

Ace the Interview

careers.ucr.edu
(951) 827-3631

CONNECT. INSPIRE. EMPOWER.





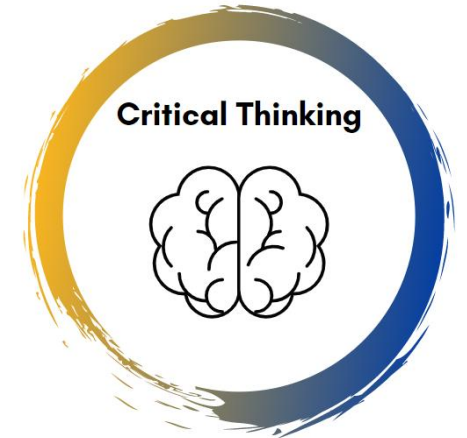
Agenda

- **Prepare for the Interview**
- **Commonly Asked Questions**
- **During the Interview**
- **After the Interview**
- **Questions**

What story do you want to tell?



NACE CAREER READINESS COMPETENCIES



*Obtaining **requisite competencies** that broadly prepare college graduates for a **successful transition** into the workplace.*



What You'll Learn Today

At the end of this workshop, you will be able to...



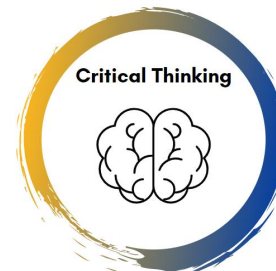
Explain what is important when preparing for an interview



Identify types of interviewing, commonly asked questions, and how to answer them effectively



Understand your role in the process and how to navigate (before the interview, during the interview, and after the interview)



What is an interview for?

PURPOSE

1

**Market
Yourself**

2

**Find out more
about the
organization**

3

**Determine
good fit for you
and the
employer**

The First Impression

It begins far before you actually interview!



**Career Fair or
Networking**



Email



**Application
Materials**



Phone Call

Once you are invited...



- ✓ Smile
- ✓ Check Schedule
- ✓ Respond Promptly
- ✓ Be Courteous



Types of Interviews & Interview Logistics

In Person Interview

- **Verify the time and location**
- **Ask for clarification (if needed)**
 - **Will this be a panel or individual interview?**
 - **Who will I be meeting with during the interview?**
 - **Should I prepare any materials or a presentation for this interview?**



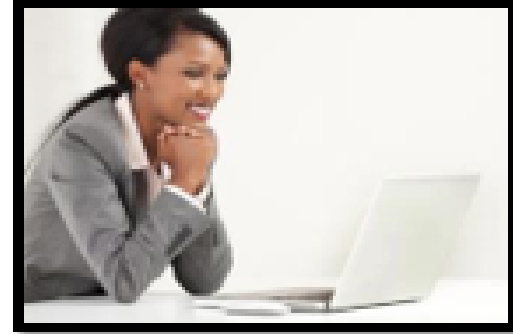
Virtual Interview

- Find a space without interruption and a good internet connection
- Access the link/platform ahead of time
- Dress the part
- Ask for clarification (if needed)
 - What is the web conferencing system that will be used?
 - What time zone will this interview take place?
 - Should I prepare any materials for this interview?



➤ Virtual Interview

- **Test your technology:** make sure your internet connection is stable and that your camera and microphone work properly
- **Create a professional virtual background:** Use a plain background (test virtual backgrounds if needed)
- **Choose a suitable room:** Position yourself in a quiet and well-lit area, preferably facing a natural light.
- **Use notes strategically :** Avoid reading from them directly
- **Dress professionally**
- **Be mindful of body language:** Maintain eye contact; Smile when appropriate and nod to show engagement.



Group Interview

- Focus on interactivity & inclusivity
- Speak with purpose
- Listening is key
- How do you work in a team setting?
- What unique ideas do you have?



Meal

Follow the interviewer's Lead

Maintain conversation

Follow etiquette rules

Less formal environment



Dress for Success

- Dark or muted colors are more professional
- Closed-toe shoes, dark socks if appropriate
- Avoid heavy perfume or cologne
- Clean hands, nails, and brushed teeth
- Grooming (hair & facial)
- Visit R' Professional Career Closet
- Have you checked your virtual presence lately?





Do Your Research

Review the position description

Research the company/organization

Ask current/former employees about their experiences

Prepare 3-5 questions for your interviewer

Interview Question Styles

Different interviews include different types of questions

- **Tell me how your background prepares you to do the job?**
- **Could you tell me about a time when you worked on a group project?**
- **How would you respond to a dissatisfied customer?**
- **What new feature would you add to MS Word if you were hired?**

Straightforward

Behavioral Based

Situational

Technical

Reflect on past actions and provide real examples for your answer

Behavioral Questions

- **Problem-solving & Critical thinking:** "Tell me about a time when you had to find a creative solution to a complex problem at work"
- **Time Management:** "Can you provide an example of a time when you had to handle multiple projects or tasks with competing deadlines? (How do you prioritize your tasks and manage your time?)"
- **Teamwork and Collaboration:** "Tell me about a time when you had to work in a team to complete the project before the deadline."
- **Adaptability and Flexibility:** "Describe a time when you had to quickly adjust to new environment, unexpected changes or shifting priorities. How did you handle it?"
- **Communication and Interpersonal Skills:** "Tell me about a challenging conversation you had to have with a coworker or client. How did you approach it, and what was the outcome?"
- **Initiative and Proactivity:** "How have you shown initiative?"

Behavioral Questions

Be a STAR



<u>S</u> ituation or <u>T</u> ask	Describe a specific event or situation. Give enough detail for the interviewer to understand. Draw from campus, work, or community experiences.
<u>A</u> ction	Describe the action you took. If you are describing a group project, focus on your role.
<u>R</u> esults	What did you accomplish? What did you learn?

- **Past actions are more indicative of future success than hypothetical situations**
- **Prepare 3-5 STAR examples**



**Let's
Practice!**



S T A R



Interview Question 1:

Tell me about a time when you worked effectively under pressure.
How did you ensure that you were successful?

Interview Question 2:

Describe a time when you worked with a group to achieve a goal.

Interview Question 3:

Walk me through a time when you made a mistake. What would you have done differently?



1

Divide into groups of 3. Person 1 will be the interviewer and will ask questions first

2

Person 2 will be the interviewee first

3

Person 3 will observe and give feedback

4

Then switch, so that each person takes on each role

Other Common Questions

Tell us a little bit about yourself and why this position interests you?

- *What makes you different than others?*
- *How organized and concise are you?*
- *What brought you to this career?*
- *Why do you want to work with this organization?*



Why do you want to work for our organization?

- *Where you work should be important to you (values)*
- *Recall your company research*
- *Let them know that you know about their achievements and challenges*

What is your greatest weakness/opportunity?

- *Identify a weakness that does not contradict a core competency needed for the job*
- *Explain at least 2 specific ways you have overcome/managed the weakness and provide evidence*

Practice Virtually Using

1. **STANDOUT**[®]

2. Schedule an **interview** practice or Mock Interview Critique appointment with your career specialist.

[STANDOUT](#)
[TUTORIAL](#)

Arriving at the Interview

In-Person

- Arrive early (10-15 minutes so you are not rushed)
- Leave cell phone in the car or shut off before going into interview
- Interview begins in the parking lot — be courteous
- Bring extra copies of resume
- Take cues from interviewer

Virtual or Phone

- Check the Zoom/virtual link early and make sure you have the link, password, internet connection ready to go
- Put cell phone or any other distractions away before the interview
- Have a copy of resume, CL, & job description in front of you
- Take cues from interviewer

During the Interview

- **Sit, taking cue from interviewer (in-person)**
- **Be mindful of time**
- **Make effective eye contact – smile!**
- **Express confidence in your abilities**
 - What would you bring to the organization?
- **Tie your background to the position**
- **Speak clearly with enthusiasm**



Closing the Interview

- **Your time to ask questions!**
- **Ask about the next step (if not already mentioned)**
- **Ask for business cards if not offered**
- **Shake everyone's hand, call them by name if possible and thank them for their time**
- **RELAX...you're done!**



➤ Last question: Do you have any questions for us?

Prepare 2-3 questions to demonstrate your interest in the role

- **Research the company and job description**
- **Personalize your questions:** Avoid asking simple questions that could be answered easily by a quick online search. “What qualities or skills are you looking for in an ideal candidate for this position?”
- **Ask about the team and culture:** Inquire about the work environment, team dynamics, and company culture to assess if it aligns with your own values and working style.
- **Avoid asking about compensation and benefits**

After the Interview

- **Send a thank you note (email, card)**
- **Be specific with what you appreciated about them in the interview**
- **Follow-up if the date that they said they would get back to you has passed**
- **Always be professional**



Exception:

If the employer stated to not contact them, do not contact them

When an offer has been made...

Accepting the Offer:

- Be enthusiastic
- Find out the details
- Find out how much time they can give you
- Always deliberate before accepting

Declining the Offer:

- Remain positive
- Don't burn any bridges!
- Respond promptly and courteously – don't ghost the employer!



Salary Negotiation

Should I negotiate?

- Am I completely entry-level?
- Is the job in a field that doesn't allow for negotiation?
- Is the offer reasonable?

How do I negotiate salary?

- Maintain professionalism
- Present an appropriate salary range for the position
- Consider cost of living and other factors
- View the *What's My Worth? Salary Negotiation* workshop



What to say when you don't get the job...

- Many companies do not inform you of their decision if they are not hiring you
- Remain professional
- Situational: ask them what could have made you a stronger candidate
- Don't burn any bridges!



On-Campus Interviews

- **Students are encouraged to participate!**
- **Employers interview UCR talent on campus**
- **Chance to interview for multiple internship and full-time positions**

Filters

Job type

Full-Time

Part-Time

Internship

On-Campus

Job

Co-Op

Experiential Learning

Fellowship

Graduate School

Volunteer

Work study

Interviewing on campus

UC RIVERSIDE | Career Network



Join the UCR Career Network, an online community for networking, mentoring, and job opportunities for alumni and students.

MENTORING

Matching process that connects current students with alumni or alumni with one another.


JOB SEARCH

Job board for those currently seeking employment or for alumni looking to hire other Highlanders.

NETWORKING

Discussion boards to meet and network with others who have similar career questions.

REGISTER AT [CAREERNETWORK.UCR.EDU](https://careernetwork.ucr.edu)



**What questions do
you have?**

Location: We are located in the Career Center Plaza. Our entrance is the University Lecture Hall and the Surge Building, behind the UCR Campus Store.

Hours:

Mon. - Fri. 8 am to 5 pm

Individual counseling appointments available

Schedule on Handshake

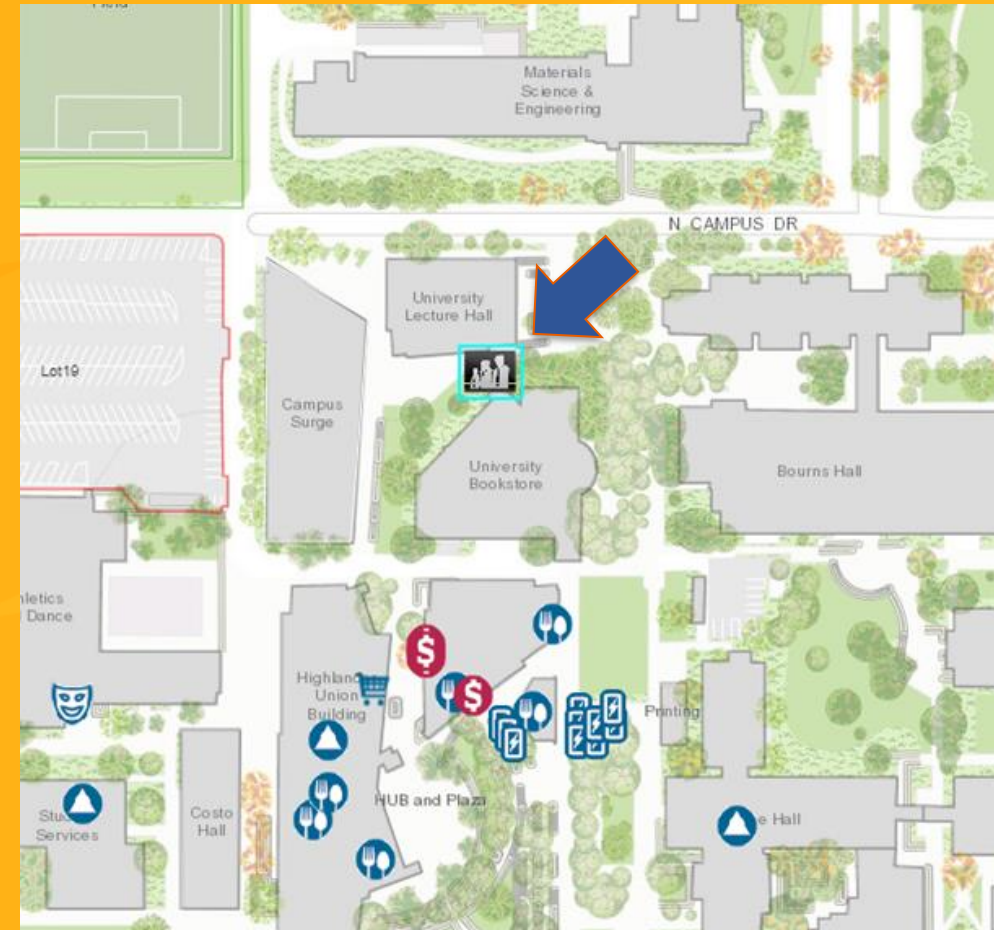
Drop-in Hours:

Mon. - Fri. (days & times vary)

View drop-in schedule on our website <https://careers.ucr.edu/>



Career Center



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