

Recap and additional points from HST 590 “Interviewing” on 9/28/06 FJ Schoen

Prepare for the interview

- Learn about the organization, its people and the work you might do.
- If an academic department, learn about its faculty and programs, strengths and weaknesses.
- Consider specifically how you will contribute (courses, programs, a unique expertise or focus).
- Prepare questions for the interviewer, such as:
 - How do you see X department changing over next 3 years?
 - What are your plans for other recruitments?
 - What are the weaknesses of X department?
 - How is x department different from others?
 - How would you describe the ideal candidate for this job?
 - What are the opportunities for mentoring, and growth in the organization?
 - Know your motivations, strengths and weaknesses.
- Consider what are your “ideal job”, “biggest failure”, and “most satisfying accomplishment”.
- Consider how you will answer the questions, “tell me about yourself”, “how would you handle criticism”, “how you would improve yourself”, or “why should we hire you”?
- Bring a clean copy of your CV, and know it well; ensure no “gaps” in time.
- Look over available sample interviewing questions and other tips on available websites.
- Find about as much as possible about your interview in advance (schedule, individuals, group/panel vs. single interviews)
- Bring clean copy of several key papers you’ve published; offer but don’t “force” them.
- Use professional-sounding e-mail address names and material on personal websites (be mindful that Facebook and MySpace venues can come back to haunt you).
- Invite references beforehand.
- Be aware of “illegal” questions.
- Be on time.

Avoid pitfalls in interview

- Be prepared.
- Dress appropriately (usually tie and jacket for men, business attire for women).
- Body language is important.
- Be enthusiastic, interested and confident, but modest.
- Go in with a message to deliver, and reiterate it.
- Don’t talk too much; use short, direct responses.
- Use good manners, smile, and be professional.
- Don’t knock your present employer.
- Be honest, and don’t take credit for things you did not do.
- Don’t negotiate (salary, research space and funding) too early.
- Avoid “tired” words, slang and clichés.
- Be positive about the negative: How did you learn from failure?
- Don’t panic if things seem not to be going well.

Follow-up letter

- Send within a few days.

- This is courteous.
- Shows understanding of business procedures and demonstrates professionalism.
- Shows enthusiasm and communications skills.
- Express interest in position.
- Ask additional questions.
- Thank interviewer for taking the time.
- Allows emphasis or correction of points that were discussed in interview.
- Don't over flatter the interviewer.