Interviewers evaluate on the following...

- **Appearance**: Dress appropriately for the interview
- **Greeting/Introduction**: We recommend that you stand to greet your interviewer with a handshake, using his/her name. Also, make good eye contact with the interviewer, smile, and be professional.
- **Body Language**: During the interview, be aware of your eye contact, subtle use of hands while speaking, good posture, etc.
- **Attitude**: Your attitude toward work and working with others is crucial in the hiring process. Be sure to convey an attitude that is enthusiastic, sincere, and genuine.
- **Responses to the Interview Questions**: Do your research and practice, practice, practice! Know your goals and be able to express them to the interviewer.
- **Oral Communication**: Speak clearly and concisely. Try to think out your response before answering a question.
- **Preparation**: Prepare questions for your interviewer and research the position and/or company/organization-agency for which you are interviewing
Know the Facts!

Be sure you are fully prepared for interviews by completing the worksheets on pages 2 and 3! They will help you understand yourself and the employer!

Prepare yourself

- Interviews can be a very intimidating task if you are unprepared.
- Preparation and practice are key ingredients to a successful interview!
- You must be able to talk about yourself with confidence.
- Exploring and understanding yourself allows you to answer interview questions as effectively as possible.
- It is vital to understand your attributes and personality so that you can convey those positive qualities to the interviewer.
- **A worksheet is provided in order to help identify different aspects of your character (see page 2).** When answering the questions be sure to also analyze the information on your resume and ask others who know you well.

Know the Employer

- Do your homework! Be prepared for an interviewer to ask questions about his/her organization.
- Researching the company/organization/agency shows genuine interest in the career opportunity and it allows you to gain valuable information as well.
- By learning about the company/organization/agency you are able to see if it is a place where you would like to find employment.
- Also, this time spent will help generate questions to ask the employer during the interview process.
- The Internet will have a lot of information to offer and is a good place to start your research.
- **A worksheet is provided with questions to begin your company research (see page 3).** The questions will prepare you for possible questions that employers may ask.
- A survey revealed that the following factors were most important when interviewing a candidate:
  - Skills & experience 10%
  - Education 10%
  - First impression 40%
  - Personal characteristics 40%

Prepare yourself

1. Personality traits or skills I have that are job related:
   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________

2. Examples of experiences I have had that demonstrate the above traits/skills:
   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________

3. List 3-5 accomplishments that would be of interest to the person interviewing me:
   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________

4. What are the 3 most important things I want the interviewer to know about me?:
   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________

5. What concerns might an employer have about me and what will alleviate those concerns?:
   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________
Know the Employer

1. How long has the organization been in operation?
   __________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

2. Where is the organization located? Are there other locations?
   __________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

3. Is it a public or private organization? ________________________________

4. Has the organization been in the news lately? For what reason(s)?
   __________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

5. What are the services/products/programs this organization provides?
   __________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

6. Who are its competitors?
   __________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

7. How is it doing relative to its competitors?
   __________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

8. What are the organization’s short-term goals? Long-term goals?
   __________________________________________________________________________________

9. What else is the organization known for (e.g., community involvement, supportive of families,
relaxed atmosphere, etc.)?
   __________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

10. What challenges/difficulties does this organization face? How can I help solve them?
    __________________________________________________________________________________
    __________________________________________________________________________________
Behavior Based Interviewing

What exactly is behavior based interviewing?:
Behavioral based interviewing is a style of interviewing that many companies and organizations use in the hiring process. The basic premise behind behavioral interviewing is this: **The most accurate predictor of future performance is past behavior in a similar situation.** It provides a more objective set of facts to make employment decisions than other interviewing methods. Traditional interviewing may ask you to respond to general statements like, “tell me about yourself.” The process of behavioral interviewing is much more probing and works very differently.

The “STAR” Technique: a good approach to responding to Behavior Based Questions

S-Situation (Describe the situation.)
T-Task (What needed to be done?)
A-Action (What did you do?)
R-Result (What happened?)

**Important Points: Behavior Based Interviewing**

- In the interview, your response needs to be specific and detailed. Tell about a particular situation that relates to the question, not a general one. Tell briefly about the situation, the task at hand, what you did specifically, and the positive result or outcome.
- The interviewee tells a story for a few minutes; typically the interviewer will pick apart the story to try to get at the specific behavior(s). The interviewer can probe further for more depth or detail such as “What were you thinking at the point?” or “Tell me more about your meeting with that person,” or “Lead me through your decision process.”
- Always listen carefully to the question, ask for clarification if necessary, and make sure you answer the question completely.
- Your interview preparation should include identifying examples of situations where you have demonstrated the behaviors desired by a given company/organization/agency.
- Prepare success stories. The stories should represent your skills, qualities, and characteristics. Always give examples of your strengths and successes.
- Your resume will serve as a good guide when answering these questions. Refresh your memory regarding your achievements in the past couple of years. Demonstration of the desired behaviors may be given in many ways. Use examples from past internships, classes, activities, team involvement, community service, and work experience. In addition, you may use examples of which you may be especially proud of, such as: winning a marathon race, exhibiting paintings in an art show, running for student government, etc.
Sample Behavior Based Interview statements for response:

1. Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.

2. Describe an instance when you had to think on your feet to extricate yourself from a difficult situation.

3. Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.

4. By providing examples, convince me that you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations, and environments.

5. Describe a time on any job that you held in which you were faced with problems or stresses that tested your coping skills.

6. Give an example of a time in which you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision.

7. Give me a specific occasion in which you conformed to a policy with which you did not agree.

8. Give me an example of an important goal which you had set in the past and tell me about your success in reaching it.

9. Describe the most significant or creative presentation which you have had to complete.

10. Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.

11. Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person when the individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).
Other possible interview questions & statements for response

**Education**
- Why did you choose your degree/program?
- Why did you choose to attend graduate school?
- Do you think you received a good education? In what ways?
- In what ways do your graduate education and work experience relate to this job?
- Do you plan to return to school for further graduate education?

**Personal**
- What do you consider to be your greatest strength?
- Can you name some weaknesses? How are you working to improve them?
- Define success.
- Have you had a time that you failed at something? What did you learn from that failure?
- Of which three accomplishments are you most proud?
- Who are your role models? Why?
- What motivates you most in a job?
- Tell me about yourself.
- Describe your ideal job.
- Where do you want to be in five years?

**Experience**
- What job related skills have you developed?
- What did you enjoy the most/least about your last employment?
- Have you ever done any volunteer work? What kind?
- How do you define leadership? In what capacity have you served as a leader?
- How do you think a former supervisor would describe your work?

**In the Workplace**
- Do you prefer to work under supervision or on your own?
- What do you look for in a supervisor?
- Would you be successful working with a team?
- Are you able to work on multiple assignments at a time?
- What can your supervisor expect from you?

**Prepare: Questions for the Interviewer**
At some point during the interview, the interviewer may ask if you have any questions. Based on your research, you will most likely have areas about which you would like more information. You should have several questions in mind to ask, but also listen during the interview for points about which you may need more information. Asking pertinent questions shows that you have prepared for the interview and are knowledgeable, interested and evaluating the employer.

The following list will help you generate ideas to prepare your own list of questions. It is also appropriate to have the questions written down in a padfolio and at your fingertips during the actual interview:

1. What are some of the qualifications you expect the ideal candidate for this position to have?
2. What characteristics do the individuals who are successful in this position possess?
3. Could you describe the normal daily routine for this position?
4. Is there a training period? What does it involve? Are there opportunities for professional development?
5. How would my performance be evaluated? How often? By whom?
6. What is your hiring timeline? What are the next steps in the process?
Interview Tips and Suggestions

- Have a positive attitude. Keep all of your answers as positive as possible.

- Pay attention to your non-verbals (i.e. eye contact, voice projection, posture, nervous habits).

- Express your qualifications. Come up with a list of six to eight adjectives that you use to describe yourself. Think of examples that demonstrate these adjectives. When you are asked to tell the employer about yourself, use these adjectives and examples to do just that.

- The first few minutes of the interview are the most important. It is at this time that you really want to sell yourself and get the interviewer interested in you. That is why it is important to package yourself and your qualifications. Having a set agenda of what you want to get across during the interview will help (i.e. education, background, experience, strengths, goals, accomplishments, challenges)

- Always try to relate what you are saying and how it can benefit the company/organization/agency with which you are interviewing. It is important to be familiar with the employer prior to the interview so you can know what type of person they seek, as well as what the position requires.

- If you get stuck on a question, it is okay to pause. Often, you can simply say, “That’s a very good question; let me take a minute to think about that.” Although a short pause is okay, try to avoid a lengthy one. Employers can tell if you are just buying time to make something up.

- It is important to end the interview on a positive note, either reiterating your interest in the position or telling the recruiter you look forward to hearing from him/her soon. Don’t forget to thank the employer for his/her time and interest.

- In addition to knowing information about the company/organization/agency, always have questions prepared to ask the interviewer.
Don’t Leave Home Without Reading This Advice!

Dos and Don’ts

- DO answer questions honestly, thoroughly, and sincerely.
- DO NOT try to tell the interviewer what you think he/she wants to hear.
- DO be careful about saying negative things about past experiences (i.e. insult a company that you interned with).
- DO NOT display a negative or arrogant attitude.
- DO be polite, tactful, and sincere - eye contact is also important.
- DO dress neatly and appropriately (conservative, not trendy).
- DO NOT be late unless there is an emergency (be sure to have the company phone number on hand).
- DO practice the questions suggested in this guide.
- DO have a small portfolio to keep pens, extra copies of resumes, and a reference sheet.

Checklist

- Confirm the date, time, and location for your interview.
- Review the company’s or organization’s website and any other literature you’ve obtained.
- Generate quality questions to ask based on what you’ve read and heard- don’t just ask questions for the sake of asking them (make them count!)
- Review your resume again to make sure everything is accurate and that you’re prepared to answer any questions pertaining to it.
- If for any reason you must cancel your interview, contact the employer promptly. Don’t be a “no-show.”
- Make sure your clothes are ironed, your hair is neat, and your shoes are polished!