Interview Tips

Some best practices from Ken Saul, HP Senior Engineer and OSU Campus Manager

Interview Tips

- Dress is “business casual.” No shorts or shirts with holes please.
- Take a shower and brush your teeth!
- Arrive early.
- Turn off your cell phone.
- Be a role model for the job.
- Be interested and interesting.
Interview Tips: Behavioral Questions

- These type of questions are about You and reflect your life experience and maturity:
  - “Tell me about yourself.”
  - “What are your qualifications for this job?”
  - “What are your strengths and weaknesses?”
  - “What did you like best and least about your past jobs?”
  - “Tell me about a time you made a bad decision.”
  - “Tell me about a time when you had to handle a difficult situation with a coworker or customer.”
- Answer them honestly, from your own experiences.
- Practicing with a friend goes is very helpful!
- Don’t answer questions about marital status, age, religion, race, etc. These should not come up anyway.
- Citizenship or work authorization is important to answer in most cases.

Interview Tips: Technical Questions

- Do your homework! Brush up on those basic lower-division classes to answer technical questions quickly.
- Be able to work simple problems in your field quickly and clearly on paper. Think out loud.
- Show you understand first principles and the basics, even if a formula or some syntax was a little incorrect. It is ok to ask questions!
- Be prepared to talk about a lab or technical project you did alone or with a group. It is good to bring a diagram or other brief summary (no long reports, please). Drawing a quick sketch is good. You will leave all written answers with the interviewer, so try to make your writing legible.
- In group projects, be prepared to talk about your unique contribution and how you motivated / managed others to get the overall project completed.
Answer the question

- If you really don’t know the answer, don’t waste time. Honesty is way better than BS.
- Show *how your mind works* in open-ended questions:
  - How many dentists are in the US?
  - Estimate the number of airline flights per day in the US.
  - How does a CD player work?
- Try to stay focused… don’t drift off-topic or ramble.
- Watch the time – ask if you are ok on time if you think you are taking too long.

Interview Score Sheet

- **Qualifications** (able to talk about their qualifications for the position, strengths and weaknesses, accomplishments)
- **Work experience** (able to describe relevant work experience, list previous jobs, what they liked best and least from those jobs, and what they learned from their experience that set their career goals)
- **Describing past behaviors** (able to tell about decisions, handling difficult situations or disappointments, persuading others to see their perspective, managing time and priorities)
- **Problem solving** (solving technical and open-ended questions)
- **Communication skills** (speaking clearly and coherently, able to summarize, comfortable under pressure, including their body language)
Be interested

- Do your homework on the company you are interviewing with.
- There will be tons of information on their website.
  - Come with a few good questions about the company that you think the interviewer can answer:
    - Are your working hours fixed or flexible?
    - Do you have info on medical/dental benefits?
    - How much travel is expected in this job?
    - Do you pay for relocation?
    - What is your vacation policy?
- Send a thank-you letter by the next day.

Interviewing over a meal

- If you are interviewing over a meal, don’t eat much
  - You are there to talk, not to get filled up. It’s ok to leave food on your plate. *Avoid alcohol even if others are drinking.* No smoking, please.
  - Take small bites so your mouth is not full if you need to talk.
  - Watch your table manners but don’t get paranoid about them.
  - Turn off your cell phone.
Review

- Remember that every time you meet a company representative you are being interviewed!
- Be mature, responsible, and friendly.
  - Attend info sessions, career fairs, panel discussions, guest lectures, sponsored dinners, etc.
  - Build your network!

Good luck!

- Any Questions?