I. Two Types of Interviews students might experience:
   a. College Entrance Interviews: Interviews with prospective colleges/universities to determine admission.
   b. Internship/Job Interviews: Internships are usually for college credit and are a requirement to graduate. Some are paid, and they are meant to allow you to get “real-life” experience in your field/major.

II. BEFORE THE INTERVIEW
   a. Do your homework!!! Research
      i. College Entrance: The school, the faculty, the programs, the cost, time/years to complete, the jobs graduates obtain, their accreditation.
      ii. Internships/Jobs: The company (its competitors), history, locations, philosophy, mission, different jobs, their clients!
   b. Prepare your portfolio. Bring spare copies. This should always be printed on resume paper. Your portfolio should include the following:
      i. Cover Letter
      ii. Resume
      iii. References (these should be individuals who can speak to your work ethic/performance. Do not include close relatives…former instructors, coaches, bosses, supervisors are best.
      iv. Honors/Awards (in work or school)
      v. Showcase of your work (if applicable). For example, design sketches for someone seeking a fashion design position.
   c. Check your social networks! According to Tiffany Hsu of the 2011 LA Times article, “Facebook, Twitter play role in college admissions” many college admission counselors as well as companies are checking applicants' social network pages.
   d. Research who may be interviewing you (Google search etc.)
   e. Practice sample questions (See Sample Questions)
   f. What if, I’ve never had a job before? Never underestimate the power of volunteering, this shows that you give back to your community and can use this to respond to interview questions. You don’t even have to dedicate lots of hours, even 10 hours/month is better than nothing and will give you experience in working with others.
g. What if I have been fired from my previous job? I would recommend that you NOT include this on your resume and/or even bring up in the interview (if you can avoid it).

h. What if I have a tarnished background/record? Be truthful and be prepared to explain how you have learned from past mistakes and overcome adversity. However, be aware that many companies do not hire individuals with a recent felony on his/her record. You might want to investigate this before you apply. If you have any court documents indicating you are off “probation” etc. Bring these to your interview. You might also want to bring to light WOTC (Work Opportunity Tax Credit) for the employer if you fit into one of the designated categories (See WOTC Handout).

i. Be prepared to submit to a background and/drug test that very day of the interview.

j. Dress to impress!!! Prepare your outfit the night before. (See Attire Handout)

k. Get driving directions. Be sure to factor in cash/coins you may need for parking garages or meters. Allow for traffic. Make sure you have gas the night before!

l. Get a good night’s rest

m. EAT a small meal!!

n. Be confident!! Be YOU!!

III. DURING THE INTERVIEW

a. Arrive EARLY (at least 15 minutes).

b. Greet everyone as if you are talking to the actual interviewer!! You never know when their feedback might be solicited about your communication with him/her.

c. Never refer to anyone by his/her first name.

d. Dress to impress!!! Give a firm handshake, eye contact, smile, confident posture. Remember, not all companies will request you to wear a suit/tie. Be sure to wear an outfit that is job appropriate. (See Attire Handout)

e. Listen to all question(s) answer with a complete sentence. Some interviewers will ask “compound questions” or, one long question which is actually three or four questions put together. Be sure to actively listen to the entire question(s) and have a response for all. If you don’t understand the question, ask for clarification, but avoid doing this for every question.

f. Think before you speak, try to be honest, many young interviewees provide cliché and scripted responses. Give specifics!! (See Interview Questions Handout)
g. Answer ALL questions!! The worst thing you can say is, “I don’t know, I’m not sure.”

h. Never speak negatively about a former employer or co-worker. This shows both immaturity and unprofessionalism.

i. Know the illegal questions (See Interview Questions Handout)

j. Ask questions of them (See Interview Questions Handout)

k. Don’t talk money!!

l. Thank him/her.

IV. AFTER THE INTERVIEW

a. Take notes of questions asked, things you did well, things you can improve for next time.

b. Follow up with a thank you letter/email. Reiterate your interest.

c. Thank your references.

d. If you don’t get the acceptance/job, don’t fret 😊
Sample University Interview Questions
The following represent common questions asked in a university interview.

Tell me about yourself?
What are you best at?
What are your main interests?
Why do you want to study for a degree?
What do you think university can offer you?
What else, apart from study, interests you about university?
Why did you apply to this university?
Why have you chosen this department?
Why should we offer you a place?
How would you define your subject?
What are the most important current developments in your subject?
What did you learn from any work experience you've done?
What practical skills have you acquired?
What are your career plans, if any?
What qualities do you possess to follow your chosen career?
What really interests you?
What was the last book you read?
How did you choose the last book you read?
What do you believe to be the functions of a good university?
What are your views on the funding of universities?
How do you think universities should achieve a good social mix in their intake?
Can you describe the interested listed on your personal statement in more detail?
What have you most enjoyed at school?
What do you dislike about school? (NOTE: Trick Question!!)
What do you think you can offer this university?
What opportunities have you had for exercising leadership?
Tell me an achievement of which you are proud.
How do you think you will benefit from a university education?
Sample Internship/Job Interview Questions

The following represent common questions asked in an internship/job interview.

What are your long-range goals and objectives for the next seven to ten years?

What are your short-range goals and objectives for the next one to three years?

How do you plan to achieve your career goals?

What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?

Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?

What are your strengths, weaknesses, and interests?

How do you think a friend or professor who knows you well would describe you?

Describe a situation in which you had to work with a difficult person (another student, co-worker, customer, supervisor, etc.). How did you handle the situation? Is there anything you would have done differently in hindsight?

What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort? Describe a situation in which you did so.

In what ways have your college experiences prepared you for a career?

How do you determine or evaluate success?

In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our organization?

Describe a contribution you have made to a project on which you worked.

What qualities should a successful manager/leader/supervisor/etc. possess?

Was there an occasion when you disagreed with a supervisor's decision or company policy? Describe how you handled the situation.

What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?

Describe your most rewarding college experience.

What interests you about our product or service?
Why did you select your college or university?

What led you to choose your major or field of study?

What college subjects did you like best? Why?

What college subjects did you like least? Why?

If you could do so, how would you plan your academic studies differently?

Do you think your grades are a good indication of your academic achievement?

What have you learned from participation in extracurricular activities?

In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?

How do you work under pressure?

Describe a situation in which you worked as part of a team. What role did you take on? What went well and what didn’t?

In what part-time, co-op, or summer jobs have you been most interested? Why?

How would you describe the ideal job for you following graduation?

Why did you decide to seek a position with our organization?

What two or three things would be most important to you in your job?

What criteria are you using to evaluate the organization for which you hope to work?

How would you view needing to relocate for the job? Do you have any constraints on relocation?

Are you comfortable with the amount of travel this job requires?

Are you willing to spend at least six months as a trainee?
Interview Responses/Questions

Be Specific

Employers like specifics. Don’t assume they know the ins and outs of your previous fields, jobs and work experience. Try to avoid vague terms. Here are some examples of how to properly respond to questions in an interview or resume.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vague</th>
<th>Specific</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have experience in working in a fast-paced environment.</td>
<td>Successfully serviced over 50 guests at one time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have excellent verbal skills.</td>
<td>Trained 20 new hires on customer service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a team player.</td>
<td>Collaborated with five other co-workers to increase speed of receivables and prevent interruption of service to clients.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How to Respond to Illegal/Unlawful Questions

Although not necessarily intended, many employers will ask “illegal questions” during an interview. Violations range from “What does your spouse do?” to sexual harassment. This poses a sticky situation for applicants. You don’t want to answer the unlawful questions (nor are you required to by law), but not answering the question could also lead the interviewer to perceive you as “uncooperative.” The following are examples of some unlawful questions and how to properly and professionally respond.
(Source: “Illegal Interview Questions.” (2011). USA Today.)

**Interviewer:** How old are you?
**Interviewee:** I don’t think age is important if you are well qualified for the position.

**Interviewer:** Do you plan to have children?
**Interviewee:** My plans to have a family will not interfere with my ability to perform the requirements of this position.

**Interviewer:** You seem confined to a wheelchair. How might this affect your work performance?
**Interviewee:** I am quite mobile in my chair, but I do not believe that my disability is relevant for a position as a computer software designer.
The following subjects are considered unlawful if asked the "wrong" way. Here are examples of the illegal and legal way an interviewer may ask you.

**Subject: Nationality**

**Illegal:** Are you a U.S. citizen?; Where were you/your parents born?; What is your "native tongue"?

**Legal:** Are you authorized to work in the United States?; What languages do you read, speak or write fluently? (This question is okay, as long as this ability is relevant to the performance of the job.)

**Subject: Age**

**Illegal:** How old are you?; When did you graduate from college?; What is your birthday?

**Legal:** Are you over the age of 18?

**Subject: Marital/Family status**

**Illegal:** What's your marital status?; Who do you live with?; Do you plan to have a family?; When?; How many kids do you have?; What are your child care arrangements?

**Legal:** Would you be willing to relocate if necessary?; Travel is an important part of the job. Would you be willing to travel as needed by the job (This question is okay, as long as all applicants for the job are asked it.); This job requires overtime occasionally. Would you be able and willing to work overtime as necessary? (Again, this question okay as long as all applicants for the job are asked it.)

**Subject: Affiliations**

**Illegal:** To what clubs or social organizations do you belong?

**Legal:** Do you belong to any professional or trade groups or other organizations that you consider relevant to your ability to perform this job?

**Subject: Personal**

**Illegal:** How tall are you?; How much do you weigh?

**Legal:** Are you able to lift a 50-pound weight and carry it 100 yards, as that is part of the job? (Questions about height and weight are not acceptable unless minimum standards are essential to the safe performance of the job.)

**Subject: Disabilities**

**Illegal:** Do you have any disabilities?; Please complete the following medical history.; Have you had any recent or past illnesses or operations? If yes, list and give dates.; What was the date of your last physical exam?; How's your family's health?; When did you lose your eyesight?

**Legal:** Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job with or without reasonable accommodations? (This question is okay if the interviewer thoroughly described the job.)


Subject: Arrest record
Illegal: Have you ever been arrested?
Legal: Have you ever been convicted of _____? (The crime should be reasonably related to the performance of the job in question.)

Subject: Military
Illegal: If you've been in the military, were you honorably discharged?; In what branch of the Armed Forces did you serve?
Legal: What type of training or education did you receive in the military?

Questions to Ask of the Employer
The following questions represent those that an interviewee might ask the employer/interviewer.

Describe your ideal employee.
Tell me about the culture of the organization.
How does your organization encourage employees to come up with new ideas?
What is a typical workday for this position?
What is the possibility of flexible working hours?
How does your organization evaluate employees?
How might your organization support me if I wanted to return to school?
What do you like most about working in this organization?
What characteristics are you looking for in an applicant in this position?
Tell me about your training program.
What major department changes do you anticipate during the next five years?
Attire Do’s & Don’ts
The following are guidelines when dressing for an interview.
(Source: Virginia Tech University: Career Services)

MEN

Suit:
A two-piece matched suit is always the best and safest choice. Don’t combine a suit jacket with pants that don’t match.

Conservative colors / fabric:
Navy and dark gray are safe and are the most conservative for men. Black for men was once considered severe or overly formal, and may still be considered so in very conservative industries, although it is commonly worn by many. Other color trends may come and go; avoid the extremes. Choose a solid or very subtle weave pattern or plaid (the kind that look solid across a room).

Cost / quality:
You are not expected to be able to afford the same clothing as a corporate CEO. One good quality suit is sufficient for a job search if that is all your budget allows. You can vary your shirt and tie.

Ties:
Tie styles come and go. Select good quality silk ties. Avoid fashion extremes, like character ties, in interviews. Notice what men in your industry wear on the job, at career fairs, at information sessions, when they meet with clients.

Shirts:
Long-sleeved shirts, even in summer. Choose white or light blue solid, or conservative stripes. A dark shirt might be acceptable in a non-conservative industry. Avoid being trendy.

Socks:
Dark socks, mid-calf length so no skin is visible when you sit down.

Shoes:
Leather, lace-up or slip-on business shoes, preferably black or cordovan. Invest in a good pair; even if you don't wear them daily on the job, you'll need them for other occasions and you should expect to get lots of years out of good shoes.

Belt:
Black or cordovan leather, to match your shoes.

Facial hair:
If worn, should be well-groomed. Observe men in your industry if you are unsure what's appropriate or are considering changing your look.
Jewelry:
Wear a conservative watch. If you choose to wear other jewelry, be conservative. Removing earrings is safest.

**WOMEN**

**Don't confuse club attire with business attire.** If you would wear it to a club, you probably shouldn’t wear it in a business environment.

**Suit:**
Wear a two-piece matched suit.

**Suit - pants / skirts:**
Tailored pants suits are appropriate for women. Pants suits can be an excellent choice for site visits, particularly if the visit involves getting in and out of vehicles and/or the site is (or includes) a manufacturing plant or industrial facility. If you wear pants, they should be creased and tailored, not tight or flowing. If you are pursuing a conservative industry and are in doubt, observe well dressed women in your industry on the job, at career fairs, at information sessions, etc.

**Skirt lengths:**
Much of what you see on television shows that masquerades for professional attire is actually inappropriate for a work environment. Your skirt should cover your thighs when you are seated. Showing a lot of thigh makes you look naive at best, foolish at worst. A skirt that ends at the knee when you're standing looks chic and professional. Longer skirts are professional too; just make sure they are narrow enough not to be billowing, but not so narrow that you can't climb stairs comfortably. High slits in skirts are not appropriate. A small back, center slit in a knee-length skirt is appropriate. On a calf length skirt, a slit to the knee to facilitate walking and stair climbing is appropriate.

**Color / fabric:**
Navy, dark gray, brown and black are safe. Other color trends may come and go; avoid the extremes. Women generally have more options with suit color than men. For example, while a women could look conservative in a slate blue or light gray suit, these colors would be inappropriate for men. Choose a solid or very subtle weave pattern or plaid (the type that looks solid across a room). Wool, wool blends, and high quality blends and synthetics are appropriate for women's suiting.

**Shirt / sweaters:**
Underneath the suit jacket, wear a tailored blouse in a color or small print that coordinates nicely with your suit. Don’t show cleavage.

**Jewelry / accessories:**
Wear a conservative watch. Jewelry and scarf styles come and go. Keep your choices simple and leaning toward conservative. Avoid extremes of style and color. If your industry is creative, you may have more flexibility than someone pursuing a conservative industry.
Cosmetics:
Keep makeup conservative. A little is usually better than none for a polished look. Nails should be clean and well groomed. Avoid extremes of nail length and polish color, especially in conservative industries.

Shoes:
Should be leather or fabric / micro fiber. Shoe styles and heel heights come and go. Choose closed-toe pumps. Regardless of what is in style, avoid extremes; no stilettos or chunky platforms. Make certain you can walk comfortably in your shoes; hobbling in uncomfortable shoes does not convey a professional appearance.

Hosiery:
Should be plainly styled (no patterns), sheer is most conservative (not opaque), and in neutral colors complementing your suit. Avoid high contrast between your suit and hosiery color.

Purse / bag:
If you carry a purse, keep it small and simple, especially if you also carry a briefcase. Purse color should coordinate with your shoes. You may choose to carry a small briefcase or business-like tote bag in place of a purse. Avoid purses that look like beach/pool totes, partyish, or little-girlish.

WOTC (Work Opportunity Tax Credit)
(For more detailed information and forms, visit www.edd.ca.gov)

An employer may qualify for a tax credit of up to $9,000 if the employee is a member of a designated target group and meets that group’s specific requirements.

Target Groups that Qualify for the WOTC — Individuals hired from the following nine target groups may qualify an employer for the WOTC:

1. Qualified recipients of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF).
2. Qualified veterans receiving Food Stamps or qualified veterans with a service connected disability who:
   a. Have a hiring date which is not more than one year after having been discharged or released from active duty OR
   b. Have aggregate periods of unemployment during the one year period ending on the hiring date that equal or exceed six months.
3. Ex-felons hired no later than one year after conviction or release from prison.
4. Designated Community Resident – an individual who has attained ages 18 but not 40 on the hiring date who reside in an Empowerment Zone, Renewal Community, or Rural Renewal County.
5. Vocational rehabilitation referrals, including Ticket Holders with an individual work plan developed and implemented by an Employment Network.
6. Qualified summer youth ages 16 through 17 who reside in an Empowerment Zone, Enterprise Community, or Renewal Community.
7. Qualified Food Stamp recipients ages 18 but not 40 on the hiring date.
8. Qualified recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
9. Long-term family assistance recipients.