

# HOW **2** guide:

## Interviewing: Preparation and Follow-up

The selection process for any job culminates in the interview process. This is typically where the hiring decision is made, and is, therefore, the best opportunity for candidates to sell themselves. Unfortunately, interviewing appears to be the least understood and least developed skill for many job seekers. The good news is that after using our Interviewing guides, you should be much better prepared for the interview process.

### The other guides in the Interviewing series available from FGCU Career Services are:

- Common Interview Questions
- Tips for Success
- Answering Behavioral Based Questions
- Questions to Ask Employers
- Phone Interviews
- Panel and Group Interviews
- Employer Research Worksheet
- Identifying & Marketing Your Strengths to Prospective Employers Worksheet
- Salary Negotiation
- Dress for Success
- Sample Post Interview Thank you Letter

### Before the Interview

The number one complaint from employers is that candidates are often unprepared for the interview. There are things you need to be doing NOW to prepare for job interviews before you even start looking for a job. (By the way, there are some employers that respond quickly to resume submitted to their company, and their initial contact with you may include a one-the-spot mini-interview over the phone!)

- Review all of the guides listed above.
- Know exactly how you want to describe yourself to recruiters in terms of your skills, personal qualities, education, experience, strengths/weaknesses, and career direction. Use the “Identifying Your Strengths Worksheet” and “Marketing Yourself to Prospective Employers Worksheet” to help with this process.
- Have your professional wardrobe ready. The fastest way to undermine your credibility is to arrive dressed inappropriately for the interview. Refer to the “Dress for Success” guides available from FGCU Career Services. As a rule of thumb, you should always plan on wearing professional business attire, even if the employees of that company don’t wear suits. Remember, they already have a job there...you don’t.

### To prepare for an interview with a particular employer:

- Review the job description closely, and ensure your answers correlate with what they are looking for.
- Thoroughly research the employer. Go to the company website and learn as much as you can about the company, its history, culture, competitors, and performance. Use the “Employer Research Worksheet” to help with this. Also, become more familiar with the industry in which this company operates.

### On the Day of the Interview

- Make sure you are well rested and mentally prepared.
- It is **critical** that you are not late for your interview. Plan on arriving at the designated interview location 10 minutes early so you can relax and compose yourself prior to the interview. Make sure you know EXACTLY how to get to your interview location. Get directions from the company website (if available) and confirm with MapQuest. Plan extra time if you have never been to the location before (in case you get lost) and to account for unexpected traffic. If the location is not far, you may even want to drive the route a few days prior to the interview. If you are going to be late, call the recruiter and let them know when you anticipate arriving.
- Do not arrive at the recruiter's office more than 15 minutes prior to your interview. By arriving too early, they may think you don't know how to manage your time effectively, or feel obligated to entertain you. If you arrive substantially early, wait in your car and review your notes, or take a walk to clear your head. Depending on the company and where you are interviewing (for example, a resort or college campus), if it is appropriate you may even want to walk around and observe.
- Carry your materials (extra resumes and list of professional references) in a professional looking portfolio that has a notepad for you to take notes. If necessary, you can also bring a "cheat sheet" with key points to remember during the interview. Write down the questions you want to ask and bring them along.
- If possible, avoid bringing anything that could be cumbersome to carry, such as a pocketbook. Most of the time, it will be a nuisance. Bring only what you absolutely need for that interview!
- Turn your cell phone off. Even better, leave it in the car. No texting while you wait for the recruiter.
- Be pleasant and professional with whomever you make contact with while waiting.

### After the Interview and follow-up

- As soon as possible, write a brief summary of what happened. Note any follow-up actions you should take and put it on your calendar. Evaluate your performance. Were there any questions you didn't know how to answer or need to answer more effectively? What do you need to improve on? What do you need to prepare (such as additional research) if you get called for a second interview with the company.
- Send a thank you note within 48 hours to:
  - express your appreciation for the opportunity to interview for the position
  - highlight one or two areas in which you think you are an excellent fit for the position
  - reiterate your desire to work for the company.
- Some people prefer to send hand-written notes, while for more executive-level positions a typed letter may be more appropriate. Send an email thank you only if time is limited (they plan on making a decision within a week.) Refer to the "Sample Post Interview Thank you Letter."
- Collect the business cards of all you meet so you have their names, titles, and contact information.
- During the interview, you should have asked what the next steps in the process are and the timeframes involved. That way you will know when it is appropriate to follow-up if you have not heard back. Your follow-up may consist of a friendly call to the recruiter to see if there is anything else they need from you and check on the status of the process.