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Ace the Interview

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?"

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COMMUNICATION



PROFESSIONALISM



CRITICAL THINKING



TEAM WORK



NACE®

CAREER READINESS COMPETENCIES

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



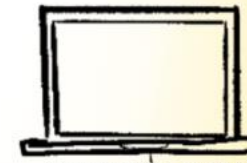
EQUITY & INCLUSION



LEADERSHIP



CAREER AND SELF-DEVELOPMENT



TECHNOLOGY



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 the purpose of an interview?

1

**Market
Yourself**

2

**Find out more
about the
organization**

3

**Determine
if it's a 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

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In Person Interview

- Verify the time and location
- Ask for clarification (if needed)

Examples:

1. Will this be a panel or individual interview?
2. Who will I be meeting with during the interview?
3. 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)

Examples:

1. What is the web conferencing system that will be used?
2. What time zone will this interview take place?
3. 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:** “look good, feel good”
- **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?





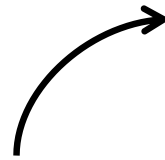
Meal

- 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 & face)
- Visit R' Professional Career Closet
- Have you checked your virtual presence lately?



PRO TIP!

You get 3 free items of clothing per quarter at R'Closet





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

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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- Situation

T- Task

A- Action



R- Result





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*



Mock Interview Practice

1. **Visit our office** to schedule a Mock Interview with Peer Advisors or ask how to sign up for Quinncia to access mock interview tool.
2. **Schedule an interview** practice or Mock Interview Critique appointment with your career specialist.



AI & Interviewing

Sample Prompts

- **Interviewing**

- I'm interviewing for [a role] at [company name]. Generate 10 interview questions based on the job description. [Paste the job description]
- I'm interviewing for a [job title] at [company] and expect to be asked [type a question here]. How can I best answer the question with a STAR method example? [Paste your resume]
- Provide me with five behavioral questions based on this job description.
- I'm interviewing for a [job title] at [company] and expect to be asked [type a question here]. How can I best answer the question with a STAR method example? [Paste your resume]
- I'm interviewing for [job title] at [company] and know nothing about the company. What do I need to know about them for my interview?

Disclaimer: UCR Career Center is not affiliated with the AI tools apart from "Gemini" and "Quinnia" when signing in with your R'Mail account. We are sharing them as resources, illustrating how these AI tools could assist you in the job search process. Please use your discretion when using AI tools as the Career Center does not endorse the effectiveness of AI tools.



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**
- **Thank each person by name**
- **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!**

There is no failure.
You either win
or you learn.



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



Responsible AI Use

Key considerations:

- Always disclose AI use when required by employers or academic institutions
- Verify factual claims made by AI, especially about companies or industries
- Be aware of potential biases in AI outputs
- Understand copyright implications when using AI-generated content
- Protect your personal and sensitive information

Learning Enhancement

Students should understand how to use AI to enhance their learning and professional development, not replace it.

Best Practices:

- Use AI to break down complex tasks into manageable steps
- Reflect on what you learn through AI interactions
- Identify when AI is helping you develop skills vs doing the work for you
- Seek human guidance (career counselors, mentors) for holistic support



AI Disclaimers

Students can use AI to amplify their strengths and streamline their efforts, but they should **never let it replace their own authentic voice, critical thinking, or personal growth**. The key with using AI is to **maintain agency** in the process. Students should remember that the career development process is about **more than just landing a job**. **It's about understanding yourself, developing professional skills, and building meaningful relationships**. AI can support these goals, but **it cannot achieve them for you**. Approach these tools with **curiosity, intentionality, and a commitment to your own development**, and they will serve you well throughout your career journey.

The ethical questions surrounding AI—such as **its environmental impact, potential for bias, data privacy, and effects on employment**—are complex and evolving. Rather than avoiding AI entirely or using it uncritically, we encourage **informed, thoughtful engagement**. By understanding both the benefits and challenges, students can use AI responsibly while advocating for its continued improvement.

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Keep in mind that the person in the interview will need to match the voice of the documents submitted. ChatGPT/AI is best used in combination with your own voice and writing style. Be sure to personalize and edit ChatGPT/AI responses for things like your resume, cover letter, and professional correspondences.

ENROLL IN EXCEL + NOW!

Start anytime during your undergrad degree, **go at your own pace**, and **earn recognition** for the valuable career readiness skills you're already building on campus.

- Pick your Competency

IE: Career and Self Development, Technological Literacy, and MORE!

- Upload and Track Progress
- Earn Competency Badges
- Highlight Your Skills to Employers

Students enrolled by 10/31 will be entered into raffle to win a \$25 UCR dinning gift card.



Excel.ucr.edu

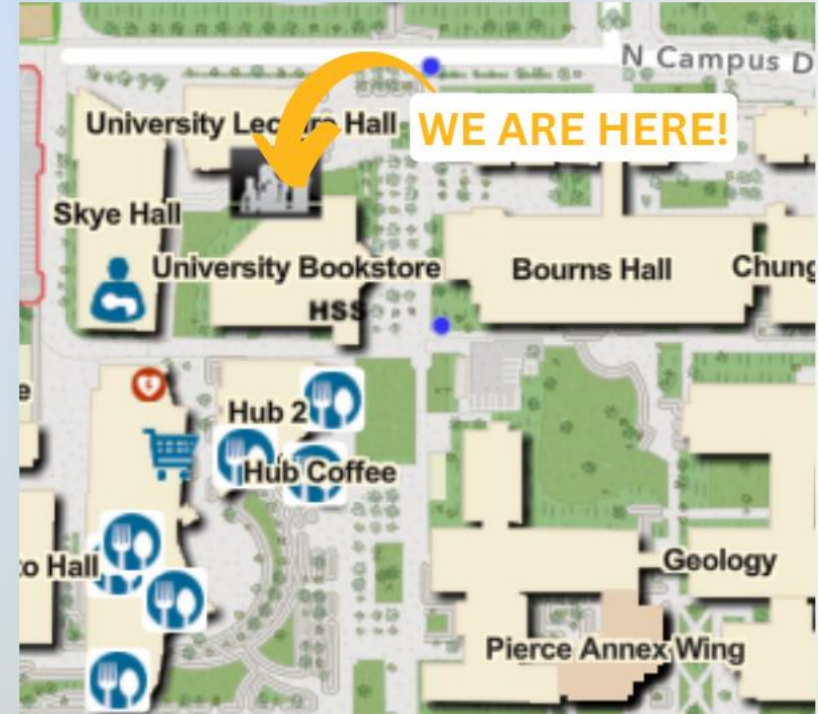
location

ENTRANCE IS ACROSS FROM ARC AND UNIVERSITY LECTURE HALL, UNDERNEATH THE BOOKSTORE

hours

8 AM - 5 PM MONDAY-FRIDAY

website home *drop in hours*



connect with us!



INSTAGRAM

@UCRCAREERCENTER



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QUESTIONS?

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Post-Workshop Survey

