An interview is a conversation between you and a potential employer. In a perfect scenario, it is a mutually informative conversation within which you both learn something from one another. For example:

“You are the perfect candidate!” or “I do NOT want to work here!”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>As the potential candidate, you will use the interview:</th>
<th>Similarly, the interviewer uses the conversation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- To share information about your qualifications</td>
<td>- To determine if you have the right skill set for the job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To express interest in working for that organization</td>
<td>- To promote their particular organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To pose questions to the interviewer</td>
<td>- To determine if you are the right person for the job</td>
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</table>

Remember, the “fit” between you and the interviewer - how natural the conversation is, how much you enjoy one another’s company, how confident and positive you seem and how interested they are in spending time with you can be just as important. Also keep in mind, interviewing is a skill and like any skill one should practice and prepare to be successful.

A Career Planning Center counselor is available to assist you in honing your interviewing skills and can help you prepare for any interview! For an appointment call (203) 254-4081 or e-mail CPC@fairfield.edu.

**Effective Interviewing**

**Prepare for the Interview**

The first step in preparing for an interview is to research everything there is to know about the organization and the specific industry it is in. Employers expect you to have done your “homework” and be able to clearly articulate why you are interested in working for that particular company. The only way to do that is to **KNOW** the company inside and out.

**Starting your research:**

*Go to the company’s website and start digging!*

- You want to know as much as you can - who are their clients? Their competitors? What are their products or different services? Do they have an annual report?
- Set a Google alert for the corporation and the industry so you can start getting alerted on anything that is occurring in the news.
- With all of your research, begin to formulate questions that you can ask the employer during the interview.

*Start reading the paper and news websites!*

- You need to have an understanding of what is going on in the world.
- Some employers might even ask you a question about a current event!

*Now that you know the company inside and out, it is time to get to know YOURSELF!*

- Assess the requirements of the job and determine how your qualifications meet the employer’s needs.
  - Relate skills, projects, and internships to the position.
- Know your resume and be able to **DISCUSS** it in detail.
- Prepare answers to potential interview questions (*see Interview question handout*)
- To boil it down, an employer is interested in knowing the answer to three basic questions:
  1. Why are you interested in this field?
  2. Why are you interested in this position and organization?
  3. What relevant skills and experiences do you have that will make you successful? **WHY YOU?**
Practice, Practice, Practice!

Conduct a Mock Interview

- Make an appointment with Career Planning to have a mock interview - it will provide you the opportunity to verbalize your answers and make sure they sound perfect before the real thing.
- Utilize InterviewStream, a virtual interviewing system that allows you to digitally record an unlimited amount of practice interviews. The tool then allows you to review your interviews to see how prepared you really are. All you need to use this tool is an internet connection and a web cam. For more information, see fairfield.interviewstream.com

The Interview

Dressing for success!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women's Interview Attire</th>
<th>Men's Interview Attire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solid color conservative suit</td>
<td>Solid color, conservative suit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, blue, or grey - avoid brown</td>
<td>Black, blue, or grey - avoid brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinated blouse &amp; moderate shoes</td>
<td>White long sleeve shirt &amp; a conservative tie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited jewelry &amp; professional hairstyle</td>
<td>Dark socks, professional shoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sparse make-up &amp; perfume</td>
<td>Neat, professional hairstyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manicured nails</td>
<td>Clean shaved and neatly trimmed nails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio or briefcase</td>
<td>Portfolio or briefcase</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Getting there!

- Know the location of the interview in advance and arrive early.
- Check in 5-10 minutes early - think of this as your first impression! Also, prepare for bad weather and bring an umbrella.
- Bring copies of your resume on RESUME PAPER even if they have the resume already.

Communicating in the Interview

- A successful interview involves making a positive first impression and building rapport with the interviewer.
  - Offer a good firm handshake and small talk to break the ice; be sure to be responsive.
- Your nonverbal communication is just as important as what you say!
  - Maintain good eye contact, sit up straight, and be aware of your nervous habits (are you a tapper?)
- There are 4 different styles of interviews, understanding the types will help you be intentional in your answers:
  1. Direct: Interviewer: Organized. Follows checklist - Often predictable questions
     YOU: Avoid ‘yes & no’ answers - Elaborate on your experiences
  2. Non-Direct: Interviewer: Loose structure, open ended
     YOU: Stay on track - ask questions - relate your experiences to job
  3. Stress: Interviewer does something to see how you deal with pressure
     YOU: Think before answering; recognize the technique and respond calmly
     YOU: Be yourself, know job and field, follow S.T.A.R. formula

S.T.A.R. Formula

In your answer, describe the Situation or the Task you were involved in
Explain your role and what Action you took
Illustrate the Results you achieved

- As the interview comes to an end, be sure to express your interest in the position and summarize why you are well qualified. Ask what the next steps will be or when you can expect to hear from the interviewer.

Follow Up E-mail

- Write a thank you e-mail shortly after the interview (they could make selections by end of day)
  - This shows your interest in the position and provides you with one more opportunity to illustrate why you are perfect for the job.
- If you are not contacted within the specified amount of time, call or e-mail your contact to restate your interest and inquire about the status of the hiring process.
  - Do not be a nag, that might turn the interviewer off. Try to be patient and wait until they make a decision.