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www.pace.edu/careers
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Preparation is key

If you’re like most of us, the thought of going on a job interview is enough to make you break out in a mild sweat. Employment interviewing can be an intimidating experience if you don’t know what to expect. Preparation is the key to reducing anxiety, so don’t take the “wing it” approach or you’ll be sweating through a lot more interviews.

Your sales pitch

A job search is analogous to a sales campaign and an employment interview is the time to make your sales pitch! Think of yourself as the product and be prepared to be a sales expert. What distinguishes you from the competition? Why should the employer hire you? What do you have to offer that’s different from the other candidates? By knowing your “product” inside and out, you’ll be able to convince an employer to hire you and overcome objections skillfully.

Interviews are a two-way process

The interview is a two-way process: you are there to present your information in an honest, straightforward manner and to evaluate potential job opportunities. The employer is assessing you as a candidate, trying to predict future performance, in addition to “selling” you on their organization and job opportunity. You are both on a fact finding mission; and you both play two roles: as participant and observer.

What are employers looking for?

They are evaluating candidates on many different criteria: tangible and intangible. Technical knowledge and ability, past performance, successes and accomplishments, problem solving and creative talents are all tangible evidence. Personal qualities, verbal and non-verbal communication skills, self-confidence, interpersonal skills and enthusiasm are all more subjective. Interviewers are trying to determine basically three major points:

- Do you have the skills/background to successfully perform the job?
- Are you willing to do the tasks associated with the job?
- Will you fit into the company culture?

With all this in mind, we strongly urge you to use this guide. Successful interviewing is a skill one can develop through preparation and practice!

Good luck!
Analyze yourself and the position

In order to successfully “sell” yourself to a potential employer, you must do a thorough self-assessment. You need to identify your skills and what you have to offer before you can convince someone that you are the ideal candidate.

What are your skills?

Review the list of skills and personal characteristics on the next two pages and highlight those which apply to you. Complete the statements on pages 3 & 5 to help you organize your thoughts. When doing your skills analysis, focus on:

**Work Content Skills**
Those which relate specifically to being able to do a certain job. These skills are gained through work, education, and personal experience.

**Self-Management Skills**
Those personal characteristics related to your personality and to how you work within an organization or perform tasks.

**Transferable Skills**
Those general skills that can be applied to a wide variety of settings and have been developed naturally or through education, training and experience.

Keep the following in mind

- Take time to identify your skills, strengths, and past experiences as they relate to the position you are seeking.
- Try to get a detailed job description. If one is not available, research similar positions or speak with a career counselor to help you find more information.
- Reflect back on your activities, accomplishments and achievements. Think about the skills you used in these activities/accomplishments as they relate to each job description.
- Identify what makes you stand apart from the competition!
- Evaluate your educational experience and what skills you’ve developed as a student.
- Use the following list of self-management and transferable skills to help you think about yourself (on pages 3 & 5)
- How would you describe yourself? What skills are your strongest? How do they relate to the position you are seeking?

**Top 10 Qualities Employers Seek**
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Technical
- Work Experience
- Leadership
- Interpersonal
- Motivation/Initiative
- Academic Record
- Analytical
- Honesty/Integrity/Ethics
Self-management and transferable skills

The following word lists are extremely helpful when thinking about what you have to offer an employer. Action verbs can describe your work experience as well as communicate your transferable skills and strengths. Self-Management skills or personal characteristics can help you describe qualities necessary for performance.

**Self-Management Skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>accurate</th>
<th>exceptional</th>
<th>quick</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>active listener</td>
<td>flexible</td>
<td>reliable</td>
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<tr>
<td>adept</td>
<td>goal oriented</td>
<td>responsive</td>
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<td>anticipatory</td>
<td>good listener</td>
<td>responsible</td>
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<td>aware</td>
<td>humorous</td>
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<td>creative</td>
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<td>successful</td>
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<td>competent</td>
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<td>sensitive</td>
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<tr>
<td>decisive</td>
<td>instrumental</td>
<td>strong</td>
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<tr>
<td>dedicated</td>
<td>independent</td>
<td>sophisticated</td>
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<tr>
<td>adept</td>
<td>integrity</td>
<td>self-motivated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dependable</td>
<td>leader</td>
<td>self-confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diplomatic</td>
<td>motivated</td>
<td>tactful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discreet</td>
<td>objective</td>
<td>team player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>driven</td>
<td>optimistic</td>
<td>trained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dynamic</td>
<td>perceptive</td>
<td>unique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effective</td>
<td>planner</td>
<td>versatile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>empathic</td>
<td>problem solver</td>
<td>willing</td>
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Complete the following questions to organize your thoughts.

**My top 3 self-management skills are:**

1) ____________________________________________

2) ____________________________________________

3) ____________________________________________

**These examples show how I’ve demonstrated them:**

_________________________________________________

_________________________________________________

_________________________________________________
### Transferable skills and action verbs to demonstrate these skills

#### Communication
- explain
- summarize
- listen
- edit
- persuade
- demonstrate
- sell
- make public
- presentations
- speak
- use humor
- converse
- teach
- read
- write
- define
- group facilitation

#### Organization/Management
- set priorities
- implement
- plan, forecast
- manage
- prepare
- coordinate
- time management
- establish procedures
- budget
- design
- organize
- develop

#### Leadership
- decide
- confront
- delegate
- facilitate
- redesign
- supervise
- reengineer
- motivate
- mediate
- persuade
- debate
- influence
- collaborate
- initiate
- resolve

#### Problem-Solving/Analytical
- compile
- reason
- investigate
- abstract
- observe
- evaluate
- research
- locate
- sense
- assess
- ask
- trouble shooting
- question
- review
- clarify
- diagnose
- reflect
- analyze
- obtain

#### Interpersonal
- active listening
- counsel
- cooperate
- communicate
- interview
- empathize
- negotiate
- care for
- provide
- advocate

#### Creative
- entertain
- illustrate
- create
- encourage
- design
- enable
- display
- tutor
- innovate
- facilitate
- train
- dramatize

#### Technical
- compile
- allocate
- budget
- bid
- develop reports
- estimate
- data management
- compute
- cost analysis
- data management
- forecast
- meet deadlines
- record keeping
- organize records
- attend to detail
- reconcile
- project
- systematize
- account
- calculate
- maintain
Complete the following questions to organize your thoughts.

My top three transferable skills are:

1)_____________________________________________________

2)_____________________________________________________

3)_____________________________________________________

I can demonstrate these skills with these examples:

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________
Types of interviews

There are several different types and formats of interviews you may encounter during your job search. You may find that several aspects of these interviews are combined.

The screening interview is typically your first encounter with the company. During the “screening” interview you meet with a human resource professional to determine if you meet the basic qualifications and could be recommended for an interview with a hiring manager. Most campus interviews are screening interviews.

The telephone interview is a common screening tool. See page 7 for more detailed information on this type of interview.

There are 5 basic styles of interviews:

- Structured/Traditional
- Behavioral
- Non-Directive
- Stress
- Case

While a one-on-one interview is the most common, you may encounter a panel or group interview where there are two or more interviewers. Be sure to maintain eye contact with each person and address them by name. Try to address all interviewers as you ask and answer questions.

The structured/traditional interview is the most common. The discussion is generally directed by the interviewer, with a question and answer format similar to the outline on pages 21-22.

Behavioral interviewing is another common type of interview. This approach is built on the premise that past behavior will likely predict future behavior. Questions are targeted to reveal details of past performance with specific examples. The line of questioning probes your approach to situations and the results of your efforts. Employers are generally looking for critical areas such as problem solving, decision making and leadership. The STAR technique is the key to answering Behavioral type questions. Refer to page 16 for an explanation of the STAR format and page 18 for a list of Behavioral Questions.

The non-directive interview is unstructured and more like a conversation where the interviewer is less likely to ask specific questions. The interviewer asks open ended questions like “tell me about yourself” and expects the candidate to direct most of the conversation. This type of interview clearly illustrates how well you prepared for the interview as you have the floor for 75% of the time.

The high stress interview is designed to see how well you handle stress, your confidence level, and how composed you remain in a tense situation. While this is not a very common interview style, you may encounter some aggressive interviewers.

Case style interviewing is now commonly used by management consulting firms, particularly at the graduate level. In this method, an employer presents a fictional business problem and expects a response that shows your thought process. You will be evaluated on your ability to analyze, formulate and present a business plan.
The telephone interview

Telephone interviews are becoming more common as students seek out internships and jobs around the country. Due to cost, it’s often impossible to arrange a face-to-face interview. Employers still want to talk to you, so they will either schedule a call, or, call without warning. Other employers will want to conduct an initial telephone screening before meeting you. With preparation, you can have a successful interview across the wires.

Prepare your voicemail message: If you think you might get phone calls from employers, be sure the message on your voice mail appropriate. You want to give a good impression right from the start.

Use the telephone interview opportunity to your advantage: Have your resume readily available and keep your job research materials well organized and accessible.

Do your prep work, as you would with any interview: Research the organizations to which you are applying. Practice answering questions as you would for an in-person interview. Schedule a practice interview with a career counselor, or attend an interviewing skills workshop.

During the interview:

- If you’re not expecting the call, you can ask for a minute to take the call in a quiet place, or ask to call back in five minutes, or at a time that is mutually convenient.
- Turn off music or TV, close your door.
- Consider standing while you talk. It will improve the quality of your talk (a tip from telemarketers who encourage pacing to project enthusiasm by increasing activity)
- Smile while you talk, looking into a mirror during the interview also helps.
- Keep your answers concise. Because you don’t have visual cues to guide conversation, it can be difficult to know if you are saying too much or too little.
- Be careful of “ums” and “ahs.” Without visual cues, flaws in your speech patterns are magnified (and this is all the interviewer has to evaluate).
- Speak slowly, and articulate well. Give the interviewer time to think and respond.
- You don’t need to dress up or worry about posture, but it might be helpful for you to set the tone.
- Keep a notepad handy to write notes during the interview. Be sure to get the interviewer’s name, title, address, phone number and e-mail.

After the interview: As with any interview, be sure to write or e-mail a thank you note immediately.
Preparation

Interviewing for co-op internships

Co-op interviews take place year round for pre-professional internships which provide students with temporary employment experience either part-time during the school year or full-time during the summer months.

The interview process for co-op positions is generally a shorter version of the interview for post-graduate positions. Co-op employers most often will interview applicants only once. The specific questions posed by interviewers and applicants are, for the most part, the same as those asked during an interview for a full-time position. The short-term nature of a co-op internship requires a less extensive application process, in most cases. Keep in mind, though, that many employers use co-op or internship positions to screen potential future full-time employees, so do not take an interview for a co-op position less seriously!

Once you have registered with the Cooperative Education program, completed the required workshops on resume writing and interviewing skills and had your resume approved by your counselor, you can begin the co-op self-referral process. Companies review resumes and directly contact students either by phone or email that they are interested in interviewing. Be prepared by keeping a pencil and paper by your phone to write down the date, place, and time of your scheduled interview. Return all calls or emails from employers within 24 hours and also notify your Co-op Counselor that you have been selected for an interview.

What to expect

Most co-op interviews are conducted at the company’s location unless the company has arranged to interview a scheduled number of students on campus. The interview itself can last approximately 20-30 minutes with either a Human Resources Representative or an actual department/division representative. During the interview, you will be expected to talk about your skills and your ability to perform the tasks of the co-op position. Be sure to ask questions about the position and the company however do not bring up the issue of salary. Most co-op jobs have a set salary that is listed on the position description. Ask your counselor before you interview for salary information, if one is not listed. Don’t forget to ask for the interviewer’s business card before the end of the interview.
Interviewing on-campus

The Campus Recruiting Program (CRP) at Pace takes place twice a year in the Fall and in the Spring for graduating students. Many employers choose to visit the Pace campuses each Spring and Fall to screen graduating students and co-op interns. These interviews are usually brief, 20-30 minutes in length, and often conducted by a human resource representative. The employers’ objective in the screening interview is to learn more about you and your achievements, to assess how well you would fit into their particular environment, and evaluate your ability to perform the responsibilities of a particular position. Once they determine if you are a possible fit for their organization, you will be invited to an employer site interview.

What to expect

Many companies hold “Information Sessions” the night before interviewing. Be sure to attend as it will enhance your interview and increase your chances for a job offer. If no Information Session is held by the company, be sure to research the company and the industry (see page 12). On the day of the campus interview, you should arrive at the Career Services office 10 minutes prior to your scheduled interview. You will be directed to a waiting area where you sign in. While you wait, you may be greeted by a representative from the interviewing companies. These employee representatives who are called “Greeters” might be recent Pace Alums currently working for that company. Their role is to make you feel at ease and answer any preliminary questions. Be friendly and always maintain a poised, professional demeanor (even if you know them personally!).

The interviewer will come to the waiting area to meet you and escort you to the assigned interview room. While walking to the room expect to engage in some informal conversation (some topics might be: the weather, a current event, sports, the campus). The interview itself can last approximately 20-30 minutes and is usually with a Human Resource Representative or an actual Department/Division Representative. Try to get a more detailed description of the job during the interview and as much information about the organization as possible. Make sure you ask for the interviewer’s business card before you leave the room.

Interview feedback

After you have had two campus interviews you may ask a Career Counselor to review the Interview Feedback Forms that are completed by the campus interviewers. These forms are useful to evaluate your performance at the interview and to focus on areas that may need improvement.
Second interviews/on-site interviews

This is a final step before a job offer or rejection. Since the first interview for the Campus Interview Program is generally a screening interview, you can expect that the second interview will be conducted by the supervisors and co-workers for whom you will be working. The second interview is where jobs are won or lost! Even though an invitation for a second interview is a positive sign, it is not a guarantee of a job offer.

Second interviews offer both parties a better chance to make informed choices. The employer can make a more in-depth analysis of you as a candidate, and you have a chance to see the work environment, meet staff members and gain useful insight into the organization’s culture.

The interview day may include multiple interviews, information sessions, tours, meals and other activities. The actual interview may include some combination of one-on-one, behavior based and group interview formats. Be prepared to answer some questions repeatedly throughout the day.

The second interview is usually longer, sometimes lasting a half to a whole day. Your day could include a mealtime meeting. See page 20 for tips on dining etiquette.

Before leaving, find out how long you can expect to wait before hearing about an employment decision. Don’t be afraid to convey your enthusiasm about a job if you feel that there is a good fit and that you are eager to join their team. If you receive a verbal job offer at the end of your interview day, you may accept it or request a specific date by which they need your decision.

Words of wisdom:

- No matter how relaxed you are, maintain your professional demeanor at all times.

- Take extra copies of your resume and your reference list with you. Be sure to obtain prior permission from those you list as references.

- Be ready to accommodate different styles of interviewing with various people you will meet – not all of them will be skilled, or comfortable interviewers.

- Be aware. If the company has brought you back, they are serious about you. Is this the kind of place you would like to work?

- Do not feel compelled to accept an offer on-site. Take time to consider the offer.
Researching employers

Researching a potential employer is a crucial step in the interview process. Interviewers commonly ask “What do you know about our company?” or “Why are you interested in working for us?” If you possess knowledge of the organization, you’ll come across as a stronger and more competitive candidate. Ask friends, classmates, professors, or the Career Services staff if they have knowledge of companies. Use your research to develop connections with companies.

Be warned: Don’t try to research an organization the day before an interview! While the Internet has revolutionized the information gathering process, you may need to dig further. Don’t put this off, begin as soon as you find out you have an interview.

Why research the employer?

- To gain an idea of products or services, size of organization, location(s) and annual sales
- To understand their philosophy, organizational structure, competition, type of training programs, and potential growth and recent developments
- To be able to formulate questions based on your research
- To impress the interviewer with your interest in the company

Where can I find information?

- Online sources/internet
- Through networking with personal and Career Services contacts
- Annual reports (usually available online)
- Databases – “Business and Company Resource Center”, “Business Source Premier”, “Lexis-Nexis Academic” and “Mergent Online” in the reference section of the Pace or Public Library
- Periodicals/Newspapers – look for current articles in the NY Times, Wall Street Journal, Forbes, Bloomberg, The Economist, etc.
- Ask a reference librarian to assist you

How can I use the information during the interview?

Being informed about an employer does not mean you’ll ace an interview unless you can successfully use the information to ask pertinent, intelligent questions. Artfully weaving the information into the interview is a skill you need to develop and practice. Merely spouting facts about the company will not impress an interviewer.

Using information you have gathered to answer questions should be done with subtlety. If you know the company is international, you could say that you feel comfortable communicating in a second language. If you know the employer wants to expand its market share, stress how you increased sales or fundraising activities.

Use the information to also ask questions and expand on what you’ve read. For example, if you’ve read in their literature that after 6-12 months promotions are made based on “demonstrated ability,” you could ask the interviewer to expand on methods used to evaluate employees or what would distinguish top employees during that time period.
Researching employers (continued)

One of the quickest and most effective ways to find information about companies/potential employers or industries is through online research. Many companies will a home page that you can locate through the web address (URL). Keep in mind that a home page is designed by the company and will only tell you what the company wants you to know.

You can use a search engine such as Google, Yahoo or Bing to locate the company website or industry information.

Pace students and alumni may access additional ways to conduct employer research through the Career Services home page at:

http://www.pace.edu/careers

Click on “Job Search Tools” then “Research Employers and Industries” to view a selection of websites which provides company and industry listings. Suggested sites are: glassdoor.com, wetfeet.com and vault.com

You may also access relevant information using databases on the Pace Library Website by going to:

http://library.pace.edu

Once you are in the Pace Library site: Select “Find Resources” then “Databases”. Some electronic databases have remote access and others may be used only in the library.

From the Complete Database Listing, check out: "Business and Company Resource Center", "Business Source Premier", “Lexis-Nexis Academic” and “Mergent Online” and other databases according to interest.

Alternatively, in the Library Services section, you can use Research Guides. Click on Research Guides -> Business and Marketing ->Company Research -> Locate Articles/Library Databases. Use this list to finds links to companies on the web, annual reports, industry/trade associations and journals, and tools for company/industry research.
Preparation

Your wardrobe and grooming

Initial impressions count, so be sure to have interview attire that is professional and comfortable! Quality clothing along with an appropriate, neat hairstyle will combine to make a professional image. Dressing like you already have the job demonstrates self-confidence.

IMAGE TIPS FOR WOMEN

SUIT OR DRESS: A conservative colored suit is always appropriate, but a tailored dress may also be worn. Avoid floral prints. The skirt should be knee-length with no high slit. Be sure that the skirt is not too tight and that you are comfortable sitting down in it.

BLOUSE: A business-like blouse that looks neat under the suit and is flattering. White or pastels are always good but a different color is also acceptable if it is professional. Make sure that it is freshly pressed and has a conservative neckline.

SHOES: Mid-heel pumps in black, brown or navy. Don’t wear light color shoes, sandals, or very high or narrow heels. Make sure that your shoes are well polished and in good shape.

HOSE: Neutral color hose is always safe, but hose that blends with the hemline is also acceptable. No textures or patterns. Carry an extra pair of hose in a briefcase or pocketbook in case your hose gets a run on the way to the interview.

ACCESSORIES: Conservative jewelry (one ring on each hand) and simple style earrings (one pair only) avoiding big hoops and bangles. Your pocketbook should be in good condition. You may want to use a professional looking briefcase instead of a pocketbook and carry a smart-looking portfolio in which you will keep extra copies of your resume, a note pad and a business-like pen. If you smoke, do not have cigarettes visible in your briefcase or pocketbook.

GROOMING: Fingernails should be clean and not too long. Polish is fine as long as it is conservative. Hair should be clean and well groomed. Make-up should be natural and conservative especially with eye shadow and liner. No visible body piercing. Do not wear heavy cologne. Make sure that your clothes are spotless. Check for lint and dandruff before your interview. Avoid strong smelling foods and freshen your breath before your interview. If possible, do not smoke for several hours prior to the interview.
**IMAGE TIPS FOR MEN**

**SUIT:** Single breasted suit of gray, black, navy or pinstripe. Fabric should be wool or wool blend. Sleeves should end at wrist bone.

**SHIRT:** Long sleeved, button down or spread collar of white or light blue. Collar should fit perfectly and one inch of cuff should show beyond suit. Fabric should be cotton or cotton blend and should be well ironed.

**TIE:** Conservative stripe or small pattern preferably of silk. No bright colors.

**SHOES:** Laced oxfords black, brown or cordovan. Tassel slip-ons are acceptable. Make sure your shoes are shined and in good repair!

**SOCKS:** Solid and dark to match the shoes and high enough to cover the calf.

**ACCESSORIES:** The only jewelry that should be worn is a conservative watch and perhaps a conservative ring (if that is what you usually wear). No visible body piercings. A good leather belt to match your shoes or you could wear suspenders, but not both. Carry a professional looking portfolio in which you can keep extra resumes and a note pad. Buy a professional looking pen. If you smoke, do not have cigarettes visible in your pocket or portfolio.

**GROOMING:** Make sure your hair is neat, your nails are clean and everything is polished and professional. Hair should be short and beards should be clean shaven or close. Make sure that your clothes are spotless. Check for lint and dandruff before your interview. Avoid strong smelling foods and freshen your breath before an interview. Do not wear strong after shave or cologne. If you smoke, avoid smoking for several hours prior to the interview.
Interviewing techniques

Once you've outlined what it is you wish to convey to potential employers during an interview and stories you wish to tell, you need to practice. Find a friend, stand in front of a mirror, work with a counselor, attend an Interview Workshop or request a mock interview session. Practice what you want to say and how you want to say it. Your answers should communicate strengths, purpose and enthusiasm. Have a plan to cover major points about your:

EDUCATION • WORK EXPERIENCE • ACCOMPLISHMENTS • ACTIVITIES • GOALS

Be prepared to cover all these topics during the interview!

Practice your communication skills

- Check your tone of voice.
- Avoid “um” and “uh” and phrases such as, “like” “okay” and “you know”.
- Use correct grammar and a strong vocabulary.
- Check your non-verbal communication: posture, facial expressions, eye contact and mannerisms.

Practice talking about yourself

- Get comfortable with you as the main topic! For some people who are naturally shy or less inclined to talk about themselves, this will take practice. But, if you don't sell yourself – who will? Stating the facts is not boasting!
- Practice communicating your selling points, with emphasis and enthusiasm.
- Personalize by using the personal pronoun “I” as opposed to “you” or “we”.
- Practice relaxation techniques.

Practice interviewing techniques

- Practice the STAR method outlined on the next page.
- Practice restating complex questions and clarifying before answering.
- Practice pausing before answering.
- Practice answers to questions on the following pages and study questions you may want to ask.
- Practice emphasizing positive aspects of your experience. Learn how to avoid any negative comments.
- Practice overcoming objections and anticipating concerns the employer may have about your qualifications.
- Set up a mock interview with a Career Services Counselor. Have it digitally recorded and play it back to analyze both your verbal and non-verbal communication skills.
Forming answers to questions

You will be asked various types of questions during a job interview, but all of them are geared toward getting to know you and understanding your knowledge and experience as it relates to the position. Carefully outline what you want employers to know about you, then prepare stories based on the following format called the STAR method!

**STAR** stands for:

- **S** (situation)
- **T** (task)
- **A** (action – what you did!)
- **R** (results – the outcome of your effort!)

An example of how to use the STAR method:

**QUESTION:** “Give me an example of how you utilized your organizational skills.”

**S (Situation):** This past semester I was involved in Homecoming Weekend at Pace.

**T (Task):** My assignment was to publicize the event.

**A (Action):** I made a list of all the student organizations, newspapers and radio stations to contact and made all the calls to request publicity spots. I delegated the creation of posters and flyers to the art major on the committee.

**R (Results):** At the end of the weekend, we totaled a 65% increase in attendees from the previous year.

The STAR method proved **goal setting** and **organizational skills** through a concrete story. This approach can be used for all kinds of answers to interview questions. Practice creating STAR stories highlighting your transferable skills and using the sample questions on the next page.

16
Commonly asked questions

Develop and practice answers to these commonly asked questions.

Tell me about yourself.
This is a very open ended question and you should use it to make a brief statement about your education and professional background, why you’re interested in the position and how you are qualified for it.

Why did you choose this major/career?
Indicate a particular skill or interest. Tell a specific story about it that supports your decision.

What courses/subjects did you like best or least? Talk about the courses in your major and the ones in which you performed best and what about the subject makes it so appealing or not.

What are your long and short term career goals? You need not be specific but you must show knowledge of career paths and opportunities in the industry.

What do you consider your greatest strength? Pick one that relates to the position and give an example using the STAR method.

What motivates you?
Tell a story about your accomplishments and what was personally satisfying about it.

What have been your most significant achievements?
Tell a STAR story!

Why should we hire you?
Use this question to review the major key points of your interview outline. Emphasize your strengths and use supporting evidence to justify your response.

What do you consider your greatest area in need of improvement? Choose something that is not related to the position, but indicate that you are working to strengthen it. Focus your response on examples that involve an area of knowledge or set of skills that require further development.

Why do you want to work for our company?
Show your knowledge of the company through having done extensive research, what you’ve learned at the interview, and discuss your personal goals and values.

What qualities do you possess that make you think you’d be successful in this job/industry?
Use your research to back up the personal qualities that make you the best candidate.

What do you do in your free time?
Talk about your involvement in community service, a sport, or special interests/passions you pursue outside of school.

In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our organization?
Reiterate contributions you have made in the past in other work or school situations and relate them to this organization.
Behavioral questions

Practice answers to behavior based questions using the STAR method. Remember, these are the questions looking for how you performed in a situation in the past at work or school. Employers ask behavioral based questions to anticipate your potential success in the position. Think back on your classroom, work and other experience to find specific examples demonstrating various skills. Remember to give factual responses that show results.

**Hint: study the job description/qualifications for clues to the types of behavioral questions you might be asked.

Give me an example of a time where you took on a leadership role.

Tell me about a time when you used excellent communication skills.

Give me an example of a goal you set and how you achieved it.

Describe an achievement of which you are most proud and how you accomplished it.

Give me an example of where you had difficulty in a course and what steps you took to remedy it.

Describe a situation where you had to coordinate the activities of other people.

Describe a successful project you completed that required long hours.

Describe a time when you had to work with someone who was uncooperative.

What is the greatest decision you've had to make within the last 6 months?

Describe a time when you successfully balanced several competing priorities.

When you have a full day of tasks, how you approach successfully completing them?

Describe a time when you had to adapt to a variety of people or situations.

Tell me about a time you had to handle a difficult situation with a co-worker.

What did you do in your last position to contribute toward team success?
Asking questions

Interviewers expect candidates to ask questions. In fact, candidates who do not ask questions are often eliminated from consideration. Remember, you are evaluating the employer and need to have as much information as possible in order to make your decision. Make sure questions indicate that you have researched the company, the position and the industry. Be sure not to ask questions already explained by the interviewer, in company literature or at an Information Session.

**Hint:** It is always a good idea to ask about the hiring timeline to give you a sense of how long the process might take.

- Could you describe more fully the duties and responsibilities of the position/internship?
- Is this a newly created position or are you filling a vacancy? Have you hired interns before?
- How are new hires/interns trained and developed?
- Will I be working as part of a team or more independently?
- Who would be my immediate supervisor? Will I be working with other students?
- What type of supervision will I receive?
- What is the management style of the organization? The department? The supervisor?
- What new projects or initiatives are planned for the near future?
- How would you describe the work environment?
- Could you describe a typical day for someone in this position?
- What skills are most valuable in performing this internship/job?
- What characteristics do you look for in a successful intern/candidate?
- Could you describe the career paths of people in this job/department?
- How and when will my performance be evaluated?
- What do you see as the strengths of the department/division?
- What major projects could I expect within the first six months/year on the job?
- What are the priorities of the organization over the next year?
- What is the greatest challenge currently facing the department/organization?
- What are the opportunities for professional growth and development?
Dining etiquette

As part of the interview process, particularly with the Campus Interview Program, you may be invited to lunch, dinner, or a reception with an employer. Increasing numbers of employers are making use of mealtime interviews. Why? These meetings showcase your social behavior allowing the interviewer to evaluate your image, poise and personal habits. These observations can lend insight into how you will behave with others in the workplace and/or with prospective clients.

Here are a few tips for dining your way to success:

- Be prepared to engage in a casual conversation, usually “pleasant small talk” such as the weather, recent news events, sports or travel. Avoid politics or personal issues.

- Stress pertinent aspects of your professional background during the meal, when appropriate.

- Never order alcoholic beverages. Alcohol can affect your alertness and ability to be articulate, especially if your stress level is high.

- When ordering, use your host as a guide and stay in the moderate price range.

Be alert to the following:

- Always place your napkin in your lap and leave it there throughout the meal.

- Cut the lettuce in a salad to avoid dressing splatter.

- Avoid foods with strange flavors, smells or those which are sloppy to eat.

- Always let your host pick up the bill, even if it is placed in front of you.

- Familiarize yourself with proper dining manners through books, workshops or videos.

Good luck & bon appetite
The Interview Format

Generally, an employer will contact you by phone or email to schedule an interview. Your initial verbal communication will make a lasting impression, hopefully a positive one. Be sure to have a professional message on your voicemail and conduct all phone calls to set up appointments using a clear voice and giving the impression that you're an organized person!

There are five basic stages of all employment interviews. Awareness of these stages will enable you to prepare for the entire interview and know what to expect.

Stage 1: Arrival

Always arrive at the interview location 10-15 minutes early to allow time for you to relax and gather your thoughts. This time will enable you to observe the organization and lower your stress level. Greet the receptionist in a friendly manner and be aware that you might have been in the elevator with the person who is about to meet with you! Don't eat, smoke or chew gum while waiting.

Stage 2: Breaking The Ice

First impressions count! Your attire, confidence and communication skills will have an important initial impact on the interviewer. This is the time in which the interviewer is trying to establish rapport and put you at ease. A firm handshake is crucial. It says “I am confident and in control.” Establish eye contact and smile.

Expect some “chit-chat” for a minute or so about the weather, directions, etc. It is important that you present yourself as relaxed, confident and positive!

Be sure to use the interviewer’s name and convey that you are very pleased to be there.

Assume and maintain a posture that shows energy, alertness and confidence—lean in during the conversation. Be aware of your nervous habits and non-verbal communication signals. Use facial gestures to show interest, head nodding to show understanding and voice inflections to show enthusiasm.
**At the Interview**

**Stage 3: Information Exchange/Discussion**

This is the core of the interview where you will be asked questions designed to determine whether or not you possess the knowledge, skills and attitudes to effectively perform the job. It is your time to verbalize your ability to do the job by telling stories and giving examples of your qualifications using the STAR technique (page 16). All that you have practiced comes into play here. Offer examples and stories to illustrate points about your background.

**Stage 4: Expanding The Focus**

In this part of the interview you want to zero in on more detailed information about yourself and broaden your descriptions of how your experience can translate to their position. This is the “sales pitch” part of the interview where you focus on exactly what the employer has told you they are looking for, stressing your qualifications. You may show interest and enthusiasm for the position and start to get excited about the job! Make sure that your questions have been answered and try and bring back into discussion comments made by the interviewer earlier on. This shows you were truly listening and that you were able to remember the information.

**Stage 5: The Wrap Up**

This part of the interview allows you to ask additional questions and make your final comments about wanting the job. Emphatically state your interest, don’t assume that the interviewer is aware of your enthusiasm. Ask about the next step in the interview process and the length of time before notification regarding decisions or second interviews. Thank the interviewer, shake hands and state that you enjoyed the meeting. Be sure to get a business card! Say a cheerful goodbye to the secretary on your way out. The opinions of office staff are often valued in the assessment of candidates.
Some Helpful Hints

Throughout all of the various stages of the interview itself there are several points to keep in mind and remember:

- Stay alert, focused and listen carefully to what is being presented to you. Ask for clarification if you are unsure about details.
- Maintain eye contact and try to smile.
- Avoid yes/no and brief answers. Offer a general statement to serve as an introduction to your answer.
- Take your time. Don't be afraid to stop and think about an answer to a question. You may even paraphrase a question before answering. Employers will have an impression of you as a thoughtful individual, one who will think before acting!
- Interviewers don't expect you to have all the answers; it's okay to admit you don't know something or can't think of an answer at that moment.
- Always remain positive, never volunteer negative information. Avoid negative words and phrases like "No, I haven't" or "No, I can't". Try to put all answers and statements in a positive form.
- Don't lapse into casual conversation or let your guard down. Remain professional and focused on your goal stressing your qualifications for the job!
- Don't initiate the salary question and don't discuss it until you've proved your value as a candidate and the employer has raised the issue.
- Take some initiative during the interview, but do not try to control it. If the conversation starts to move away from the job itself, try to focus it back to you as a candidate.
- Employers want to hire people who are competent, bright, friendly, likable, enthusiastic, and honest. Project these qualities during the interview.
- Ask intelligent, well thought out questions showing you are serious about the job.
- Maintain a conversational flow with the interviewer by asking questions, probing and expanding the depth of the discussion. Build on areas of interest based on the interviewer's reactions.
- Include specific, quantifiable details in your examples and stories, repeating your strengths, skills and assets.
- Keep your answers concise and to the point. Don't ramble. Structure your answers using the STAR format (see page 15) always giving examples.
At the Interview

Illegal Interview Questions

At any point during the job search process you may be confronted with pre-employment questions you are not required to answer by law. Keep in mind that all questions should be job-related, specifically in reference to how your qualifications relate to the job responsibilities. Deciding how to respond to an illegal question is not easy and may depend on a variety of factors. In all cases, try to respond positively about your qualifications for the position! Employers may not ask questions about:

Age
How old are you?
When were you born?
When did you graduate from high school?

Marital Status
Are you married?
Do you intend to get married soon?
Do you have children?
Are you a single parent?
Do you have reliable child care?
Are you pregnant?
Do you plan on having children soon?
Can you travel?

Religious Preference
What is your religious affiliation?
Are you a member of any religious group?
What church/synagogue are you a member of?
What do you do on Sundays/Friday nights?
Is there any day of the week you are not able to work?

Ethnic Origin/Race
What country where you born in?
What’s your nationality?
Are you a U.S. citizen?
Where are your parents from?
What languages do your parents speak?

Are you bilingual?
What language do you speak at home?
What is your racial/ethnic group?

Sexual Preference
What’s your sexual orientation?
Are you a member of any gay/lesbian groups?
Do you date members of the same or opposite sex?

Disability/Special Working Conditions
Do you have any disabilities?
What health problems do you have?
Have you ever been denied health insurance?
Do you take any prescription medication?
Are you physically fit?

Arrest Record
Have you ever been arrested?
Have you been involved with law suits?
How many times were you arrested and for what?

Affiliations
To what clubs or organizations do you belong?

Personal
What is your maiden name?
How long have you lived at your current address?
How much do you weigh?
Would you submit a photograph?
Do you own a car, home, etc?
What is your credit history?

These are by no means all the questions you may encounter, but should give you a good idea of what might be considered discriminatory.
Recap and Follow Up

Analyze your performance after each interview. Ask yourself:

- Was I prepared?
- Did I keep the interviewer’s attention?
- Which questions gave me difficulty?
- Did I cover my outline of “selling points?”
- Did I learn enough about the job and employer?
- What areas do I need to better prepare for the next interview?
- Where could I have elaborated more?

In addition, assess whether or not you would want the job. Ask yourself if there are any points you want to clarify. Think about what potential concerns the interviewer may have about you.

Review the following areas to critique your interview performance:

Leadership/Assertiveness
Confident; team-oriented; problem solver; motivated

Communication Skills
Verbal responsiveness and quality of questions asked; non-verbal body language, eye contact, handshake, expressiveness

Interview Preparation
Researched company; understood field or industry; was clear about goals

Academic Preparation
Technical knowledge/skills; understanding major in relation to career goals

Professional Appearance
Was I dressed for success?

Write a letter of appreciation within 24 hours. Be sure to reiterate your interest in the position. Make it as personal as possible so that the interviewer will remember you. Include any documents or information requested. Restate points which you may not have communicated effectively. If you interviewed with more than one person, write to each one. Request your thanks be conveyed to others involved in the interview process. The letter doesn’t have to be long, but an immediate correspondence shows you are sincerely interested in the position. See sample on Page 26.

Review the interview with a Career Counselor and discuss areas of concern. Practice interviewing or set up a mock interview for constructive feedback! Review feedback forms if part of Campus Recruiting Program.

Follow-up with the employer if you have not heard within two weeks regarding your status as a candidate, unless you were given a specific time frame during the interview.

If you receive a rejection letter, follow-up with a note expressing interest in future positions for which you may qualify. If you are comfortable, ask for feedback on your interview or why you were not selected as a candidate.
After the Interview

Thank You Letter Sample

Your Address
City, State, Zip Code

Date

Name
Title
Organization
Street Address or P.O. Box #
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms.:

1st Paragraph: Thank the interviewer for his/her time and consideration. You may also express how much you enjoyed the meeting and learning more of the position at his/her firm.

2nd Paragraph: Sum up some important qualifications you possess which make you a good candidate for the position. For example, “I believe my organizational abilities would make me particularly effective in this position.” Be enthusiastic and sincere with your comments. The notes you jotted down after your interview will help you formulate comments for this second paragraph.

3rd Paragraph: Thank the employer once again for his/her interest in you as a candidate. You may also write something like: “I look forward to learning of your decision” or “I am excited about the possibility of working for your organization.”

Sincerely,

Your Name

Your Name
Evaluating Job Offers

Congratulations! You have a job offer, or perhaps, several job offers! Evaluating job offers is a part of the job search that often receives little attention. Review and reflect on the information you have gathered about the position, organization, and long-term opportunities. Keep in mind it is normal to feel anxious and excited when making decisions. Since it is important that you make a decision which most closely suits your personal and career goals, you need to ask yourself some important questions:

How does this job fit my long-term career plans?

Does this job take me in a direction I want to go?

In addition to these questions, here are some important factors to consider:

Job Content/Company
The job content is most important to your happiness. Therefore, be sure that you fully understand the nature of the job. Is the job interesting to you? Are you proud of the products or services of the employer? Will you develop marketable skills?

Your Manager/Supervisor
Don’t minimize this factor when asking yourself if you can get along with this person. Is there chemistry and will this person serve as a valuable mentor? Will this person be someone who will be interested in your growth? Ideally, you want a manager who encourages your professional development.

Salary and Benefits
Is the salary offered competitive? How individual salary increases are determined (job performance, job level, length of service, etc.)? When and how are salary reviews/promotions handled? Salary is not the only compensation to consider. Evaluate company benefits such as vacation time, medical benefits, retirement plans, tuition reimbursement, etc. See next page for information on negotiating salaries.

Co-Workers
All organizations are made up of individuals who contribute to the working environment or corporate culture. Try to get a sense of co-worker personalities and work styles. Will you get along with your peers?

Time Commitment
What would a typical work week be like (hours required, meetings out of office, travel, assignments, etc.)? Factor this information in with your other life responsibilities in order to evaluate whether the job will be a good fit.

Training/Professional Development
Will you receive formal training or additional education to enhance your career?

Location
How long is the commute? Do you like the location where you’ll be working and living?

Culture
Is the organization flexible or rigid? Does the culture of the organization fit in with your values? Will there be any flexibility during emergencies?

You may want to discuss all of these factors with your family, friends, professors and/or your Career Services Counselor before you make your final decision.
**After the Interview**

**Negotiating Salaries (For Full-Time Offers)**

When negotiating a compensation package, there is much to consider and it is best to prepare your strategy beforehand. Approach the process with a positive and professional attitude in order to reach a mutually satisfactory agreement for you and the employer. Follow these key points to prepare:

**Assess Cost of Living Expenses**
Estimate how much money you will need to allocate for basic living expenses as well as city, state and federal taxes. What is your current salary? What is your ideal salary?

**Homework**
Research typical salary ranges in your field for your experience level and geographic location. Salary information is available from a variety of sources including the Career Services Annual Report and the Resource Room in the Career Services offices. Recommended websites include:

- www.bls.gov
- www.glassdoor.com
- www.wetfeet.com
- www.salary.com
- www.payscale.com

**Benefits**
Your base salary is just the starting point when negotiating. Benefits can add thousands of dollars to the final compensation package. In addition to your base salary you may also receive bonuses, increases, stock options, commissions, company car, pensions and signing bonuses. Other benefits may include health insurance, retirement plans, paid vacation/sick and personal time, tuition remission and relocation assistance.

**Responsibilities**
Consider how promotions, performance reviews, accelerated reviews and job growth will impact your willingness to accept the compensation package offered.

**Discussing Dollars**
Your best strategy, once an offer has been quoted, is to take your time to consider it. The initial offer is typically the lowest salary. Your goal is to aim for the top of your estimated salary range, but be prepared to compromise. Some employers may have set pay structures with little room to negotiate. Prepare your statements in a positive manner, using neutral words or phrases such as “I am very excited about this opportunity and the position is attractive although the compensation seems conservative based on my experience”. Or: “Given the responsibilities of the job, my qualifications, and research I have conducted, I would anticipate the salary to be more in the range of $______”.

Be prepared to propose other forms of compensation or reward as mentioned above. Non-salary benefits may have tax exemptions and prove valuable. Be careful not to over negotiate, but asking for greater compensation is an expected part of the acceptance process. Remember, the salary you negotiate today will influence your future earnings.
After the Interview

Your Final Decision

In an ideal world, all job offers would occur at the same time and decisions would be easy. Since this rarely happens, we suggest some guidelines concerning an ethical approach to accepting or declining offers.

Most employers will establish a deadline date by which you need to inform them of your decision. You may want to tell the employer that you have other interviews, and would like additional time to consider their offer. Some employers will understand. Others may try to apply pressure. You may have to negotiate a later deadline. Make sure you have a date in mind and ask the employer to agree. Then, you must adhere to that agreed upon time limit with no exceptions and communicate your decision on that date.

Accepting a job offer is a serious commitment. Once you accept, it is considered proper business ethics to discontinue all job search activities. In fact, you should inform employers that you have accepted an offer and are no longer eligible for consideration. It is unacceptable to reverse your decision. Once all negotiation has ended and you’ve agreed upon an offer, obtain written confirmation. Asking for an offer in writing prevents a possible future misunderstanding. Write your own acceptance letter spelling out your understanding of the agreement.

If you receive an offer that does not interest you, decline as soon as possible. This enables the employer to offer the job to another candidate. Express your sincere appreciation for the job offer and let the employer know that your decision to decline was a difficult one. You can also briefly state your reason(s) for declining the offer (e.g. another position was better suited for your career goals). In the future you might be interested in this company again, and your professionalism will leave a lasting and positive impression.

Pace University students are expected to interview and accept offers with integrity. One applicant’s unethical behavior can damage the University’s reputation with an entire employer community.

Remember, ethical standards are important throughout your job search as well as your professional and personal life.