INTERVIEW TIPS

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY MICHELIN® CAREER CENTER

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW:

- 1. RESEARCH the company, organization, or agency with whom you will be interviewing.
 - Learn about the history, mission, organizational structure, philosophy, and position descriptions with in the organization.
 - Why? To make sure it is a place you will be happy working and to be well prepared for the interview.
 - Where? Career Resource Library, Cooper Library, the Internet
- 2. PREPARE for Interview Questions.
 - Study possible interview questions and think about how you will answer them. Be comfortable with your responses; try not to sound rehearsed.
- **3. THINK** about your qualifications. Be sure you can verbalize them to a potential employer.
- **4. PRACTICE** your communication skills.
- **5. PLAN** for travel, if necessary.
 - If you are traveling to a *local* interview, make sure you know how to get there. Drive to the building the day before your interview, if possible.
 - If you are traveling *out of town* for an interview, make sure you clarify with the employer *before your trip* who will be responsible for travel costs.

DURING THE INTERVIEW:

- **1. ARRIVE** 15 minutes early.
- 2. Bring extra copies of your resume, a pen, and some paper.
- **3.** Make sure you know how to properly pronounce the interviewer's name.

- **4. Dress** professionally and conservatively.
 - Even if you know that you will dress more casually for the actual job, an interview is still a professional business meeting, and a dark suit for men and women is most appropriate. If you want to add a little color, do so with a tie or a scarf.
 - Keep accessories to a minimum. For men: stick with your watch and a class or wedding ring. For women: stick with simple and classic jewelry (no dangling earrings or bracelets).
 - Go without cologne or perfume. (You never know if your interviewer might have allergies).
- **5. MAKE** a positive first impression.
 - Offer a firm handshake.
 - Greet the employer by name.
 - Be relaxed and enthusiastic.
 - Do not smoke or chew gum.
 - Maintain eye contact about 70% of the time.
- **6. BE FAMILIAR** with the typical structure of an interview.
 - Rapport establishment = small talk
 - Opener = First serious question from the interviewer. "Tell me about yourself."
 - Exploration of facts = questions about your experience, education, and goals.
 - Conclusion = summary of the interview and your opportunity to ask questions.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW:

- **1. MAKE NOTES** from your conversation with the interviewer.
- **2. SEND** a thank you letter within 24 hours.

COMMONLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

- 1. What goals have you set for yourself? How are you planning to achieve them?
- 2. Who or what has had the greatest influence on the development of your career interests?
- 3. What factors did you consider in choosing your major?
- 4. Why are you interested in our organization?
- 5. Tell me about yourself.
- 6. What two or three things are most important to you in a position?
- 7. What kind of work do you do?
- 8. What are your expectations of your future employer?
- 9. What is your GPA? How do you feel about it? Does it reflect your ability?
- 10. How do you solve conflicts?
- 11. What are your strengths? Your weaknesses?

- 12. What work experience has been the most valuable to you and why?
- 13. What was the most useful criticism you ever received, and who was it from?
- 14. What has been your greatest challenge?
- 15. What are your team-player qualities? Give examples.
- 16. What leadership positions have you held? Describe your leadership style.
- 17. What interests or concerns you about the position or the company?
- 18. In a particular leadership role you had, what was the greatest challenge?
- 19. What idea have you developed and implemented that was particularly creative or innovative?
- 20. What characteristics do you think are important for this position?
- 21. How have your educational and work experiences prepared you for this position?
- 22. How do you think you have changed personally since you started college?
- 23. Why did you choose the extracurricular activities you did? What did you gain? What did you contribute?
- 24. Knowing what you know now about your college experience, would you make the same decisions?
- 25. What can you contribute to this company/organization/agency?
- 26. What characteristics are most important in a good manager/supervisor? How have you shown one of these characteristics?
- 27. What challenges are you looking for in a position?
- 28. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction?
- 29. What is the most important lesson you have learned in or out of school?

Behavioral-Based Interview Questions:

- 1. Tell me about a situation when you had to persuade another person to your point of view.
- 2. How important is it to you to be perceived as a team member and why?
- 3. Describe a situation where you had a conflict with another individual, and how you dealt with it.
- 4. Tell me about a project you initiated.
- 5. What types of situations put you under pressure, and how do you deal with the pressure?
- 6. Describe the project/situation that best demonstrated your analytical skills.
- 7. Tell me how you dealt with those who expressed the sentiment of, "Why change when we have always done it this way?"
- 8. Tell me about a team project of which you are particularly proud of and your contribution.
- 9. Describe a time when you worked as a team to complete a task/project.
- 10. How have you motivated yourself to complete an assignment or task that you did not want to do?
- 11. Tell me about the riskiest decision that you have made.
- 12. Describe a situation where class assignments, work or personal activities conflicted. How did you prioritize? How did you manage your time? What was the outcome?
- 13. Can you tell me about a complex problem that you solved? Describe the process you utilized.
- 14. Tell me about a situation when you had to learn something new in a short time. How did you proceed?
- 15. How have you most constructively dealt with a disappointment and turned it into a learning experience?
- 16. Have you generated any new ideas or suggestions while at school or at work?
- 17. Tell me about a time when you worked with a person who did things very differently from you. How did you get the job done?

- 18. Give an example of when your persistence had the biggest payoff.
- 19. Describe a situation in which you effectively developed a solution to a problem by combining different perspectives or approaches.
- 20. Think about a difficult boss, professor, or other person. What made him or her difficult? How did you successfully interact with this person?
- 21. Tell me about a challenge that you successfully met.
- 22. Describe your three greatest accomplishments to date.
- 23. Describe when you or a group that you were part of was in danger of missing a deadline. What did you do?
- 24. Take me through a project where you demonstrated leadership skills.
- 25. Tell me about a difficult decision you have made.
- 26. Tell me about a challenge that you successfully met.
- 27. Can you tell me about an occasion where you needed to work with a group to get a job done?
- 28. Tell me about a complex project or assignment that you have been assigned. What approach did you take to complete it?
- 29. What were the biggest problems you have encountered in college? How have you handled them? What did you learn from them?

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES/STUDENTS TO ASK:

- 1. What is your method of training new employees?
- 2. What type of orientation would I receive?
- 3. How closely will I be supervised?
- 4. What characteristics do you think are important for this position?
- 5. How often are performance reviews done?
- 6. How soon will I be given responsibility?
- 7. How much travel is normally expected?
- 8. What are some of the major short and long-range goals that the company/organization has?
- 9. What outside influences affect the company's/organization's growth?
- 10. In what areas does the company/organization excel, or in what area does it have limitations?
- 11. What are some of the common denominators among the organization's successes?
- 12. Based on what you have seen of me so far, where do you think I could contribute most? Effectively?
- 13. Is there anything you perceive as a weakness in my background?
- 14. What are some of the characteristics that the company/organization considers to be unique?
- 15. What would add or subtract from the incumbent's performance to increase their effectiveness?
- 16. Can you give me some idea of the projects that I may be working on?
- 17. Could you describe any opportunities for advancement within the organization/company?
- 18. What is the typical time frame for these advancements?
- 19. What characteristics do you think are important for this position?
- 20. Has the company had to lay off employees in the past couple of years?
- 21. How has the company/organization changed over the past 5 or 10 years?