

# Interviewing Skills

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# Adam Morris (he/him)

Assistant Director Internships & Employment

UMBC Career Center

Math/Psych Building Room 206

[armorris@umbc.edu](mailto:armorris@umbc.edu)



# The Career Center

- Math/Psych Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor
- [www.careers.umbc.edu](http://www.careers.umbc.edu)
- [careers@umbc.edu](mailto:careers@umbc.edu)
  
- Open Monday-Friday 9am-5pm, schedule appt on our website/Handshake
  
- Mock interviews with peers or staff, general interview preparation, salary negotiation, resume & cover letter assistance, job search strategies, etc.

# OVERVIEW





# Overview

- Interview Basics
- Common Interview Questions
- STAR Method
- Transferable Skills
- Asking Questions
- Salary Negotiation
- After the Interview

# INTERVIEW BASICS





# Interview Basics

## Types of Interviews:

- Screening (typically conducted by HR)
- Phone/Zoom
- On-Site
- Panel/Group
- Technical (interviewer wants to see how you think through a problem)
- Series (multiple people over multiple days)
- Case (solve real-world problems specific to an organization)



# Interview Basics

- Introduction – 30 seconds – 1 min.
- Q & A – longest portion (20+ min. or more)
- Your chance to ask questions – 5-10 min.
- Closing/wrap-up – 3-5 min.



# COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



# Common Interview Questions

- “Tell me about yourself.”
- “Why were you attracted to this opportunity?”
- “What is your greatest strength/weakness?”
- “Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.”
- “Describe a time in which you worked with a difficult supervisor or teammate.”

# STAR METHOD





# The Star Method

**S** – Situation

**T** – Task

**A** – Action

**R** – Result

*\*CAR is a variant (Context, Action, Result)*



# The Star Method

## **S** – Situation

- set the stage, what's the event/issue

## **T** – Task

- what roles/responsibilities were you assigned

## **A** – Action

- what choices did you make & why

## **R** – Result

- what was the outcome, provide insight & analysis





# The Star Method

## Get specific

- Use stories with specific examples that support your resume
- Examples are necessary to show employers why/how you are qualified but your responses also contribute to your ability to communicate effectively
- For each trait/skill from their job description you should be prepared to offer a supporting story



# Example 1

“I am extremely  
thorough  
detail-oriented

If you say you're  
**thorough & detail-  
oriented,**  
your responses  
should be **thorough  
& detail-oriented**

Last semester I  
25-page  
per. To  
my thesis, I  
scholarly  
new upon 20

Trait

Story



## Example 2

“I am a hard worker who can handle multiple tasks at once.”

“This past school year I held a part-time job working 12 hours a week. Additionally, I took a full course load and assumed leadership roles in three different student organizations.”

Trait

Story





# The Star Method

## Experiences to pull from:

- Work (PT or FT)
- Internships/Research
- School Projects & Collaborations
- Club/Membership Leadership Positions
- Volunteering
- Personal



# TRANSFERABLE SKILLS



# What if I don't have direct experience?

## **Focus on Transferable Skills**

- Skills that you have acquired in one situation which can reasonably be expected to “transfer” or apply in a different situation





# Transferable Skills

## Examples:

- Teamwork/Collaboration
- Critical Thinking
- Problem Solving
- Communication
- Organization
- Leadership
- Creativity
- Many more!



# Transferable Skills

## **Interview/Resume Example (rest. server):**

- *Assessed and prioritized customer needs to ensure an optimal dining experience which resulted in a 15% reduction in customer complaints during peak summer operations”*





# Transferable Skills

## Interview/Resume Example (rest. server):

- *Assessed and prioritized customer needs to ensure an optimal dining experience which resulted in a 15% reduction in customer complaints during peak summer operations”*

## Transferable Skills:

- Problem-Solving, Critical Thinking, Prioritizing Tasks, Communication, Excelling in a Fast-Paced Environment

# ASKING QUESTIONS





# Asking Questions

## **THIS IS A MUST**

- Final chance to show your interest in the position, reinforce your attention to detail, critical thinking, etc.
- Come prepared, take notes (both on what they say & how they say it)



# Asking Questions

## Examples

- How will I receive feedback on my job performance and what does the performance review process look like?
- What are the short and long-term goals for this department and how does this position contribute to achieving them?
- What are the biggest challenges currently facing the team and how does this role contribute to addressing them?
- How does the company encourage and support work-life balance, and what are the expectations for this position in terms of hours and flexibility?
- What opportunities for professional development does the company provide to employees in this role?





# Asking Questions

Don't Ask:

- *What are your company's values?*

Instead:

- *How does **Gore's** value of **Environmental Stewardship** impact your team's decision making process within the **Medical Products Division**?*

# SALARY NEGOTIATION





# Salary Negotiation

## **Avoid naming a figure, if possible**

- Until they make an offer there is nothing to negotiate
- Too high you might eliminate yourself
- Too low you might lose out on potential earnings
- Focus on your desire to develop new skills, expand your knowledge & experiences, etc.
- Give a range or say salary is negotiable, if possible

# Salary Negotiation

**If you MUST name a figure, do your research**

- Job Seekers Salary Calculator, salary.com, GlassDoor.com, Career OneStop
- Informational Interviews



# Salary Negotiation

## Example Tactic 1

- *“My research has shown that Pharmacists typically earn between \$140k-\$170k. Given my experience, I feel that a salary in the range of \$150k-\$160k would be appropriate.”*
  - Be aware: average salary vs starting salary, geographic pay differences, company-specific pay norms



# Salary Negotiation

## Example Tactic 2

- If they are inflexible on the salary, ask if any other aspects of the compensation package are negotiable
  - PTO, work hours, work location, bonuses, professional development, etc.





# Salary Negotiation

## Example Tactic 3

- *“I’m still trying to understand the full scope of the role to accurately price myself, but I would love to know the budgeted salary range.”*

# Salary Negotiation

## Know the Laws

- In Maryland, Employers may not seek pay history, but they may confirm wage history voluntarily provided by an applicant after an initial offer of employment, including an offer of compensation, is made. Upon request, employers must provide an applicant the wage range of the position for which the applicant applied.



# AFTER THE INTERVIEW



# Thank You Email

- Send within 24 hours after your interview that also re-emphasizes your skills, knowledge and expertise
- If you were interviewed by a panel ask for a business card (or email) from each person and send a personal email to each panel member
- Add something about the interview and/or the position that shows your continued interest



# QUESTIONS

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