UNM | Office of Career Services

Interviewing Guide

Before stepping into an interview, be sure to practice. A candidate going to an interview without preparing is like an actor performing on opening night without rehearsing.

Interview Day:

Before the Interview:

• Schedule an appointment for a Mock Interview at Career Services so you can prepare yourself for the upcoming interview.

• Call before the interview and find out with whom you will be interviewing.

• The night before your interview, lay out your professional outfit and interviewing materials.

• Leave early to avoid traffic or have sufficient time in case you get lost.

• Make sure you have good directions to the interview site and information on where to park. Do not forget to bring parking money if necessary.

Arriving at Location:

Be polite to everyone you meet and be friendly. First impressions are extremely important and you never know who will be in your interview and who may have a say in the hiring.

During the Interview:

• Make your introduction and greeting memorable.

• Smile, make eye contact, shake hands, and say their name.

• Answer questions clearly and confidently.

• Answer questions by using examples from your previous experiences. Tell little stories to give the interviewer an understanding of your experiences and how you can relate your past experiences to the new job.

Use the STAR method: Situation, Task, Action, Results (http://www.career.unm.edu/forms/starhandout).

• Accentuate the positive. Avoid saying "No" or "I don't know."

• Do not ramble. Give enough detail to sufficiently answer the question and then stop talking. You want your answers to be short, focused and to the point. If you're not sure you've given enough information, simply ask, "Did I answer that sufficiently for you, or would you like more details?"

• Job interviews can be intimidating situations, but as the old saying goes, "Never let them see you sweat." Walk into the room in a manner exuding self-confidence - not timid, but also not rushed. Keep nervous habits in check. You want to project confidence during the interview.

• Use body language that shows you are enthusiastic, confident, and comfortable with the interview process.

• Non-verbal communication is very important. It can tell you a lot about how the interview is going.

• Be aware of the tone of your voice and the use of your hands. Speak clearly, confidently, and show your enthusiasm.

At the end of the Interview:

• This is your time to ask the questions you have previously prepared. (See sample questions)

• Ask about responsibilities that may not have been available from the job posting, the culture, and specifics you want to know about the job.

• ***Do not bring up salary and be careful about bringing up benefits until the offer has been made.***

Departing the Interview:

• Get each interviewer's business card or contact information.

• Determine how you will remain in contact.

• When leaving, shake hands with people you have met and again, convey interest in the position.

After the Interview:

• Send a thank you note! Thank you notes consist of an introduction to thank them for your interview opportunity.

• It should also include one or two unique and positive highlights that occurred during the interview.

• The thank you note ends with a conclusion expressing your interest in hearing from the interviewer soon.

• Be sure to send the thank you note within 24 hours of the interview.

• You can send it via email, regular mail or leave with the front desk.

Sample Interview Questions

Resume-based Questions:

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself.
2. How has your education prepared you for this position?
3. Tell me how your work/internship/co-op experience prepared you for this position?
4. What was your motivation for applying for this position?
5. What are your top three strengths? What is one of your weaknesses? Please explain.

Company And Position Questions:

1. What do you know about our company?
2. Why do you want to work for our company?
3. What qualifications do you have that will make you successful with this company?

Behavioral Based Questions:

Behavioral Based Interviewing focuses on experiences, behaviors, knowledge, skills and abilities that are job related. It is based on the belief that past behavior and performance predicts future behavior and performance.

1. Tell me about a time when you had a disagreement with a co-worker or supervisor and how you handled it?
2. Can you tell me about a time when you had to overcome a disappointment?
3. Tell me about a time when you had to make a decision you knew would be unpopular.
4. Tell me about a time when you made a mistake and how you turned it into a learning experience.
5. Give me an example of how you deal with pressure.
6. Tell me about a time when you were on a team and one of the members was not carrying his/her weight.
7. Give me an example of how you were particularly effective on prioritizing tasks and completing a project on schedule.

For more examples on common interviewing questions and answers refer to our *Tips For Answering Common Interviewing Questions* at: http://www.career.unm.edu/forms/qahandout.

Questions To Ask The Interviewer:

1.What is the greatest challenge currently facing your organization?
2.How does this department fit into the overall organization and its goals?
3.What is the busiest period for this position? How does the position change to meet these busy periods?
4.What is the most challenging aspect of this position? Most rewarding?
5.What opportunities do you offer for professional development?

What To Wear

According to recent surveys of recruiters seeking to hire UNM students, the following are some great tips for all candidates:

- Two-piece business suits with a skirt or slacks, long-sleeved dress shirt.
- Conservative neckline/necktie in terms of color and pattern.
- Avoid ill-fitting clothes (short, tight, clingy, or high slits in skirts).
- No visible undergarmets (camisole/bra straps or boxers).
- Business-style shoes. Avoid wearing a business suit with sandals or sneakers.
- High-fitting dark socks with slacks.
- Match shoe and belt color.
- Well-groomed hair style.
- Understated makeup. Simple classic accessories.
- Minimal cologne or perfume.
- No visible body art.
- Breath mints. Use one before greeting recruiter.
- Briefcase or portfolio instead of a purse or backpack.

Sample After Interview Thank You Letter:

Thank You

Dear Mr. Mender,

Thank you for the opportunity to interview with Vista Corporation Inc. yesterday. I very much enjoyed our conversation concerning the marketing position as well as overall professional opportunities with your company.

I would like to reiterate my interest in the position. After our interview, I am even more enthusiastic about the opportunity of working at Vista Corporation Inc. Your description of the diverse projects I would be involved in has spurred my interest since I am continually seeking new professional challenges.

I am looking forward to hearing from you about a second interview. If you are in need of further information please feel free to reach me at 505-395-4932 or through email at kfields394@unm.edu.

Sincerely,

Karie Fields