with paper, pen, copies of resume)
- Actively Listen

Types of INTERVIEWS

Group
- Several interviewers or several interviewees (or both)
- Be confident [speak loudly & clearly, and make eye contact with everyone]
- Stand Out [don't dominate]
- Don't change your answers based on others.

Videoconference Interview
- Live or Recorded
- Dress just as you would for in-person, quiet/private space, good internet connection

Dining/Lunch Interviews
- Use proper etiquette for a dinner table, order modestly (if the employer orders a side salad and a water – you should order similar).
- Offer to pay for *your* meal.
- If employer drinks alcohol – you could order a glass of wine *but only one and only if you know how it affects you.*

Tell me about yourself.

Just kidding, tell the person next to you.

How was that experience?

# Tell me about your~~self~~ career choice.

TRICK: Flip the question so that it is easier to answer.

In other words, what got you interested in this career? What skills do you have that make you a good fit? What are your career goals? How does this job fit in your journey?

Interview Preparation

- **Today:** [yes, before you even have an interview to actually prepare for]
  - Can you talk *in detail* about *everything* on your resume? You should be able to.
  - Be A STAR [this takes a lot of preparation!]
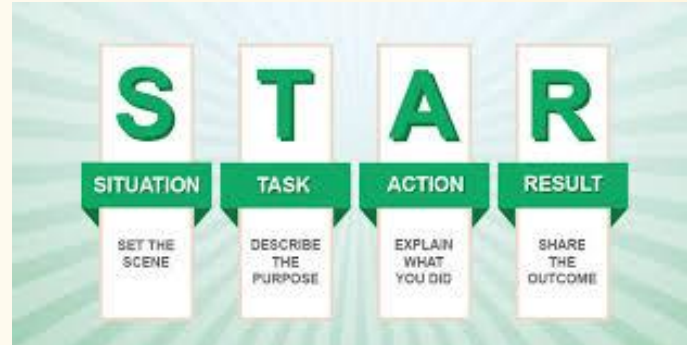
- Develop a "Brag" folder for your keeper stories!
  1. Create a folder in your email
  2. Email yourself on a regular basis [days that you felt very accomplished, organized, handled a conflict well, solved a complex problem, managed multiple assignments, managed a stressful situation, came up with a creative idea – etc...]
  3. Review these stories as you prepare for your interview!

Example Behavioral Interview Questions

- Tell me about a conflict you had with one of your peers, and the steps you took to solve the conflict.

- Describe a time when you monitored or reviewed information and detected a problem.

- Give an example of the most creative work-related project which you have carried out.

- What is the key to developing a good team? *[You can still apply the STAR formula, even though this isn't a straight forward behavioral question]*

Recommended Reading

https://theinterviewguys.com/star-method/

Interview Questions

There are *thousands* of possibilities for interview questions – how do you prepare the right examples?

USE THE JOB DESCRIPTION AS YOUR GUIDE

Example:

SUMMARY OF PURPOSE

The ITS Desktop Technician is responsible for providing technical support for all aspects of users' desktops. Services include PC hardware, office productivity applications (MS Office Professional suite & Office 365), Windows OS, and peripherals (printing, scanning, etc.). Activities include setup and orientation/training in the use of the desktop, troubleshooting, and resolution of operating problems and needs gathering for user applications. The Desktop Technician manages the outstanding help desk ticket backlog to ensure responsiveness and quality. Hardware repairs and desktop upgrades may be required on an as-needed basis.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

- Provides institute-wide technical support for the use of all desktop components in a campus networked environment including the PC desktop, telephone, Microsoft Windows, MS Office, Outlook, Other software, voice mail, and printing, and point-of-sale workstations, including cash drawers, and receipt and ticket printers.
1 - Provide hands on technical assistance with user desktops that may involve hardware installation, Windows operating system installation, software loading, and hardware and software troubleshooting and correction.
- Build new and used workstations and ensure standard software loads. Setup workstations for users. Provide initial orientation in the use of PCs, phones, printers, etc.
- Answer the help desk phone line and provide answers, troubleshooting, and other assistance as needed.
2 - Manage (prioritize and access) and complete 'tickets' through the help desk management system to ensure user satisfaction according to ITS standards. Ensure that tickets are completed according to criticality and not lost. Key in the audit trail of work performed.
- Write and maintain documentation on procedures for both IT staff as well as end users.
- Assists in managing the desktop equipment and software inventories databases.
- Manages the scheduling and maintenance of loaner equipment to ensure proper coverage of laptops and digital cameras.
- Assist in the development and deployment of custom applications on an as-needed basis from needs gathering through implementation. Develops, tests, and deploys standard system images.
- Participates in user software training sessions on an as needed basis.
- Work hours are frequently on weekends and evenings depending on event schedule.
- Performs other activities as necessary.
3 - Acts as a team player and provides expertise within team and with other teams as appropriate.

<<<Highlighted Sentences turned into STAR questions:

1. Tell me about a time you provided technical assistance to an end-user.
2. Give an example of a time when you had to manage and prioritize multiple tasks.
3. Describe a time when you had to work on a team.

Questions to ASK

- Ask questions at the end!
- You are interviewing the company too!
  - *Avoid questions about salary, benefits, etc.*
- Example Questions to Ask:
  - "What are your goals for someone in this position? What do you expect this person to
  - learn?"
  - "How has this position evolved over time?"
  - "What have past employees done to succeed in this role?"
  - "Tell me about the best day you've had at work in the past 3 months."
    - This type of question [behavioral] is my personal favorite
  - "What is the top priority for the person in this position over the next three months?"
  - "How does this company foster innovation within it's employees?"
  - **May I please have your business card(s)?**

What to do after the interview?

Thank You – Follow Up

- Should be sent within 24 hours

- Can be hand written and mailed or they can be a quick e-mail to each member of the team.
  - DON'T EXPECT A RESPONSE BACK [that doesn't mean you didn't get the job]
  - IF YOU DO GET A RESPONSE BACK [that doesn't mean you got the job]

- Should include:
  - Enthusiastic expression of interest [especially since you know more about it now]
  - A custom note to each person [based on things you spoke about in the interview]
  - "If you have any additional questions as you make your decision, feel free to reach out"

Follow Up Example Email

Dear Sarah,

Thank you very much for taking the time to meet with me this morning. I enjoyed out interview and learned a lot about your processes and the goals for this position. I especially appreciated when you answered all of my questions in detail about how you brainstorm solutions for your team projects.

This position and Yazaki's environment seem like a really great fit for me, and am hopeful that I will be chosen to move on to the next steps in the process. If you need any additional details as you make your decision, please reach out to me.

Sincerely,

Kyrsten Rue