The purpose of an interview is to personalize the content of your resume and cover letter with a conversation. Interviewing allows both the hiring organization and the candidate to determine whether they fit one another.

**BEFORE THE INTERVIEW**

To prepare for the interview, you need to develop a strategy based on research of the organization and self-knowledge. During the interview process you will be judged on how well you meet the following criteria:

✓ Are you capable of doing the job successfully?
✓ Do you wholeheartedly want the job?
✓ Are you able to relate well to the interviewer and other staff?
✓ Do you present a professional appearance and demeanor?

Preparing for the interview therefore requires that you assess your interests and skills, and research the organization and the position for which you are interviewing.

✓ Review the job description of the position for which you are interviewing.
✓ Make a list of pertinent functions of the job and the skills and experiences needed
✓ Make a list of your experiences and how you have developed and strengthened your skills.

Doing this exercise will help you articulate your experiences to an interviewer. You also will have a list of examples ready to support your assertions.

**Dress for success**

All
✓ Do research the preferred dress at the office you will be visiting. Many workplaces prefer a professional dark business suit (black, dark blue, grey), but some offices may prefer less traditional dress. When in doubt, ask someone in the company or industry for suggestions.
✓ Do use aftershave, cologne or perfume sparingly, if at all.
✓ Do bring a briefcase or portfolio.

Women
✓ Do wear conservative jewelry (small earrings, one ring not three, small necklace, etc.).
✓ Do wear stockings/pantyhose with a skirt.
✓ Do wear conservative makeup and nail polish.
✓ Do keep hair away from face, if possible.
✓ Do wear a knee-length skirt, no shorter. Pant suits also are appropriate.

X Don't wear a low-cut blouse. Blouses need to be buttoned to the top or second-to-top button.
X Don't wear open-toed shoes or shoes with heels higher than two inches.

Men
✓ Do wear a conservative tie (this is not the time for Mickey Mouse).
✓ Do arrive clean-shaven.
✓ Do wear polished shoes that match/complement the suit.
✓ Do limit jewelry to a watch, ring and/or cufflinks.
DURING THE INTERVIEW

What to expect
Like other presentations, an interview has a beginning, middle and end. What happens during those stages varies with the employer; nonetheless, the following typical stages give you an idea of what to expect.

Greeting
Remember that employers make an initial assessment when they greet you. When you meet an employer, stand straight, provide a firm handshake, and begin with some small talk as you walk to the interview room.

Establish Rapport
As an interview begins, both the employer and candidate are trying to establish rapport. An employer may cite an item from your resume or commence the interview with an open-ended question such as, “tell me a little about yourself” or “why are you interested in my organization?” Respond to the questions as though he or she was asking, “why do you want to be in this interview room?” Employers want to know that you are focused.

During this time, also assess the employer. Is he or she relaxed or formal, focused or conversational: You may want to adapt your strategy to the style of the interviewer, but always remember to be professional.

Tell me about yourself: The 90-second response
The question “tell me about yourself” is often the first question asked. What are employers looking for in this question?

This and other open ended questions are asked to see how well you can focus your answers to the position for which you are interviewing. Responses to this question should show how your skills, interests, and experiences would contribute to the position and organization.

Use a 90 second guideline when answering this question.
- Focus the first 15 seconds on any personal information you wish to share (e.g. where you are from)
- Focus the next 30 seconds on your academic experience (e.g. what you are studying, any study-abroad experience)
- Focus the next 30 seconds on your professional experience (e.g. leadership activities, internships)
- Use the last 15 seconds to discuss why you are interested in the position (given the background you just discussed).

Remember, this is a short answer; give highlights of your experiences and focus your answer. Spend some time writing down the experiences you wish to discuss and then practice how you want to answer the question.
**Respond to Interviewer's Questions**

During the interview, the employer will ask you a variety of questions to determine interest and competence. When answering the questions, make sure your answers are clear, concise, and followed by an example, and that you maintain strong eye contact. Listed below are sample questions typically asked by employers.

**Sample Interview Questions**

- Describe your most rewarding college experience and tell me why it was so rewarding.
- Relate your studies and/or experience to this job. What do you want out of your career?
- Why are you interested in working for ________?
- Why do you think you would like this type of work?
- What are some of the things you find difficult to do? Why?
- Why did you choose your particular major?
- Why did you choose to attend Georgetown?
- What is your greatest strength? Weakness?
- How will you prepare for the transition from college to the workplace?
- Do you make your opinions known when you disagree with the views of your supervisor? How?
- Why should I hire you? What do you know about my organization?
- What qualifications do you have that will make you successful in the field?
- Tell me about some things you learned in school that could be used on the job.
- As described to you, what about this position appeals to you?
- How do you feel you'll add value to this organization?
- Give me an example of a time when you dealt with pressure.
- What have your previous jobs taught you?
- What personal characteristics are necessary for jobs in this field?
- What is the most difficult situation you have faced?
- In what ways has college prepared you to take on greater responsibility?
- Describe a difficult problem you've had to deal with.
- How do you organize and plan for major projects?
- Do you prefer working independently or on a team?
- What are your biggest accomplishments?
- What would you like to be doing five years from now? Do you plan to attend graduate school?
- Why do you think you would be successful in this field?
- What is your energy level like? Describe a typical day.
- What have you gotten out of your extracurricular activities?
- How do you manage stress? How do you handle criticism?
- Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and subordinates.
- What qualities should a successful manager possess?
Ask your questions
As the interview winds down, the employer will ask whether or not you have any questions. It is imperative that you ask questions. It is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your career focus and it is how employers assess the depth of your interest in and knowledge of their organization. Most employers will not consider a candidate further if he or she does not ask questions. The following are some typical questions you may want to ask:

- What are you looking for in a candidate?
- What are the organization's five- and ten-year goals?
- Why are you looking to fill this position?
- How does this department fit into the organization's structure?
- Outside my department, who else will I work with?
- How did you choose this organization?
- What are the things you like most/least about working here?
- Describe your career path within this organization.
- What is the rate of personnel turnover?
- What has been the most exciting experience you've had while working here?
- What is your supervisory style? (Only ask if you are interviewing with your potential boss.)

Conclusion
As the interview concludes, the employer should tell you how the selection process will continue from this point. If that does not occur, take the initiative to find out. Many employers will also request references or writing samples, so you should have those ready. Lastly, ask for a business card and conclude the interview with a firm handshake, a statement reaffirming your interest in the position and thanking the employer for his or her time.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW
As soon after the interview as possible, you should send a thank you note to the interviewer. In the note, reinforce your interest in the position. Take the opportunity to highlight a positive from the interview or clarify something that did not go as well as planned.

Keep the following in mind when writing your thank you note:
- Keep it to one page.
- It can be handwritten, typed or emailed, depending on the organization's environment.
- You may write to all the people with whom you interviewed or identify the decision-maker and write to him or her; in the letter thank everyone with whom you interviewed.

First/Screening Interview
- Typically 1/2-1 hour in length.
- Purpose is to determine quickly if there is a match between employer and candidate.
- Weeds out inappropriate candidates.

Second/Office Visit Interview
- Sometimes all day at the office of the employer.
- Candidate will meet a variety of individuals, including potential supervisor and co-workers.
- Candidate is evaluated during meals, tours and departure.
- Employer may be paying for lodging and transportation.
Case Style Interviewing

Several industries, particularly management consulting, use case style interviewing in their assessment of candidates. This style focuses on a candidate’s analytical and problem-solving abilities. Problems or cases are given to the candidate and he/she must work through the case out loud with the interviewer. Employers will be assessing how a candidate arrives at an answer, not whether the answer is “correct.”

Behavioral Interviewing: The STAR Technique

This style of interviewing is gaining wide acceptance among recruiters. It is based on the premise that the best way to predict future behavior is to examine past behavior. To respond to a behavioral interview question, for instance, “Tell me about a time when you were on a team and one of the members wasn’t carrying his or her weight,” use the STAR technique.

S Situation or task: Describe a situation or task which will allow you to illustrate your strengths.

Example: “I was assigned to lead a team to perform 30 hours of community service for a class. One team member wasn’t showing up for meetings, despite constant reminders of the importance of attendance.”

T Action: Describe the specific action you took to remedy the situation.

Example: “I decided to meet with the student in private and explained the frustration of other team members, then asked him if there was anything I could do to help. He said he was preoccupied with another course, so I found him some help with that course.”

R Result: Explain the result of your action. Make sure the outcome reflects positively on you.

Example: “After I found that student help, he not only was able to attend the meetings, he also was grateful to me for helping him. We were able to complete the community service project on time.”

If you are interested in learning more about these styles of interviewing, pick up a handout in the Career Center library, attend a workshop on this topic, or make an appointment with a staff member.

Mock Interview

The best way to prepare for an interview is to practice. The Career Center’s Mock Interview Program is a good way to do this. Sign up at the Front Desk for a short interview with a staff member. We recommend that you come dressed as if you were attending a real interview. The staff member will facilitate the mock interview and then review your responses. It is one the best ways to evaluate your interview skills.

GOOD LUCK!