

INTERVIEWING GUIDE



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INTRODUCTION

Many job seekers approach the interviewing process with a sense of apprehension borne of a fear of the unknown, but employment interviewing is simply a focused, goal-oriented exchange of information between two people. Impressive resumes and cover letters will get you employment interviews; **however, the interview itself will typically be the most significant aspect of the employment process.**

In its most basic form, the employment interview is an opportunity for applicants and employers to mutually evaluate the fit between the applicant's qualifications and the position being considered. In fact, the word "interview" comes into our language from the Latin *inter video*, which means, literally, "to see about each other." **Thus, it is important to keep in mind that interviewing involves a mutual exchange of information based on two-way communication.** It is not designed to be a process of inquisition or interrogation. The 'fit' should go both ways, so the interview is also your opportunity to ask questions of the employer!

OBJECTIVES OF THE INTERVIEW

Although many books and hundreds of studies have been published on the interviewing process, no set recipe for a successful interview exists. However, its objectives are to:

- » Expand on information contained in your resume;
- » Supply information to the employer that is not contained in your resume (e.g., personality, oral communication skills, general style);
- » Gain additional information about the organization and the position you are considering; and,
- » Provide an opportunity for both parties to discuss the possibility of employment.

To make a strict list of "do's" and "don'ts" would diminish your individuality and tend to promote an artificial approach to the interview. You are unique, and you have specific qualifications and experiences to relate to employers. The success of the interviewing process is a reflection of the extent to which you effectively present your unique qualifications to employers. To merely show up at an interview, hoping that your resume or application will do all your talking for you, is not enough. Rather, you must be an active participant in the exchange of questions, answers, and impressions. Generally, the more conversational this exchange of information, the better.

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Broadly speaking, there are two basic types of interviews. The **screening interview** is usually rather general and is relatively short (30–45 minutes). It is intended primarily to eliminate

unqualified candidates from further consideration. For example, when employers recruit on a college campus, they use screening interviews to decide which of the numerous candidates are best qualified to meet their organization's needs. The selected candidates are then invited to the employer's office or facility for a second, more detailed interview.

The **selection interview**, a longer, more thorough interview, is designed to identify the most qualified candidate for the position. A selection interview may last up to one hour or more. It is not uncommon for a candidate to go through a sequence of four or five selection interviews with several different employment officials during the course of a day-long plant or office visit. This is also called a "second interview" and is discussed more thoroughly later in this guide.

Regardless of the type of interview, both the interviewer and interviewee will have dual roles. Each will act as screener and screened. Not only will you present yourself and your qualifications, you will evaluate whether or not you would consider working in the organization based on information and impressions you acquire in the interview. At the same time, the interviewer will try to discern your potential as an employee, as well as presenting his/her organization in an informative and appealing manner.

The interview process will undoubtedly involve an in-person interview where you meet with one or more interviewers/employees from the organization. Prior to the face-to-face interview, there is a good chance you may participate in either a video/Skype interview or a phone interview, sometimes both. Remember, the outcome of a phone or video interview is the same as an in-person interview — a decision will be made about whether you will proceed to the next phase of the interview process. Therefore, you want to make sure you research the employer, develop appropriate questions for the interviewer, and be prepared to answer the "typical" types of interview questions. Below are tips for both these types of interviews.

Tips to Preparing for Video Interviews

(Courtesy of the National Association of Colleges and Employers)

Video interviewing is a convenient and cost-effective alternative to the traditional in-person interview for potential employees. However, there are format-specific elements that students and new graduates need to understand and consider when preparing for a video interview. Here are some recommendations for preparing for video interviews:

- » **Understand the technology and be comfortable with it.** Do not sign up for a video interview unless you are comfortable with the process. Learn what you can and can't do with the audio and video controls. Find out what your image looks like — and how

to look your best — and where to look once the interview begins. Being adept with the technology gives you credibility as an “online professional.”

- » **Consider image and the interview environment.** Dress professionally as a video interview is an interview. Ensure the background of the interview area is consistent with the image you want to portray to recruiters. Remove or silence all distractions, such as cell phone ringers, email alerts on the computer, music, pets, roommates, and more.
- » **Test all settings and connections beforehand.** Make sure the settings are optimized and all connections are working prior to the interview to avoid any issues during the interview.
- » **Be prepared for a system hiccup.** And even though you are thoroughly prepared, have a Plan B ready in case the technology fails during a video interview. For example, have your cell phone ready to use in case the connection is unacceptable or drops. Being prepared in such a manner and making a smooth transition to another method in light of unexpected problems can impress an employer.

Conducting the Successful Phone Interview

(Courtesy of the National Association of Colleges and Employers)

A potential employer may want to do a preliminary interview by phone. If you are prepared for the call, you can impress the interviewer.

Here are some tips:

- » **Turn off distractions.** Take your phone into a quiet room.
- » **Have your tools in one place:**
 - › Resume
 - › Pen and paper to jot down the interviewer(s) name(s) and to take notes during the interview
 - › Company research (with relevant information highlighted)
 - › Questions to ask about the company and position
 - › A loosely written outline of points to make or items to cover as you talk about the position
 - › A glass of water
- » **Dress the part for the interview.** Experts say if you are dressed in a professional manner, you will speak that way. *And, in the event the interviewer(s) suggests the phone interview switch to a video interview, you will not be embarrassed by how you are dressed.*
- » **If an employer calls and wants to do the interview right away** (instead of setting up an appointment), excuse yourself politely and offer to call back in five minutes. This will give you time to make the psychological switch from whatever you are doing to your professional demeanor.

- » **Stand up while speaking.** Your position affects the quality of your voice. If you are sitting down or relaxing, you do not project the same readiness and intensity as when you stand up.
- » **Talk only when necessary.** Since you lack the visual cues of body language to assess whether you have said enough, mark the end of your response with a question, such as “Would you like more details about my experience as an intern with XYZ Company?”
- » **Let the employer end the interview.** Then you should say “Thank you for your time,” and reiterate your interest in the position.
- » **Write a thank you note** to anyone who participated in the phone interview.

One-Way Video Interviews

Also called “asynchronous” video interviews, this type of interview is conducted via video without the job candidate interacting with the interviewer on the screen. This type of interview is new to the hiring landscape and students should prepare thoroughly for these interviews as well.

Unlike a live video feed or phone conversation, a one-way video interview allows the interviewer to administer a pre-determined set of questions to the job candidate in text or video form. Below are some tips to keep in mind while preparing and conducting the asynchronous interview.

- » **Treat it like any other interview.** Dress professionally. Your interviewer will still be able to see you via their video feed. Job candidates should also follow the recommended preparation procedures outlined in this guide, especially the section on video interviews.
- » **Prepare and anticipate questions you may be asked.** It is acceptable to have your resume and notes available; however, remember that you are being recorded so make adequate eye contact with the webcam.
- » **Make the most of your time allotted.** Most one-way interview software allows the student to start recording after they have taken a few *moments* to think through their response. Unlike a live phone or video interview, an “awkward pause” may be avoided when the candidate is thinking through a response in real time. Utilize this time to craft a thoughtful and complete response (see the “C.A.R. method” on page 11).
- » **Understand that this type of interview is convenient and efficient for the interviewer.** Hiring managers are utilizing this type of interview to reduce cost and screen candidates in an efficient manner. It is in the candidate’s best interest to treat these types of interviews seriously so they convey their skills in an effective manner for the interviewer.

WHAT EMPLOYERS ARE SEEKING

What are employers looking for in candidates? It might not always be what you may think. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) conducted a national survey to learn more about the skills employers look for in recent college graduates. In 2014, the top skills employers sought according to the NACE survey were:

- » Work in a team situation.
- » Make decisions and solve problems.
- » Plan, organize and prioritize work.
- » Verbally communicate with persons inside/outside the organization.
- » Obtain and process information.
- » Analyze quantitative data.
- » Technical knowledge related to the job.
- » Proficiency with computer software programs.
- » Create and/or edit written reports.
- » Sell or influence others.

It is important to remember employers do not expect candidates to possess all of these skills, and much of what you learned will contribute to helping you acquire these skills on the job. However, it is important to consider how your experiences and skills contribute to any one of these ten areas. This will help you effectively communicate your preparation to employers through your resume, cover letter, LinkedIn profile, and interview.

From an employer's perspective, hiring you is a risk. Through studying some paperwork that you have submitted and talking with you over a relatively brief period of time, he or she is expected to make a sound decision. You have the opportunity to convince the employer of your "safety." By relating **specific** experiences and accomplishments, you must show them that you will fit into their organization and contribute to its goals, vision, and mission. Ultimately, the employer's decision reflects his or her opinion as to whether you **can** do the job and whether you **will** do the job.

INTERVIEW PREPARATION

Most candidates interviewing for a given position will have the basic qualifications necessary to do that job. However, it is typically the candidate who does the best job of presenting himself or herself who gets the job offer. Preparing thoroughly for your interview will better enable you to effectively present yourself and your qualifications as they relate to the position for which you are interviewing. Basic interview preparation should include:

Know Yourself. Before going into any interview situation, you will need to spend a considerable amount of time thinking about yourself. Are your interests consistent with the general career area and this specific job? What are your employable skills and

how do they correspond with this position? Is this opportunity compatible with your work values?

Refer to Career Services *Telling Your Story* (miamioh.edu/student-life/_files/documents/career-services/pdfs/elevator_pitch.pdf) workbook which will help you articulate to employers the knowledge, skills, and experience you gained through your classes, co-curriculars, and work experience and how these experiences will help you become a successful employee.

Know the Organization. Knowledge of the organization, its products or services, locations, and needs is **essential** and **expected**. Be especially conscientious about researching the organization through printed materials and online, including LinkedIn, company websites, and other social media forums. The more you know about the organization, the industry it represents, the position under consideration, and how all this relates to your own career goals, the more effective you will be. Thorough preparation will strengthen your self-confidence and will demonstrate sincere interest in the job. A lack of knowledge of the organization could greatly hurt your chances of being hired.

Clearly Define Your Goals Prior to the Interview. Employers look favorably upon candidates who have specific and well-defined career goals. *Poorly formulated career goals are frequently mentioned as a factor contributing to denying an interview.* Knowing what you want to do is difficult, but you will do well in an interview to start on a specific note. For example, you may say to an interviewer, “Ms. Nicks, I am particularly interested in a sales representative position with your company. Eventually, I would like to advance to a sales management position.” Many mistakenly believe that the more general they are about what they want to do, the better their chances of getting a job. *Focus as clearly as possible on your job objective.*

Consider Your Fit. Continue the interview preparation process by considering your interests, values, skills, and needs in relation to the specific job you are pursuing. How does this position fit in with your long-range goals? You may find it helpful to make a list with information about yourself in one column and information about the career and specific position in the other column. Be prepared to discuss the link-ups with your interviewer. Your task is to help the employer become as well-informed about your attributes and goals as you are. The better you relate your career interests and qualifications to the employer’s needs, the more successful you will be. The employer will know what you can do for them.

PRACTICE HELPS!

You must be able to communicate information effectively to the employer. Strive to become as articulate and natural in your interview presentation as possible. There will probably be plenty of rough edges at first, but you will almost surely find that your interviewing skills will improve quickly with practice.

Take advantage, too, of doing a digitally recorded practice interview (that is, a “Mock Interview”) at Career Services. You will need to make an appointment in advance (miamioh.edu/student-life/career-services/letters-resumes-interviews/interviewing/mock-interview/student-information/) because of the popularity of this service, but most students find it extremely helpful in honing their interviewing skills and increasing their confidence. As an alternative, have someone ask you several of the sample interview questions included in this guide and record your responses. Then, review it and evaluate your answers.

PLEASE NOTE: Anyone who intends to participate in a mock interview or on-campus interviewing must attend one *Basic Interviewing Skills* program once before your mock interview or interview. Dates and times may be found on Career Services website (miamioh.edu/student-life/career-services/internship-job-search/career-fairs-and-programs/).

Remember, oral communication is the single most important evaluation criterion. It isn't necessarily the best-qualified candidate who gets the job, but rather the one who is best at presenting his or her qualifications. Your practice will pay off handsomely.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND INTERVIEWING BASICS

Getting your interview off to a good start is important. Being prepared and knowing what to expect can increase your effectiveness in the initial stages of the interview.

What to Wear. When you are neatly groomed and appropriately dressed you create a favorable impression. The suit is the basic element of the interview wardrobe for men and women alike. Colors such as dark blue, black, or various shades of gray are considered most appropriate, although camel and beige are acceptable during the summer. Women may also wear dark brown, dark maroon, and medium blue. Fabric patterns such as solids, tweeds, muted plaids, and pinstripes create the most professional look. For men, white or blue cotton shirts are best – ties are a must! Dark, over-the-calf socks and lace-up or slip-on shoes in brown, black or cognac are the best choices. Women commonly wear tailored shirts or blouses in white, off-white, or a coordinating color. A basic medium- heeled pump in a color that complements the suit is recommended. Don't be trendy. Distracting jewelry, nail polish, make-up or perfume/ cologne should be avoided. Overall, be immaculate. A good appearance reinforces your many positive attributes.

For picture examples of what to wear, visit Career Services on Pinterest (www.pinterest.com/miamiohcareers) and look for “Appropriate Attire”.

Be Punctual. Your first opportunity to make a favorable impression on the interviewer is to be punctual. Never be late for

an interview! Try to arrive early enough (five to 10 minutes) to allow time to check your appearance, collect your thoughts, and review your notes and questions. If for some reason you will be late, be certain to call ahead. One way to help you arrive on time is to visit the interview site in advance of the appointment to be sure you know how to get there. Upon arrival for your interview, greet the employer's receptionist or secretary courteously and with respect. First impressions really count!

Handling Introductions. The introductions between you and your interviewer are important in getting the interview started on a positive note. Greet your interviewer with a smile, a firm handshake and direct eye contact. The interview will generally begin with a social comment about the weather or such to put you at ease. Expect it and react in a normal, cordial fashion. Be sure to note your interviewer's name and use it during the interview. Always address the interviewer as "Mr." or "Ms." until he or she asks you to use a first name. Ask for a business card at the end of the interview.

What to Bring. Always carry extra copies of your **resume** to the interview. If you have updated your resume for the specific job for which you are interviewing, carry along the revised version and give it to the employer. You may be asked to bring a copy of your transcript; however, this is more commonly a part of the application process.

If appropriate (as in the case of advertising, journalism, art, or education), bring a portfolio containing samples or illustrations of your work. If you have an electronic version of your portfolio, you may want to put the URL on the top of your resume under your phone number or LinkedIn URL.

It is also a good idea to carry a printed copy of your **reference page**, which indicates their names, titles, addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses. You will also want to carry a pen and paper to make notes following the interview, particularly about your impressions and about any requests the employer made that need your action. Do not take notes during the interview; devote your attention to the interviewer. There may be an occasion where you would like to write down something for future reference. Before doing so, ask your interviewer if he or she minds if you take some notes. Additionally, it is generally best to refrain from referring to notes during the interview unless you specifically ask permission from the interviewer. For example, if you have written down questions to ask during the interview, ask the interviewer if it is okay for you to look at some questions you developed specifically for this interview.

INTERVIEW TIME IS SHOW TIME

(Courtesy of the National Association of Colleges and Employers)

Want to tell a potential employer that you are creative? A problem solver? Flexible? Instead of describing yourself as a “self-starter,” tell a story about how you took action when you saw an issue that needed to be fixed. Do not say you are “flexible” — tell the hiring manager about a change in your job (or school work demands) and what you did to deal with the change. Well-worn phrases will not help you get the job, but concrete examples will!

For specific examples, refer to the table below.

DON'T SAY	THE STORY YOU NEED TO TELL
Highly Qualified	Highlight your accomplishments in previous jobs. Emphasize your specific skills and note any certifications you have earned
Hard worker	Explain exactly how you have gone the extra mile for your job. For instance, did you regularly meet tough deadlines, handle a high volume of projects, or tackle tasks outside your job description?
Team player	Provide examples of how you worked with colleagues or individuals in other departments to meet an objective or complete a project.
Problem solver	Highlight a difficult situation you encountered and how you handled it.
Flexible	Describe how you responded to a major change at work (or in your schoolwork) or dealt with the unpredictable aspects of your job.
People person	Can you offer examples of your strong communication skills? Can you describe how you have worked with co-workers and customers?
Self-starter	What can you contribute immediately to the company or to the department you work in? Describe how you took action when you saw an issue that needed to be fixed.

Refer to the section on Behavioral Interviews to learn more about how to develop answers using specific examples.

RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS: THE HEART OF THE INTERVIEW

The majority of the interview time is typically devoted to the employer asking you questions. Try to discern what an employer is really asking you. What are the underlying questions? For example, if an employer asks what qualities you think are important for someone in the position you are applying for, he or she probably really wants to know whether you have given

thoughtful consideration to the skills and abilities necessary to succeed within his or her organization. Put yourself in the employer's frame of reference and respond as directly as possible. Your objectives are to put your candidacy in the best possible light and alleviate any reservations the employer may have about your suitability for employment. BE YOURSELF AND FOCUS ON YOUR POSITIVE QUALITIES.

If there are periods in your past that are difficult to explain, do not dwell on them. Respond to your interviewer's inquiries honestly, indicating what you have learned from your mistakes. Take responsibility for your past actions and do not blame others. If something in your past is indicative of poor judgment, try to give examples of more recent things you have done that indicate good judgment. Consider the following example:

Question: "Your GPA is a 2.3. That's considerably lower than the other people interviewing for this position. Care to comment?"

Response: "Yes, it is low. My grades don't adequately reflect the knowledge I've gained. The leadership and project management skills I have developed over the past four years both in and out of the classroom have prepared me for this position. For example, I have worked with a variety of people through the offices I've held in my fraternity. You'll note that I was the chairperson of a successful charity fund-drive involving all fraternities and sororities on campus."

In virtually all interviews, you will be asked direct as well as open-ended questions. Direct questions are focused and will elicit some specific information from you. Open-ended questions will allow you to bring more information into your answers that you want to provide to your interviewer. Such questions allow you the opportunity to elaborate upon topics you want to discuss. Deal as much as possible in details and relevant examples, such as job experiences, pertinent hobbies, travel, offices held, college and community organizations, school work, special projects, and honors. Answer questions by focusing on experiences, accomplishments, and skills you have that relate to the specific job for which you are interviewing.

Keep in mind that most interviewers are making comparative judgments as they screen numerous candidates. Therefore, they tend to ask questions that will best help them to differentiate candidates from one another. Try to determine what the interviewer is really asking and what the heart of the question is before responding. Avoid the pitfall of rushing into an answer without first thinking through your response. It is okay to take a few moments to collect your thoughts before responding.

A list of questions designed to give you an idea of the types of questions you can expect to be asked is included as Appendix A. Study it carefully and prepare to respond effectively to these and similar questions. In addition to these questions, applicants for *teaching* positions are encouraged to review a special listing

of sample questions often asked of teaching candidates in Appendix B. *Creative arts* majors may find Appendix C helpful in reviewing some general types of interview questions for your major.

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWS: ANOTHER STYLE OF INTERVIEWING

Behavioral interviewing is a style of interviewing that has become increasingly popular among employers. Not all employers use this style of interviewing, but it is likely you will encounter behavioral interview questions sometime during your job search. Behavioral interviews are based on the premise that the most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in similar situations. During a behavioral interview, an interviewer will ask questions to elicit real examples of your past performance in order to gain insights as to whether you will be successful in the position.

Before beginning to interview candidates, employers typically identify key characteristics of the position (e.g., communication, leadership, teamwork) and then structure questions to elicit detailed responses aimed at determining whether candidates possess the desired characteristics. Questions typically start with: “Describe a situation in which you...” or “Give an example of a time when...” By thoroughly researching the employer and requesting a detailed job description, you can better anticipate both the key characteristics and the types of questions that might be asked.

During a behavioral interview, you will need to provide an in-depth response by drawing upon your background, experience and knowledge of particular issues. Use the **C.A.R. method** to help you frame your response. That is:

C = Context

Background of a Specific Situation

A = Action Taken

The Action you took

R = Results

The Results you achieved

Your responses to questions should provide the **context** (background) of a specific situation (the story), the **actions** you took, and the **results** you achieved. Your ability to provide appropriately detailed answers to interviewers’ questions will give you a substantial advantage over candidates who give more general answers. Become a great storyteller during your interview, but be careful not to ramble. Below are two examples:

Example 1: Describe a recent situation in which you successfully persuaded others of your point of view.

Context: In my public speaking class I was called upon to develop a brief impromptu presentation. I was asked to convince my peers in the class to agree to come in on a Saturday morning to hear outside speakers during a panel discussion. This was an actual upcoming event being sponsored by the Department of Communication.

Action Taken: I thought for a few minutes, developed my rationale, took a deep breath and stood up to speak to the class. I made a strong proposal and supported it with logical reasons, including the networking contacts we could make and the knowledge we would gain about jobs in our field. This was difficult to do, since most of us like to sleep in on Saturday if we can!

Results: While I was not able to persuade everyone, roughly half the class came to the panel discussion that Saturday. My instructor said it was the best turnout she had ever had for this event. I believe my arguments had something to do with its success.

Example 2: Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation.

Context: In my psychology research course, my teacher assigned our class a semester-long group project. When stressed to meet the deadlines for our project, one of my group members used very harsh language when communicating to the other group members and myself, both in person and via email. This created a very negative atmosphere with the one group member constantly putting down the other members of our team.

Action Taken: After getting upset the first few weeks of the semester, I decided to speak with this group member about the way he communicated under pressure. I understood the stress he was under and suggested that we together create a clear timeline to set deadlines for portions of the project. We also delegated responsibilities for those portions of the project to the group members.

Results: Speaking with this group member in person and early on in the semester helped diffuse my classmate's inappropriate communication to the other members of our team and promote a more positive, supportive, and open working environment. We were able to sort out issues immediately, anticipate any likely problems, and plan a clear timeline for the remainder of the semester.

By using the C.A.R. method, you ensure that you are providing a thorough response. Be especially diligent in articulating the results! Don't be surprised if the interviewer probes further for more depth or detail. Finally, be careful—if you tell a story that is anything but totally honest, your response will not hold up through a barrage of probing questions.

An excellent way to get ready for behavioral interviews is to prepare a small arsenal of example stories that can be adapted to many behavioral questions. Identify six to eight examples from your past where you demonstrated key characteristics that employers typically seek. Think of examples from classes and school projects, activities, internships, athletic team participation, community service, hobbies, and/or work experiences. Also consider examples of any special accomplishments. Wherever possible, provide a measurable result (e.g., increased donations by 10% over last year) or describe the impact you made as a result of your actions. Since some questions try to get at how you responded to negative situations, you'll want to have one or two examples of negative experiences ready, but try to pick ones with positive outcomes or where you learned from the experience.

Appendix D contains sample behavioral interview questions listed under common key characteristics. Review these questions, especially the ones listed under the characteristics you believe are important for positions you seek. Don't try to memorize answers; instead prepare a mental outline to follow in responding to the questions. Behavioral interviews are challenging, but if you know what to expect and are prepared, you will be more confident and successful.

QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEWER

As important as it is to provide good answers to interviewers' questions, you must also be prepared to ask pertinent questions during the interviewing process. Many applicants mistakenly believe that they are evaluated solely on their response to interviewers' questions. In reality, candidates are also evaluated on the basis of the questions they **ask** during employment interviews.

Your questions should reflect a sincere interest in the organization and an awareness of the employer's needs and how you can fulfill them. Questions relating to salary and benefits should normally be avoided during initial screening interviews. Rather, these types of questions should be raised in subsequent interviews—after you and the employer have developed a greater degree of mutual interest. Do not scare off an interviewer by appearing overly concerned about salary, benefits, vacation time, etc. Examples of good questions to ask are located in Appendix E.

These questions should give you an idea of the types of queries employers expect candidates to make during employment interviews. Obviously, there will not be enough time to ask all—or even most—of these questions, so choose them wisely. Most importantly, ask the questions that are significant and relevant to you as you consider a particular employment opportunity. In any case, avoid asking questions that are adequately covered in the recruiting literature most companies provide. It is perfectly permissible to ask for clarification of information provided in

recruiting literature, annual reports, and the like, but do not give the interviewer the impression you have not “done your homework” prior to the interview.

Likewise, if the interviewer appears pressed for time, do not prolong the interview by trying to fit in all your questions. There will probably be time to ask further questions during subsequent interviews and before you will need to respond to an offer of employment.

HOW TO HANDLE IMPROPER OR ILLEGAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Refer to Appendix F.

CONCLUDING THE INTERVIEW

Most interviewers will conclude the interview by indicating when you can expect to receive further word on your status as an applicant. However, if the interviewer does not volunteer this information, be certain to ask. This will help you to follow up your interviews within a reasonable time frame. When employers are interviewing numerous candidates, your follow-up efforts will help distinguish you from less conscientious applicants. As a means of facilitating this follow-up process, ask the interviewer for one of his or her business cards and keep it handy for future reference. If the employer does not have a business card, write down his or her full name, title, address, phone number, and e-mail address for your records immediately after the interview.

HANDLING THE SALARY ISSUE

The topic of salary, as mentioned previously, will probably come up in your selection interviews. As part of your pre-interview search, investigate salary levels within your career field for similar positions. The Occupational Outlook Handbook, published by the U.S. Department of Labor, the National Association of Colleges and Employers' (NACE) Salary Survey, Glass Door, and Salary.com will prove helpful. These resources, and others, may be found on Career Services website (miamioh.edu/careers/internship-job-search/beginning-your-job-search/general-resources/salary-information/). Salary information may also be found in pertinent professional journals and various other publications. In any event, have an appropriate salary range in mind based on your research prior to the interview, but don't get so bogged down on the salary issue that you give the employer the impression that you are more interested in salary than the opportunity at hand. Normally, there will be sufficient time to negotiate salary after the employment offer has been made.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

As a matter of courtesy, it is important to send your interviewer a short thank-you letter, handwritten note, or e-mail within 24 hours after the interview. Send an e-mail thank you if the

interviewer states that they will make a decision about the next step in the interview process within a day or two after the interview. Generally, all that is necessary is to thank the interviewer for his or her time and to express your ongoing interest in the position. You may also include a specific topic from your interview conversation as a reminder of something you discussed. If the interviewer indicated a specific time frame by which you should learn of your status as an applicant, be sure to mention that you are looking forward to hearing from him or her by this time.

If time permits, send a short thank you e-mail within 24 hours after the interview and follow up with a handwritten or typewritten note that includes references to one or two specific topics discussed in your interview.

As is the case with other types of employment correspondence, your thank-you letter should be neatly typewritten or handwritten to ensure a professional image. Sample thank-you letters can be found in the *Cover Letters and Other Job Search Correspondence* guide available via our website (miamioh.edu/student-life/_files/documents/career-services/pdfs/coverletters.pdf).

EVALUATING YOUR INTERVIEWS

Immediately following your interview, take some time to evaluate your performance. Consider what you might do in future interviews to strengthen your effectiveness. Each interview should be a learning opportunity and an opportunity to improve your next interview. You will find that the more you interview, the better you become at effectively presenting your career interests and qualifications to employers.

However, if you are consistently passed over for the next phase in the interview process or never make it past the first interview, consider some of the following factors:

- » Have you set realistic job goals for yourself?
- » Do you need to do your pre-interview research more thoroughly?
- » Are you presenting yourself in the best possible manner?
- » Does your resume reflect your career interests and support your claims? Does it represent the real you?
- » Are you conveying an enthusiastic and well-informed interest in the position and an eagerness to learn?

Ultimately, as you evaluate your interviews, you will develop new skills in the entire process of interviewing. Besides being well-prepared, don't underestimate the importance of being enthusiastic. Highlight your qualifications and potential. Remember, the number one rule in any hiring situation is to convince the organization that you are worth more than they will be paying you. Be confident in yourself, and don't give up trying.

SECOND INTERVIEWS

Typically, employers who interview on campus include a second interview at their offices or facilities as a part of the hiring process. These interviews follow on-campus or screening interviews and are usually the last step in the process. They are designed so that the employer and candidate can get to know each other in more depth than is possible in the campus interview. The objective of second interviews is to ensure that there is a good “fit” or “match” between you and the organization and position.

During these visits, you will learn more about the position, the employer’s culture, mission, vision, product(s), services, goals, long-term career opportunities, and the local community. You will experience a variety of formats for these second interviews. For example, the length of the interview visit will vary among different employers, and a variety of people will ask questions in both formal and informal sessions. In addition, these interviews can be given many names such as an office visit, plant visit, or site visit.

It is important to maintain your professionalism at all times throughout your visit. Keep in mind that every employee you meet, from the person who picks you up at the airport, to the person who greets you at the reception desk, to the recent alumnus you meet at lunch, to the people with whom you formally interview, are evaluating your qualifications and “fit” for the position.

Since the most common ways to be contacted are by phone or e-mail, you will want to have a professional-sounding message left on your voicemail and a professional e-mail address.

Preparation: The second interview is an important opportunity to collect information you will need to make a decision. Well in advance of the interview, you should prepare questions to ask and think about what to observe during your interview visit. The better you prepare, the more likely you will be to present yourself as an enthusiastic, mature, and interested candidate.

You should be very familiar with and up to date on information about the employer. This preparation might include a review of the organization’s annual report, as well as any Internet-based resources, including the employer’s website and other citations that may be found using various search engines. LinkedIn may provide alumni contacts within the organization, as well as information on the employer and the individuals with whom you are interviewing. Career Services website has information on researching companies and organizations (miamioh.edu/careers/internship-job-search/company-and-organization-research-resources/index.html).

Finally, be sure not to overlook self-preparation, including appropriate travel and interview attire. Also be certain to review

your activities, work experience, strengths, skills, and other qualifications that match what the employer is seeking and as written in the job description.

Arrangements and Expenses. Generally, there will be one primary contact to work with regarding arrangements. If possible, you should confirm the arrangements in writing, regardless of the method an employer used to contact you. Be sure to discuss who is paying for the trip. Most employers will reimburse you for all reasonable expenses, including transportation, meals, hotel, and parking. Normally, you will be expected to cover incidental expenses such as snacks, souvenirs, wi-fi, in-room movies, etc. Most employers are willing to pre-pay travel and lodging expenses if you do not have a credit card or sufficient cash.

Visits are usually at least one day long, so overnight accommodations are often necessary. Most times an employer will want to work around your schedule but will also appreciate your flexibility. Transportation may be by car or plane depending on the distance involved and your preference. The employer may make the arrangements or ask you to make them. If you make them, ask the employer for recommendations on airlines, hotels, and ground transportation, etc. The employer may suggest that you rent a car upon arrival. That is fine if you meet the minimum age requirement and have a major credit card, but you may not, so be certain to inquire about this to avoid embarrassment. It also shows that you plan ahead. Ask about any expense forms that need completion and be sure to keep any receipts. On occasion, a married student's spouse or partner will be invited, but the employer should take the initiative in such cases.

Be sure to confirm arrangements several days prior to your visit and get any necessary directions as well as the name and telephone number of your host. This will enable you to avoid any miscommunication. Keep your expenses within a reasonable range; using common sense and good judgment is very important. Never double-charge two or more employers for the same trip. Rather, prorate your expenses among employers visited on the same trip.

Arrival. This will vary depending upon whether you are driving or flying, but it is a good idea to arrive in or near your destination the evening before the interview. If you fly, it is especially important that you confirm your flight a few days ahead of your visit. A representative may meet you at the airport, or you might take a courtesy van or taxi. In either case, you should dress professionally—as you would for an interview. You may be going to dinner or to the employer's office before going to the hotel.

If you drive, be sure to allow yourself plenty of time. Plan extra time for delays such as road construction or detours. You should also keep a record of your mileage and receipts for gasoline.

Upon arrival at the hotel, you should check for any messages. The employer may have left a packet of information for you to review prior to the interview. You may want to verify the payment arrangements with the hotel.

The evening before the interview some organizations will schedule a dinner for you. It is advisable to avoid alcoholic beverages and maintain your professionalism. This dinner can serve many purposes. It will enable you to get an idea of what the next day will include concerning meetings, interviews, and the people involved. It enables you to relax and meet one or more employees. The dinner may include a recent hire, an alumnus/a from Miami, your key contact from the organization, a manager, other staff members, or a combination of these or other people. Usually, the dinners are relaxed, but the people you are with will be evaluating your ability to converse, as well as your maturity, “fit” for the position and the organization, ideas and views on current issues, and social behavior. Remember that your primary goal should be to talk rather than eat. You can take your cues on menu selections from your host(s), but you should avoid ordering the most expensive items on the menu and foods that are difficult or messy to eat.

Following dinner, you should have enough time to prepare for the next day, including a review of the questions you want to ask and the research you did on the employer. You should also find out if you are to check out before departing the hotel, and what to do with your baggage.

Interviewing. Your interview schedule will vary depending on the organization. As with the on-campus interview, it is very important to be yourself. Don't try to give the answer you think the interviewer wants to hear. It is common to have numerous interviews with various levels of employees. It could be a one-on-one or group setting. Each interviewer knows what he or she is looking for in a candidate. The types of people involved may include managers (staff, line, plant), human resources officials, recent alumni, your prospective immediate supervisor, and people in departments with whom you would work closely. You should be excited about the chance to talk to a variety of people, since it will give you a better understanding of the overall organization.

The interviewers will vary in terms of their ability to ask questions and conduct an interview. Some may be skilled communicators, some may be more technically oriented, and others may be relatively unprepared and may even ask inappropriate questions. Some employers allow the interviewers to develop their own questions with little coordination. Remember that the people you meet in the second interview may not be experienced interviewers. Refer to Appendix F—How to Handle Improper or Illegal Interview Questions.

The questions asked may be very similar to those asked in the

on-campus interview. You may also be asked the same question many times or you may be asked very different, but specific, questions by each person. They might be directed toward assessment of your skills and strengths (e.g., communication, leadership) as they relate to the position, or the questions may require you to communicate how you would handle or react to a given situation. You may also be asked to give an example of a situation and how you handled it (e.g., “Give me an example of a time when you experienced rejection and how you dealt with it”). Different interviewers may be assigned to go into depth about a specific skill or quality.

For example, one interviewer may ask several questions related to communication skills and another may inquire mostly about problem-solving or analytical skills. In addition, you may be asked to talk about an organization’s products, services, status among competitors, recent news, or other related topics. You may also be expected to participate in a group activity, work simulation, give a presentation, or present your portfolio.

Be sure to keep track of interviewer names and titles throughout the day. You may want to jot these down and check the spelling of their names with your primary contact before you leave. Ask for business cards after each interview, whenever possible.

Observing. You should also think about, observe, and note various other aspects of the organization during your visit, including:

- » Are people professional and courteous to each other?
- » Are people positive or do they complain?
- » Do you enjoy the people?
- » Is there diversity?
- » What is posted on bulletin boards?
- » What seems to be the work attitude (fun, serious)?
- » Building location, other tenants
- » Office furnishings and decor
- » What social events, civic/volunteer activities, sports leagues, leisure activities are organized through the employer?
- » Is the employer involved in philanthropic activities in their community?

Tours. Depending on the type of organization, you may be taken on a tour of the plant or facilities. Usually an employment, department or plant manager conducts the tour and, while it is normally a relaxed time, you should be aware that you are still being evaluated.

It is also very important to learn about the community in which you would be living and working. You may get a tour of the city or surrounding area during a second interview that will give you a feel for the community. You may also want to look at the Chamber of Commerce’s website and other online information about the area. Housing, cost of living, entertainment, and other personal interests as they relate to the community are important factors in your job satisfaction and should not be overlooked.

Testing. An increasingly common part of the employment process is testing of some kind. This can include personality and interest inventories, mathematical and verbal tests, or drug tests. Many times, offers are contingent upon completion of these tests that can take place during a second interview. Usually there is not much preparation that can be done for these tests. With personality or interest inventories, keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers. You should answer questions honestly in order to give an accurate profile of yourself.

Drug tests have also become a standard part of the employment process. These tests usually take the form of a urine or blood sample that is analyzed for controlled substances. You should not be caught off guard if any of these tests are a part of your second interviews. In addition, you should keep in mind that failure to complete these tests might mean that you will not be considered further for employment.

Salary Discussions. It is normally best to let employers take the initiative in bringing up the subject of salary. However, as mentioned earlier, you should research the field to find out the salary range you can expect. If questioned about salary, it is advisable to avoid giving an exact figure. Rather, you should indicate a broad salary range. This range should be based on your research. Another option is to simply indicate that you trust that if an offer is made, that it will be in line with your qualifications and the salary structure in the industry. Stress that you are very interested in this career/job opportunity. Use Career Services website for more information about salary (miamioh.edu/careers/internship-job-search/beginning-your-job-search/general-resources/salary-information/).

If you are seeking an entry-level position, you may have relatively little opportunity to negotiate your salary. Most employers, at least those of substantial size, have fairly standard salary packages for entry-level candidates. It is rare that these employers will deviate significantly from an established norm. However, some employers do include salary premiums for such things as previous internship or co-op experience, high academic achievement, etc. If in doubt about how the salary you are initially offered has been determined, simply ask the employer how the offer compares with offers being made to other entry-level candidates. This will open up an opportunity for you to mention any special “qualifiers” you may possess that may have been overlooked in the interviewing process. Also, ask when your performance and salary will be reviewed. It may well be that your salary will increase after you complete a formal or informal probationary period. In any case, if you engage in salary negotiations, strive for a “win-win” outcome and beware of the pitfalls of pushing too hard on the salary issue.

Keep in mind that an employer can increase the “value” of an offer to you in many ways, including a starting bonus, company car, commissions, an expense account, temporary housing

during your move, moving expenses, interest-free loans, and other benefits. You should also carefully evaluate the complete employee benefits package. Normally, employee benefit plans are described as part of the salary discussion, and literature detailing employee benefits is provided. In any case, be certain that you understand the benefits to which you would be entitled. You should evaluate an offer based on the total compensation package.

Some organizations make their offers during the second interview, but most need several days to several weeks to decide on candidates. Thus, it is important to find out about the hiring timetable. If delays occur, you should not hesitate to contact the employer and check on your status.

Follow-Up. It is highly recommended that you send a letter of thanks to the primary contact person and possibly to other individuals you meet during the visit and interviews. This is a common courtesy and will certainly make you stand out above an average candidate. It is best to send this correspondence as soon as possible after your interview visit.

If you have additional questions about second interviews, please do not hesitate to schedule an appointment with your Career Services Advisor.

NEED HELP?

If you need help with interviewing or any other aspect of the job search or career planning process, take advantage of the assistance available to you at Career Services. A variety of resource materials are available to you on our website (**MiamiOH.edu/careers**). In addition, workshops on interviewing, networking, LinkedIn, and the job search process as well as a digitally recorded mock interview service are offered throughout the year. Individual appointments may also be made with your Career Advisor via Miami CAREERlink (**miamioh.edu/careers/schedule-advising-appointment/**)

CAREER SERVICES WEBSITE

For additional information about Career Services, please refer to our website at **MiamiOH.edu/careers**

Appendix A

GENERAL SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- » Tell me about yourself.
(For help with developing your answer, refer to the *Telling Your Story* workbook (miamioh.edu/student-life/_files/documents/career-services/pdfs/elevator_pitch.pdf))
- » What are your major strengths/weaknesses?
- » Please share with me two positive traits that you do not currently have that you wish you had.
- » Why should I hire you over other candidates?
- » What kind of professors did you like?
- » Do you work well under pressure? How do you handle it?
- » What have you done to show initiative and innovation?
- » What supervisory or leadership roles have you had? What have been your most satisfying and most disappointing experiences?
- » Why did you decide to interview with us?
- » Why are your grades low? Do they reflect your ability?
- » What do you know about our organization? What interests you about this specific position?
- » What qualifications do you have that make you feel you would be successful?
- » What have you learned from some of the jobs you have held?
- » What is your experience with “difference”?
- » What is not on your resume that you would like to tell me?
- » What have you read recently?
- » In what school activities have you participated? Why?
- » Which school activities did you enjoy the most?
- » How did you spend your vacations while in school?
- » If you were starting college all over again, what would you do differently?
- » Do you think your extracurricular activities were worth the time you devoted to them? Why?
- » What are your long-range/short-range goals? How do you plan to achieve them?
- » What do you see yourself doing five years from now? Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
- » If you were hiring a graduate for this position, what qualities would you look for?
- » Why did you select Miami University?
- » What major problem have you encountered and how did you deal with it?
- » What have you learned from your mistakes?
- » What criteria are you using to evaluate the organization for which you hope to work?
- » What other employers are you interviewing with? What types of positions are you considering? What would be your ideal job?
- » Why did you select your particular major?

Appendix B

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHER CANDIDATES

- » Describe the courses you most enjoyed at Miami University, and explain why.
- » Why do you want to be a teacher?
- » Why have you chosen to interview with our school system?
- » What is your philosophy of education?
- » Describe your previous work experience and how it will relate to your work as a teacher.
- » Describe your theory of curriculum development and how you would implement a new curriculum.
- » What is your philosophy of classroom management? How would you evaluate your performance in the classroom?
- » How would you like your students to describe you at the end of the school year?
- » How would you like your teaching colleagues to describe you at the end of the school year?
- » What is the greatest asset you will bring to your classroom and to your profession?
- » What extracurricular activities do you feel you could supervise in our school system?
- » What skills do you think an excellent teacher should possess?
- » In addition to becoming a successful teacher, what are your other goals?
- » How would you organize your classroom in order to teach the entire class, yet provide individualized instruction?
- » How would you approach the problem of students who have not mastered basic reading or writing skills?
- » What have you done recently to overcome one of your weaknesses?
- » What are your interests and hobbies outside the school setting?
- » What are the primary professional associations for your field?
- » What are your plans for future professional growth and development?
- » What are some of the current issues in regard to teaching and education?
- » How would you respond to a parent who is upset with your teaching methods or with your treatment of his or her child?
- » How would you describe the “ideal” principal? What assets should he or she have that will help your performance as a teacher?
- » How much do you intend to involve the administration with regard to problems, conflicts, and/or suggestions in the classroom?
- » Why should I give you further consideration as opposed to other candidates?
- » What would you like to add to this information that will help me remember you as a teaching candidate?
- » Do you have a portfolio of some of your lesson plans, activities, projects, etc. that I may see?

Appendix C

GENERAL COLLEGE OF CREATIVE ARTS MOCK INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- » What are you doing when you are not creating? What other hobbies do you have?
- » Describe a real-life situation that inspired you?
- » What is an artistic outlook on life?
- » What made you first realize you wanted to pursue a career in the Arts?
- » What memorable responses have you had to your work?
- » What is your favorite or most inspirational place?
- » Whose work do you relate to most? Who inspires you?
- » Tell me about a time when you did not receive a role, or get a position or opportunity that you really wanted?
- » Using these 4 C's: Creativity, Collaboration, Communication and Curiosity, how would you describe yourself?
- » What do you expect of others in a team environment? How have you effectively worked in a team situation?
- » Describe for me your significant leadership experience(s).
- » If you could picture yourself 5, 10 years from now, where would you be and what would you be doing?
- » If you were awarded a grant of \$2,000.00 for a major art project, how would you use the money?
- » Describe some important goals you have achieved.
- » What are your short-range and long-range goals and how do you plan to achieve them?
- » What are your behaviors that inspire or motivate others? Please give an example.
- » How do you measure your level of success/achievement?
- » How do you start the creative process? How do you get inspired creatively with a new assignment?
- » What is the best advice you ever had about how to be more creative?
- » What were 2 important courses or experiences you have had? Please describe what impact they have had on you and why?
- » What has been your biggest challenge so far and what did you learn?
- » How do you think your colleagues in your major would describe you? Faculty?

Appendix D

SAMPLE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

MOTIVATION

- » Give an example of a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty.
- » Describe a situation when you were able to have a positive influence on the actions of others.
- » Give an example of a goal you set, and tell me how you achieved it.

PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

- » Describe how you handle having your schedule suddenly interrupted.
- » Tell me about a time when you worked effectively under pressure.
- » Give me an example when you were unable to complete a project on time.

DECISION MAKING

- » Give me an example of a time when you had to be quick in coming to a decision.
- » Describe a difficult decision you made in the past six months. What made it difficult?
- » Tell me about a time when you made a bad decision.

LEADERSHIP

- » Tell me about a time when you had difficulty getting others to accept your ideas. What was your approach?
- » Give an example of your ability to build motivation in your co-workers, classmates, or other group members.
- » Describe the toughest group that you have had to get cooperation from. How did you handle it?

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

- » Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a very upset customer or co-worker.
- » Describe a situation in which you were able to effectively “read” another person and guide your actions by your understanding of their needs and values.
- » Tell me about a situation in which you had to be assertive.

INITIATIVE

- » Describe a situation when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get the job done.
- » Give me examples of projects/tasks you started on your own.
- » Tell me about a time when you surmounted a major obstacle.

COMMUNICATION

- » Describe your most significant written document, report, or presentation which you had to complete.
- » Tell me about a situation when you had to speak up (be assertive) in order to get a point across.
- » Give an example of a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone’s opinion.
- » What do you do if you disagree with someone you work with?
- » Describe a decision you made that was not popular and how you handled implementing it.

Appendix D (continued)

TEAMWORK

- » Tell me about a team experience you found rewarding.
- » Describe a team experience you found disappointing.
- » What could you have done to prevent this?
- » How do you take initiative and communicate with others while working as a member of a team?

PROBLEM SOLVING

- » Tell me about a time you were creative in solving a problem.
- » Give a specific example of a policy you conformed with which you did not agree.

- » Describe an instance when you missed an obvious solution to a problem.
- » Have you ever made a mistake? How did you handle it?
- » How have you handled a difficult situation?
- » For additional interview questions, including major specific, please refer to Career Services website (**miamioh.edu/careers/letters-resumes-interviews/interviewing/mock-interview/student-information/**)

Appendix E

QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEWER

- » What qualities are you looking for in your new hires? Could you describe a typical first-year assignment?
- » Could you tell me about your initial and future training programs?
- » Do you have in-house professional development seminars? If so, what topics are typically covered?
- » What are some of the typical career paths followed by others who have been in this position? What is a realistic time frame for advancement?
- » How is an employee evaluated and promoted? What are the opportunities for personal growth?
- » What is the retention rate of people in the position for which I am interviewing?
- » What are the most challenging facets of the position? What are your expectations for new hires?
- » What is the overall structure of the department where the position is located?
- » What is the work environment like?
- » How often can I expect to relocate during the initial years of employment with your company?
- » What are the organization's plans for future growth?
- » Is the organization stable and financially sound?
- » What assurance about employment stability can I expect?
- » Is it company policy to promote from within? What is the work history of your top management?
- » What distinguishes your firm from its competitors? What industry-wide trends are likely to affect your organization?
- » What are your company's strengths and weaknesses? How would you describe your corporation's personality and management style?
- » How is the work environment affected by the company's management style?
- » If you were to name three values this organization represents, what would they be?
- » Why should I want to work for your organization instead of another?
- » Why did you join and stay with the firm?
- » What do you like about working for this organization? What don't you like?

Appendix F

HOW TO HANDLE IMPROPER OR ILLEGAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

During an interview, you expect and are prepared to answer questions that relate to the job and how well your qualifications, skills and interests fit the position. Consequently, it can be very disconcerting to be asked an interview question about your private life, marriage or family plans, or related personal matters. Personal questions in interviews are at best improper and at worst illegal.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has summarized the questions that may be asked during an interview or other pre-employment processes. The summary is on the EEOC website (www.eeoc.gov/laws/practices/):

Pre-Employment Inquiries (General)

As a general rule, the information obtained and requested through the pre-employment process should be limited to those essential for determining if a person is qualified for the job; whereas, information regarding race, sex, national origin, age, and religion are irrelevant in such determinations.

Employers are explicitly prohibited from making pre-employment inquiries about disability.

Although state and federal equal opportunity laws do not clearly forbid employers from making pre-employment inquiries that relate to, or disproportionately screen out members based on race, color, sex, national origin, religion, or age, such inquiries may be used as evidence of an employer's intent to discriminate unless the questions asked can be justified by some business purpose.

Therefore, inquiries about organizations, clubs, societies, and lodges of which an applicant may be a member or any other questions, which may indicate the applicant's race, sex, national origin, disability status, age, religion, color or ancestry if answered, should generally be avoided.

Similarly, employers should not ask for a photograph of an applicant. If needed for identification purposes, a photograph may be obtained after an offer of employment is made and accepted.

Most of the recruiters who come to Miami have been trained by human resource professionals and understand what questions they may ask and which ones are improper. If you are ever concerned about how you were treated during an interview, please contact your Career Advisor immediately.

In the unlikely event that you are asked an improper/illegal question, below are suggestions about how to respond to the question. These suggestions should not be considered legal advice.

How Should You Respond if You are Asked an Improper/Illegal Question?

First of all, think about what the interviewer may be asking or why he/she may be asking you that question. Perhaps the job requires long hours and a lot of travel. An untrained interviewer may ask you point blank if you are married or plan to have children or about your ability to travel. What are your alternatives if asked such a question.

- » **You Can Refuse to Answer**
- » **You Can Answer the Question as Asked**
- » **You Can Answer the Legitimate Concern of the Employer – ignore the improper question itself, and respond instead to the concern underlying the question.**

The third choice allows you to present yourself in a positive manner and control the way you answer the question. You might want to rephrase the question or simply ignore it and answer the issue behind the question. You can address an interviewer's reservations directly, correct erroneous assumptions about the real issue of concern, and resolve it. For example:

Q: Are you planning to get married soon? (or, Do you have a serious boyfriend or girlfriend?)

A: If you are concerned about my staying in the area or my ability to travel, I can assure you that I am looking forward to living in this area and travel has always been part of my job expectations.

Q. What do your parents do? (Sometimes asked to find out how many contacts you might have for a sales job, typically in financial services.)

A: I am not sure how this relates to this job. Can you explain?

Q. Do you plan to have children?

A: Regardless of whether I have children, my career will always be an important part of my life.

Q. Where were you born? (The concern is about your work eligibility and you should respond to that concern.)

A: I am a permanent resident of the United States and have a legal permit to work.

-or-

A: I have an F1 (or J1) visa and can obtain practical training experience before returning home.

Questions that were inappropriate before you are hired, such as date of birth, marital status, and others, may be perfectly legal after you are hired. Employers often need such information for employment eligibility, tax, insurance, social security and other purposes.

The following link from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio provides additional information on questions that are appropriate and inappropriate to ask during an interview:

http://www.case.edu/finadmin/humres/employment/attachments/interview_questions_legal_and_illegal.pdf

Titles in the Career Development and Workbook Series include:

Cover Letters & Other Job Search Correspondence

The Graduate School Option

Interviewing Guide

A Job Search Guide for International Students

Job Search Strategies

Mapping Your Miami Journey

Resume Preparation

Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Your Job Search

Telling Your Story

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