



Interviewing & Networking

Career Resource Manual

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Mission

The John P. Fahey Career Center, as part of the Creighton EDGE, is committed to assisting students and alumni in exploring purpose and opportunities, developing career-related skills, and implementing goals that reflect their unique roles in the world of work and their commitment to a life of service to others.

Core Values

Empower People - Develop Partnerships - Inspire Purpose

Introduction to Interviewing

The purpose of an interview is for an employer, organization, or school to determine if a candidate has the skills, knowledge, and abilities to perform a job or be successful in an academic program. Often a vital piece of an interview is assessing “organizational fit” or whether the candidate would be a good match for the culture and environment of an organization. This is also an opportunity for the candidate to determine whether they would like to work for the organization or attend that school. This guide will give you a general overview of standard interview practices and how to prepare. However, keep in mind that organizations run their hiring and interviewing processes in different ways, and at different paces, so clear and open communication is an essential tool in staying aware and prepared. Please visit the Career Center if you have any questions!

What to Know Before You Go

You got the interview! Now what? It is time to start preparing how you will explain to your potential employer exactly why you are the best candidate for the position. Focus on fit and what you can offer the organization. The best way to have a great interview is to be prepared, and the first step is knowing what to expect. Before you go, remember the following four things:

- ***When is the interview?*** Have a clear understanding of the scheduled interview time and plan to be there 10-15 minutes early. When the employer calls to schedule the interview, ask how the day will be structured. Some interviews are a short 30 minutes to an hour-long meeting with one person. Others are day-long events with meals included, potentially with multiple people.
- ***Where is the interview?*** If you have the time, try making a “test run” to the interview site the day before, so you know just how long it takes to get there with at least 10-15 minutes to spare. Make sure you do this at or around the same time of day that you will be making the trip so you can account for traffic or construction delays. Some organizations choose to conduct interviews over the phone or via a video chat tool such as Skype. Test out the technology beforehand to make sure it works properly. Also, be sure to reserve a quiet place where you won’t be disturbed during the interview, such as a Career Center interview room or library study space.
- ***Virtual Interview?*** Some industries and organizations are moving to virtual tools such as Zoom or Jobvite for their initial interviews. These platforms may be live-streamed or pre-recorded. If you have a phone or video interview scheduled, find a quiet and private place with a reliable internet connection. Make sure to completely dress in professional attire, being mindful of your appearance on screen and speak directly to the camera when responding.
- ***Who will you meet?*** If possible, find out the name and the title of the person(s) you are meeting. If your schedule has multiple interviews, make sure you know how many people so you can bring a copy of your resume, cover letter, and references page for each in addition to a few extras to be safe.
- ***What should you bring?***
 - Leather portfolio (or professional folder)
 - Copies of resume, cover letter, and reference pages
 - Pen and notepad
 - List of questions for the employer
 - Business cards (if applicable)

Other things to consider:

- Some interviews include practical elements such as giving a presentation or taking an assessment related to the position. Be sure to clarify with your contact what the plan is for the day of the interview.
- If the interview is in a different city, clarify the travel arrangements. In some cases, the company organizes and funds your expenses for travel; in others, you will be expected to coordinate and pay for your trip. Keep in mind that job search-related costs are tax-deductible when you file your income taxes.

Do Your Research

After you've clarified the what, when, where, and who basics of your interview, it is time to do some research. The research process for an interview is twofold; you need to know all you can about the position and organization, and you also need to know all you can about yourself. As you clarify these, practice tying the two together.

Researching the Organization

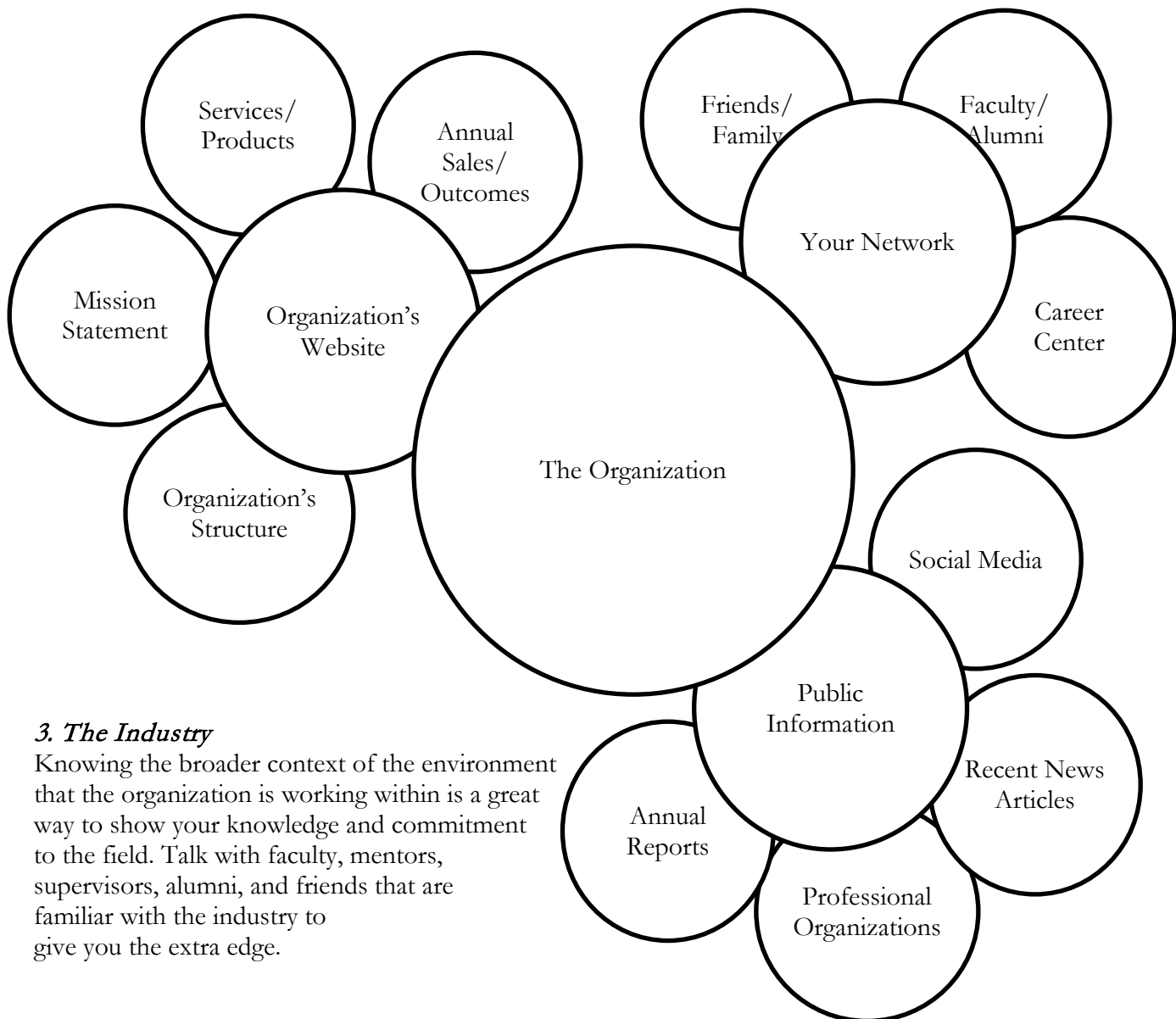
The more knowledgeable you are about the position and the organization, the better you will be able to communicate to the interviewer how you will fit and contribute to their organizational goals. The best way to do this is to know as much as you can about the position, the organization, and the industry. Explore the following:

1. The Job Description

Many companies provide information as part of the actual job description. Start by reading through this information and note key points.

2. The Organization

The graphic below provides some ideas about what types of information to seek out and how to find it.



3. The Industry

Knowing the broader context of the environment that the organization is working within is a great way to show your knowledge and commitment to the field. Talk with faculty, mentors, supervisors, alumni, and friends that are familiar with the industry to give you the extra edge.

Researching Yourself

Almost all interviews, regardless of position, organization, or industry, will ask some version of these two questions:

- ***Tell me about yourself.***
- ***Why should we hire you?***

Remember, an essential part of the interview is for the organization to get a sense of who you are as a person, and if you will fit the culture of the organization. This is your chance to specifically address why you are interested in this position, their organization, and why you are a qualified candidate. Use the following exercises to brainstorm your answers. Keep in mind the next question:

- ***What makes you unique and valuable for this organization?***

Exercises to help you prepare

- ***Job description*** – Print out a copy of the job description and write down next to each of the requirements a time that you have done something similar. This will help you keep your answers focused on what they are most interested in, which is whether you can do the job.
- ***Five stories*** – Write down 3-5 stories from your work, education, extracurricular, or volunteer experiences. They can be things you are proud of or stories that stand out to you. Be sure to include details like who you were working with, what you were working on, any challenges, and the outcome. Then reread what you wrote about and make notes about what this story says about you in the margin. Perhaps your story was a time when you worked well under pressure or showed leadership skills. Maybe it says something about your personality or ethics. This is an excellent way to have several examples of things you are proud of to talk about and also helps you identify and define your strengths.
- ***Self-assessments*** – You may know who you are, but you might struggle with conveying this in an interview setting. Taking an assessment such as CliftonStrengths or the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator can help you put into words what you already know. To get the most out of these assessments, review them one-on-one with a Career Advisor.
- ***Practice Interview(s)*** – If you would like to practice in a real-time setting, the Career Center Advising staff conducts practice interviews with students for all types of internship and job interviews. Students and alumni may set up a practice interview through Handshake, Creighton University's online career management system.
- ***Salary Research*** – If a range is requested when filling out an application, know what a reasonable range is based on your experience, education, and the geographic region. Respond with "open" or "negotiable" if possible. If they ask for a number, try to list a range. A \$5,000 range is typically recommended.

What Employers Are Looking For

The Job Outlook 2019 Survey from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE, 2018)* found that the top six qualities employers seek when reviewing resumes of recent college graduates are:

1. Communication skills (written)
2. Problem-solving skills
3. Ability to work in a team
4. Initiative
5. Analytical/quantitative skills
6. Strong work ethic
- 7./8. Communication skills (verbal) and Leadership (both qualities ranked equally)
- 9./10. Detail-oriented and Technical skills (both qualities ranked equally)

As you prepare for your interview, think about success stories that provide examples of these skills. Many of these abilities can be assumed by the employer based on your resume, but the interview is your chance to further express these skills and talents.

*National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). (2018, November). Job Outlook 2019: Attributes employers seek on a candidate's resume. Retrieved from <http://www.nacweb.org/mynace/job-outlook/>

Question Preparation

You never know precisely what an employer is going to ask, but it is helpful to have an idea about what types of things they are interested in knowing. In the appendix of this manual, there is a list of sample questions. Below are several types of questions an employer might ask. Do not write and memorize every answer; instead, practice a few at a time so that you become comfortable with things they might ask.

Below are the most common types of questions:

“Tell me about yourself.” – While this question can seem complicated, it is a simple summary of who you are as a professional. A simple way to answer is in three parts:

- Background: education, brief previous experiences, potentially some personal information
- What makes you unique: advanced coursework, an exciting internship or skill, something memorable
- Where you are going: career goals or aspirations, how this position fits into that goal

Skills and Qualifications Questions – These straightforward questions are asked to find out whether you have the right background and experience the employer is looking for.

- What qualifications do you have that make you think you will be successful in this position?
- Tell me about your experience in managing projects.
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What is your experience working with Microsoft Excel?

Technical Questions – The purpose of these questions is to determine whether you have the required knowledge needed for the job. These are most common in science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), and finance careers. Technical questions focus on programs, systems, theories, or processes needed to accomplish the job.

Personality Questions – Employers ask these questions to get a sense of the type of person you are. They want to know beyond your experience or technical skills, whether you would be a good fit for the office or company environment and culture.

- How would you describe yourself?
- What do you look for in a supervisor?
- In what kind of work environment are you the most comfortable?
- Do you prefer working alone or with others?

Behavior-Based Questions – These questions focus on past behaviors. They often start with the phrase “Tell me about a time when...” or “Describe a situation when...” What the employer is looking for is a real-life experience you have had and how you handled the situation. To successfully answer these questions:

1. Give a concrete example from your work, school, or extracurricular involvement. The employer does not want a hypothetical response or what you should do, but rather a specific example of what you did.
2. Use the **STAR** method to structure your answers
 - **S**ituation – describe the situation so that they know the context
 - **T**ask – identify the task for which you were responsible
 - **A**ction – describe the specific action you took
 - **R**esult – explain the result of the situation based on the step you took
3. Focus on your behavior and how it affected the outcome as opposed to the actual situation itself. Employers are interested in the results you can produce.

See next page for Behavior Examples

Behavior Examples

Some examples of the behaviors that might be evaluated are (Hint: Read the job responsibilities to anticipate what types of behavioral questions you might be asked.):

Adaptability	Independence	Planning
Attention to detail	Initiative	Policies and processes
Communication	Influence	Procedures
Coping	Integrity	Presentation skills
Creativity	Judgment	Sensitivity
Customer service	Leadership	Stress management
Decision making	Listening	Teamwork
Flexibility	Motivation	Technical knowledge
Goal setting	Organization	

Verbal Tips and Tricks

- Keep your tone and words positive.
- Give concrete examples to illustrate your value.
- Bookend your answer by referencing the question at the end of your response.
- Keep your answers strong but brief (between 30 seconds and 2 minutes).
- Always answer the question asked.
- Take a few seconds to gather your thoughts before answering.
- If you can't think of an answer, ask if you can come back to the question later (don't do this more than once or twice) and be sure to go back to it.

Questions for the Interviewer

Employers want to see that you are as genuinely interested in them as they are in you. Asking good questions is a great way to show your interest. Questions can be about anything you are curious about, such as the next steps in the process or working conditions. The best questions are about things like company culture, details of the job, or work environment.

- What does an average day look like for someone in this position?
- What would the training for this position entail?
- How would you describe the management style of this department?
- Would I have opportunities to work on special projects?
- What are the department's goals? How do they relate to the overall organization's goals?
- How would you describe the culture of the office?
- What are some of the challenges this department/organization faces?

Be careful not to come off like you have not done your research. When considering questions, ask yourself, "Is this information about the job that I cannot find anywhere else?"

Illegal Questions

There are three laws that prohibit employers from asking specific questions about race, religion, age, marital status, number of children, etc. They are Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964), Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (1991), and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (1997). These do not prohibit employers from asking anything about these topics, but rather prevent them from asking specific questions. They are allowed to ask questions that relate to the requirements of the job.

Topic	Illegal Question	Legal Question
National Origin or Citizenship	Are you a U.S. citizen?	Are you authorized to work in the U.S.?
Marital or Family Status	Do you have children?	Travel is an integral part of the job. Would you be able and willing to travel as needed by the job?
Age	How old are you?	Are you over the age of 18?

Options for answering illegal questions

1. Politely refuse to answer the question or ask, “How is this pertinent to the job?”
2. Answer the question, but keep in mind that you are giving information that is not job-related.
3. Consider the intent behind the question and try to respond with an answer as it might relate to the job. For instance, if an interviewer asks about your marital status, they may be wondering if you will be available to work overtime. An appropriate response would address whether you are available for overtime. No explanation is needed for your circumstance.

Remember to answer the question asked of you with an answer that addresses the underlying concern. However, if an employer is asking several illegal questions, consider if you want to work for this organization.

Interview Attire

Consider that the way you dress indicates to the organization the level of respect you have for them and the position. If you are unsure of what is appropriate, always err on the side of more conservative and formal. If the organization has a culture of self-expression and innovation, consider adding a bit of character. It is encouraged that you incorporate your culture, religion, and gender identity into your choice of business attire.

Employers often report that they remember the way a candidate presented themselves rather than the specific clothing they wore.



A lack of personal cleanliness, including body odor, dirty fingernails, chipped nail polish, or uncombed hair, are an immediate distraction.



Make sure your clothes are clean, wrinkle-free, and fit correctly.



Practice walking and sitting in your interview outfit to ensure that things fit appropriately whether you are standing, sitting, or crossing your arms.

Business Formal Attire



- Suit (typically a dark color) – which includes, tailored jacket, tailored pants, or knee-length skirt
- Shirt/Blouse (white, solid color, or subtly patterned)
- Tie – Conservative coordinates with suit and shirt
- Shoes – Dark, polished shoes with matching socks, no more than 1-2-inch heels

Business Casual Attire



- Jacket, blouse, cardigan, or conservative top with pants, or knee-length skirt
- Simple knee-length dress
- Dark pants or khakis
- Collared button-up shirt, or a collared knit polo shirt

Additional Items & Accessories

- Jewelry – Minimal and conservative
- Make-up – Subtle, natural
- Hair – Clean style, conservative
- Facial hair – Trimmed, shaped, and well maintained
- Avoid colognes, perfumes, & body sprays
- Bring your portfolio, pen, and extra copies of your resume
- Tattoos should be covered, unless the company has a more casual approach

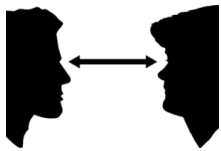
Other Attire Tips and Tricks

- Ask clothing stores about student or new graduate discounts.
- Know what your schedule looks like for the actual interview day so you can adjust your outfit as necessary. For example, if you will be walking a lot, choose more comfortable, but still professional, shoes.

Body Language

An interviewer's visual perception of you will be as much about how you present yourself as what you wear. What you say, what you wear, and how you present yourself, all indicate your interest and excitement about the position. The same physical movements can project confidence and enthusiasm or entitlement and aggression. A Career Advisor can help interpret what impression you make and provide suggestions for how to present yourself. A practice interview is particularly helpful to assess body language.

According to CareerBuilder's Survey, *The Importance of Body Language**, be mindful of the following:



Eye Contact- A consistent level of eye contact conveys interest and respect



Smiling- While simple, a "resting" face may not always show engagement



Personal Space- In most instances one arm's length distance is comfortable



Body Position- Be mindful of the message that your posture sends – arm crossing, slouching, and weight shifting can be off-putting



Fidgeting- Be aware of things such as: tapping your foot, playing with hair, and picking at nails as they can be subconscious habits



Handshake- A handshake that is firm and maintains eye contact is universally appropriate



Hand Gestures- Appropriate gestures remain below the chin, above the waist, and slightly outside the shoulders

*The most unusual interview mistakes and biggest body language mishaps, according to annual CareerBuilder survey. (2018, February 22). Retrieved August 2, 2019, from <http://press.careerbuilder.com/2018-02-22-The-Most-Unusual-Interview-Mistakes-and-Biggest-Body-Language-Mishaps-According-to-Annual-CareerBuilder-Survey/>

Thank You Notes and Follow-up

Follow their timeline – Employers usually have an internal timeline they are following with specific deadlines for things like reviewing applications, completing background checks, finishing interviews, and start dates. If they are not deciding for two weeks, do not call the next week to check on the status of your application.

Additionally:

1. **Ask about appropriate follow up** – If they do not volunteer the timeline or follow-up process at the end of the interview, ask. Consider asking when you should hear back from them and who to contact if you have additional questions.
2. **Avoid an Impatient Tone** – Emailing a recruiter to reiterate your interest doesn't pressure them for a response. This is better than asking when they will get back to you.
3. **Stay connected through a thank you note** – A thank you note is an excellent way to, demonstrate your continued interest, remind them why you are a good fit for the position, and keep your name fresh in their memory.

Thank You Notes

Thank you notes should be short, to the point, and personalized. This is an opportunity to genuinely thank them and provide a brief reminder of why you are a good fit for the position.

Sample Thank You Note:

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. _____:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me this week regarding the Research Assistant position. The experiences you shared were helpful in understanding the culture of the office. I was particularly impressed by your state-of-the-art facilities and how they allow you to serve clients better. This type of environment would match my technical skills and customer service background.

Thank you again for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
(your name)

Email or Handwritten?

The method of delivering a thank you note is not as important as the fact that you send one. Email or handwritten notes are both acceptable, as long as the handwritten note is legible. If you met with multiple interviewers, be sure to send each one an individualized thank you note. Aspects of each method are compared below.

Email	Handwritten
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A simple, free, and quick method of expressing gratitude to the interviewer(s)• May be most effective when fewer than five business days pass until a decision is made (immediate delivery)• Email addresses may be more easily accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides a personal touch that speaks to your continued interest in the role• May be most effective when longer than five business days pass until a decision is made (allowing for postal delivery*)• Names or addresses may not be readily available but can be easily located

*If sending a handwritten note, be sure to check with your local postal service to ensure the delivery date will align with your intended arrival date. Consider longer processing times if the employer is located outside of your local area.

Graduate and Professional School Interviewing

Each institution is different in the way that it organizes interviews for graduate and professional school interviews, so make sure you understand the process. If the school does not offer the information before the meeting, it is appropriate to ask the admissions office or the school contact before your arrival. Having a clear understanding of the process and practicing with friends and a Career Advisor will give you an extra boost of confidence before the interview. Below are a list of possible interview structures and factors to consider before your interview:

Day or Half-Day Interviews – Graduate and professional school interviews are often a combination of informational sessions for you to learn more about the school and interviews for them to assess you as a candidate. Remember that the entire day is a chance for them to evaluate you and for you to evaluate them, so be polite, pay attention, and ask questions throughout the day.

Open or Closed File – Some schools provide their interviewers all of your application materials (open) while others are provided no background information (closed). Knowing what information the interviewers will have about you before the interview helps you answer questions more directly.

One-on-One Interview – Most schools use a typical interview structure of 1 to 2 interviewers per candidate. You may have more than one of these interviews in a day. If you know the names of the people you are interviewing with in advance, do some research about them before the day of the interview.

Multiple-Mini Interviews (MMI) – This format is becoming more popular among medical schools. MMIs allows you to demonstrate how quickly you think on your feet and try to simulate the type of interaction many physicians have with their patients. You are typically provided with a scenario for 2 minutes and have 7-9 minutes to present your response. Questions or prompts include role-playing scenarios, ethical dilemmas, and typical interview questions. Be sure to ask what type of interview to expect when you confirm your interview date.

Group Interview – While it can be nerve-racking to interview with a group of other candidates, listening well to interviewers and other candidates is the key to success. This interview structure is designed to evaluate both your answers and how you interact with a team of colleagues.

Phone/Skype – This type of interview is more familiar with graduate programs than professional schools. Find a quiet space or reserve one in the Career Center. Dress up and arrive prepared with a smiling face!

Before the Interview

- **Why This School?** Come prepared to answer why you are interested in the school (the location should not be a primary reason). Consider what is unique, what stands out to you, and why you like this school above all others. This is one of the most important questions to get right because it helps the school see how you envision yourself as part of their mission.
- **Deficiencies?** Know what weaknesses are on your application and how to address them. This can take some practice; there is a fine line between explanation and making excuses for actions. You also do not want to linger too long on your weaknesses; the focus should be placed on how you overcame a deficiency.
- **Review Your Application:** Know what is on your application for that particular school. Read through your personal statement and any supplemental documents before arrival and be able to reference them directly. Many interviewers use your application to shape their questions.

After the Interview

- **Thank You Notes:** For useful tips on thank you notes and processes, please see page 12.
- **Exit Interviews:** If you did not get a spot in this year's class, many schools offer a period where you can schedule an exit interview. During an exit interview, you can ask questions about improving your application for the next year. This is a great resource and one that many schools use to see how motivated you are in your pursuit of the program.

Job Offers

1. Take Time

Although accepting the offer immediately might be tempting, it is common practice to ask for some time to consider the proposition: somewhere between a day to a week is customary. Most employers are accustomed and open to candidates wanting to take a short time to reflect and discuss the opportunity with a significant other or family members. You also might need to take some time to assess what different positions you are being considered for or to do some salary research before negotiating pay and benefits.

2. Ask for Time

Politely express your sincere interest in the position and ask if you can have some time to consider the offer. In your discussion with the employer, be sure to communicate how and when you will talk again. This communication is best delivered by phone or in person. You can also ask for a decision deadline extension if you are juggling multiple offers or timelines. In most industries, 1-2 weeks is an acceptable request; some recruiters will allow up to 30 days. It is a personal preference to disclose whether you are deciding between multiple offers. Above all, be clear in your communications with all organizations offering you a position to avoid losing out on an opportunity due to miscommunication or taking too long to decide.

3. Consider Offer

Considering your offer not only includes research, but includes discussions with family, friends, and other valuable stakeholders. You may research salary, benefits, commute, company information, and other areas to weigh in your decision.

4. Salary Research

Check out the websites below for salary information. Err on the side of information that specifically refers to your specific job/experience level. If an employer lists an exact figure from the beginning, they might be less inclined or able to negotiate. If the employer asks for a range, they are usually just trying to get a sense of whether your expectations match what they can provide.

A. Negotiation Tips:

- a. Know what a reasonable range is based on your experience, education, and the geographic region.
- b. Consider benefits as part of your overall compensation package.
- c. Communicate what you can do for the company that makes you worth the requested salary.
- d. Understand that sometimes the employer is working with restrictions on what they can offer and may be unable to provide more.
- e. Always let the employer be the first to bring up the topic of salary and avoid giving a concrete number during the interview process, if possible; wait for a job offer to discuss salary and benefits.

B. **Salary Research Websites:** CareerOneStop Salary Finder, Glassdoor.com, LinkedIn.com, NACE Salary Calculator, Payscale.com, Salary.com

5. Communicate Decision:

- A. **Accept:** Contact the recruiter to accept the offer. Once both parties have confirmed an offer verbally, ask for a copy in writing. You should follow up the conversation with a thank you letter outlining your understanding of the terms of the offer, your enthusiasm about starting with the company, and your appreciation for their decision to hire you. Finally, report your offer to the Career Center to let them know you have accepted employment. Once an offer has been accepted, your job search should ethically end.

- B. **Decline:** Not all interviews lead to a job. Maybe you left the interview thinking the job or organization did not feel like the right fit, or perhaps they selected someone else. Either way, how you handle not getting the offer or not accepting the job is an essential part of protecting your professional reputation. If you do choose to decline the offer, follow these steps:
- Remove your name from the application process as soon as possible. Although getting an offer might be a self-esteem boost, the company may lose other eligible candidates because they were expecting you to fill the position.
 - Be prepared to explain why if the company asks. Whatever the reason, think your answer through beforehand. The employer may not ask, but if you have a clear understanding of why you are declining, you will feel more confident in your decision.
 - Be careful not to burn bridges. Employers not only share information with others in their company; they also share information with their colleagues from other organizations. To protect your reputation and future career interests, be polite, honest, and open if you choose not to accept a position.

6. Withdrawing

If you have accepted another offer, withdraw from all other applied positions as soon as possible. The decision to withdraw may also be made before any offers have been extended.

7. Avoid Reneging

If you receive an offer, you are not sure about and still have other, more enticing opportunities in the works, wait to accept the offer. Instead, thank the employer for the opportunity and ask to speak with a few more people in the company to learn more about the culture or projects. Ask for more time to consider the offer while you gather this information to ensure it's the right fit. Once you accept an offer, it hurts your and Creighton's reputation and the possibility of future professional relationships to back out for another job. Practice integrity and open communication in your search rather than treating job offers as safety nets.

8. Receiving No Offer

While disheartening, rejection is an integral part of the job search process. Remember to:

- Take some time – The emotional impact of not receiving a job offer can be substantial. Take at least 24 hours to reflect before making any kneejerk reactions.
- Follow up if possible – Sometimes, employers will provide feedback about why you were not selected for a position. If you follow up, thank the interviewer again for the opportunity and politely ask why you were not selected. Use this feedback for future interviews.
- Take action – Review your application as a whole. Is there something you can do to improve your skillset? Were all references positive? Could you improve your interview skills? Continue to evaluate all facets of your application.
- Keep trying – Sometimes, a rejection is not a reflection of anything you did; the employer just had a more qualified candidate. Having a sound support system will help you handle the setbacks.
- Visit the Career Center – We can give unbiased feedback. Whether it is conducting a practice interview or acting as a support during the challenging job search, we are here to help.

Networking

Networking is really about building mutually beneficial relationships. The more care and time you put into building and maintaining your network, the more enriching the connections will be throughout the different stages of your career. As you plan to expand your network, consider the contacts you have or could gain in the following areas:

- ***Your Current Network:*** Think about your close family, friends, faculty, former supervisors, advisors, and peers that are doing exciting things that you want to learn more about. This is where you start and maintain the most reliable network.
- ***Social Media:*** Creighton University's LinkedIn Alumni network is vast – get involved in Creighton groups and others that are of interest. Please refer to page 18 for more information about networking on LinkedIn.
- ***Conferences, Seminars, Meetings:*** Take advantage of opportunities to engage with professionals.
- ***Alumni Events:*** Take part in alumni weekend and different gatherings for your program of interest.
- ***Panel Discussions:*** Talk to the individuals on the panel after the event.
- ***Faculty and Staff:*** Get to know faculty and staff and let them know what you are interested in.
- ***Additional Online Databases:*** Careershift.com, Vault, Handshake, and the Creighton Career Advisor Network are great resources to expand your network and learn more about organizations of interest.
- ***John P. Fahey Career Center:*** The Career Center is great at connecting you with alumni or others in your field of interest in addition to providing specific information on the outcomes of recent graduates.

Informal Networking

When people think of networking, they often think of meeting and talking to people they have never met before in a large reception hall. Although this is only one of many ways to network, it can be a very efficient and effective way to network if handled correctly. In these informal networking situations, keep in mind a few things:

- Be aware of who your audience is and start with general commonalities or talking points.
- If you are uncertain of where to start, consider the person standing alone or begin with the refreshment area (people typically congregate around food, and it is an excellent ice-breaker).
- Take note of who you know; this can be a good starting point, especially if they are talking with others.
- Carry minimal items, setting them down, or carrying over the shoulder so that you can keep your hands free.
- Be confident – smile, display good posture, and be ready with a firm handshake.
- Listen well and ask questions, really get to know the person you are talking with and use their name.
- Follow up via email or LinkedIn with the individuals with whom you had good conversations.
- Remember, networking is not about you; it is about building a relationship.

Informational Interviews

One of the best ways to build your network while also exploring career options is through an informational interview. Professionals in your field of interest can provide realistic information about career options, employment trends, and job responsibilities. They could also refer you to contacts in their industry. The purpose of informational interviewing is to help you gather information for career exploration and build your connections; you should not contact individuals with the intent of asking for a job. Instead, you intend to gain insight regarding a career field, an organization, or industry.

How to Request an Informational Interview

Once you have identified who might provide good interviews, you can contact them via phone or email to request a meeting. Be sure to lead with the commonality you have with them, whether it be that you both attended Creighton, are interested in a certain field, or have a contact in common. Then provide them a brief description of who you are, what you want, and how you can be contacted. See the example below:

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. _____:

My name is Billy Bluejay, and I am a Creighton student majoring in Psychology. I came across your profile in the Creighton University Alumni group on LinkedIn. I'm very interested in learning more about your career and industry as I am currently exploring which career path to pursue. I am interested in sports administration and am on several campus committees devoted to promoting and producing sporting events, both intercollegiate and intramural. My ultimate goal is to be in sports marketing and sponsorship sales, but I am also interested in other areas. I would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you to discuss the sports administration and any advice you may have for me. If you are willing to meet, please feel free to contact me at (402) 280-0000 or at BillyBluejay@creighton.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,
Billy Bluejay

What do you cover in informational interviews?

Details about a particular job, company, field, or industry are great topics for informational interviews, as are the educational and professional history of the person with whom you are meeting. Feedback and advice for you are also important topics to cover; however, remember this interview is an opportunity for you to learn about them, not vice versa.

Sample Informational Interview Questions

- Tell me about your background. How did you get started in the field?
- What kind of preparation is typically necessary to get into this field? Is it required, or just the typical approach?
- What was your biggest surprise or challenge when you entered this field or career?
- What is your typical day or week like?
- What do you like most about your job? What do you like least?
- What is a typical career path for someone in this field? What ensures continued advancement?
- Where do you see yourself in 5-10 years?
- Could you explain the typical hiring process?
- What skills are needed in this field?
- What advice can you offer me as a student/someone in my position?
- Are there other colleagues you know of who would be willing to be contacted by me?

Elevator Pitch

An elevator pitch is a brief introduction—a message that you could share with someone in the short time it takes to take an elevator ride. Your pitch should introduce yourself, highlight your primary skills, experience, and educational background, and convey your professional goal. The total pitch should be no more than 30 seconds in length.

While you may have a general outline of what it will look like, each one may be slightly different.

See the example below:

Hello, I am Billy Bluejay! I am a junior Marketing major at Creighton University. Currently, I serve as a Marketing Intern at ABC Company, where I coordinate social media and print marketing projects. I also have experience mentoring youth through Big Brothers Big Sisters. With my interests in marketing and helping youth, I hope to make a positive impact by utilizing my skills to advance worthwhile causes for youth. I am interested in your non-profit organization because of the work it does to provide critical educational opportunities to children.

For more guidance on creating your elevator pitch, refer to *The Elevator Pitch* video under the Career Clips link located in the *Resources for Students* page of the Career Center website.

Networking on LinkedIn

With over 645+ million users across the globe*, LinkedIn has established itself as the premier professional networking site (LinkedIn, 2019). For almost all career fields, a LinkedIn account is essential to market yourself and stay connected in the professional world. There are two ways to search for and connect with other professionals.

University Alumni Page

Begin your search by using the *LinkedIn Alumni* feature at www.linkedin.com/alumni. Filter your search by Location, Employer, Industry, Degree, and more. For more guidance and webinars on LinkedIn, please visit the *Networking* page of the Career Center website.

The screenshot displays the LinkedIn Alumni page for Creighton University. The header includes the LinkedIn logo, a search bar, and navigation links for Home, My Network, Jobs, Messaging, Notifications, Me, and Work. The main section shows the Creighton University profile with a banner image of the university's archway. Below the banner, it states "Creighton University" with "Omaha, Nebraska · 33,470+ alumni · 43,033 followers". A description reads "A Jesuit, Catholic University in Omaha, Nebraska, since 1878. #ChooseCreighton". A "Visit website" button is present. To the right, it says "Following" and "Zach & 9 other connections work here" with a link to "See all 3,414 employees on LinkedIn".

On the left sidebar, there are links for Home, About, Jobs, Alumni (selected), and Ads.

The main content area shows "33,470 alumni" with filters for "Start year" (1900) and "End year" (2019). A search bar prompts "Search alumni by title, keyword or company". Navigation links for "Previous" and "Next" are available.

Two bar charts are displayed:

- Where they live** (+ Add)
 - 32,552 | United States
 - 10,374 | Greater Omaha Area
 - 1,650 | Greater Denver Area
 - 1,571 | Greater Chicago Area
- Where they work** (+ Add)
 - 1,077 | Creighton University
 - 308 | CHI Health
 - 199 | Nebraska Medicine
 - 173 | University of Nebraska Medical Center

A "Show more" link is at the bottom of the charts.

Search for Contacts

Click on the *Search* bar in the top-left corner and then “People.” You can filter options by clicking “All Filters” to search beyond your first connections, refine your industry, and school network.

The image shows two overlapping screenshots of the LinkedIn interface. The background screenshot displays the 'My connections' section with three profiles: Jon Hood (1st connection, Principal / Athletic Director at Co... Omaha, Nebraska, United States), Sarah Thompson (1st connection, Student at Des Moines University Des Moines, Iowa, United States), and Mitchell Berry (1st connection, Graduate Student: M.S. in Clinical... Omaha, Nebraska, United States). Below this is the 'People at Creighton University' section with two profiles: Carol Ketcham (2nd connection, Senior Woman Administrator an... Omaha, Nebraska, United States) and Ronni Ng (2nd connection, Undergraduate Student at Creigh... Omaha, Nebraska, United States). The foreground screenshot shows the 'All people filters' dialog box. It has tabs for 'Connections', 'Connections of', 'Locations', 'Current companies', 'Past companies', and 'Industries'. The 'Connections' tab is active, showing checkboxes for '1st', '2nd', and '3rd+'. The 'Connections of' tab has a text input field 'Add a connection of'. The 'Locations' tab has a text input field 'Add a location' and a list of locations: United States, Greater Omaha Area, Lincoln, Nebraska Area, Greater Chicago Area, and Greater Minneapolis-St. Paul Area. The 'Current companies' tab has a text input field 'Add a current company' and a list of companies: Creighton University, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Mutual of Omaha, and TD Ameritrade. The 'Past companies' tab has a text input field 'Add a previous company' and a list of companies: Creighton University, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Union Pacific Railroad, and Mutual of Omaha. The 'Industries' tab has a text input field 'Add an industry' and a list of industries: Higher Education, Financial Services, Marketing & Advertising, Sports, and Information Technology & Services.

After clicking *Connect*, make sure to “Add a note” to let the professional know why you are connecting.

The image shows a dialog box titled 'You can customize this invitation' with a close button (X) in the top right corner. Below the title is a section 'Include a personal message (optional):' followed by a text area containing the message: 'Dear Mr. Jones: I am a Marketing student at Creighton. I see that you graduated from Creighton and have been successful in the e-commerce industry. I was wondering if you would be willing to speak with me over the phone or in-person so I can learn more about the industry? Thanks! -Billy Bluejay'. At the bottom of the dialog box are two buttons: 'Cancel' and 'Send invitation'.

*LinkedIn. (2019). About LinkedIn. Retrieved from <https://press.linkedin.com/about-linkedin>

Job Search Resources

There are steps to a job search, and it can be time-consuming, but with the proper preparation and approach, your search can be more directed, efficient, and useful. A recent study reviewed how companies filled jobs and found that 85% of all jobs were filled via networking (Adler, 2016)*. For this reason, it is important to use a variety of approaches during your job search, and remember, it usually takes 3-6 months to find employment. Here are some helpful resources. Also, visit the Career Center website www.creighton.edu/careercenter, see the *Interviewing and Networking Career Resource Manual*, or make an appointment with a Career Advisor for additional information.

- **Meet with a Career Center Advisor**
 - Prepare and review resumes and cover letters
 - Create a plan for your search, including how to network effectively and find position openings
- **Build and utilize your network**
 - Talk to friends, family, and acquaintances about job opportunities; you can also talk to people they know in companies or occupations that interest you
 - Conduct informational interviews with individuals who work in the profession you are interested in or who work for a company where you would like to work
 - Join and update your LinkedIn account. Join the Creighton University and Creighton Career Center groups to connect with alumni, along with professional associations to connect with professionals in your industry
- **Utilize professional affiliations and associations**
 - Search for industry-specific professional organizations to use their job posting boards and directories to identify possible employers
 - Consider joining a professional association as a student at a discounted student membership rate to network by attending conferences or communicating with other members electronically
- **Identify where to find jobs online**
 - **Handshake** – John P. Fahey Career Center job posting site: www.creighton.edu/careercenter/handshake
 - **Chamber of Commerce** – if you are looking in a specific geographic area, view the local Chamber website; they often provide a directory of employers in the city
 - **Human Resources for particular companies** – if you have some employers in mind, bookmark their Human Resources page to view current openings and complete applications
 - **City, State, & Federal websites** – search for the individual city and state websites, or www.usajobs.gov for federal postings nationwide
 - **Other job websites and search engines**
 - ✓ www.careerlink.com (Omaha jobs)
 - ✓ www.indeed.com
 - ✓ www.linkedin.com/jobs
 - ✓ www.simplyhired.com
 - ✓ www.careerbuilder.com
- **Use the Career Center's library resources for additional search and career support**
 - VAULT Career Insider
 - CareerShift
 - Going Global
 - Career Advisor Network
- **Consider working for a temporary agency**
 - Working for a temporary agency is a great way to gain exposure to different companies and receive an income while job searching
 - Temporary positions often turn into full-time positions

*Adler, L. (2016, February 29). New Survey reveals 85% of all jobs are filled via networking. Retrieved from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/new-survey-reveals-85-all-jobs-filled-via-networking-lou-adler/>

Sample Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why should we hire you over the other qualified applicants?
3. Why are you interested in this position?
4. Why are you a good fit for this position?
5. Tell me about a time that you worked under pressure and with deadlines.
6. What are your strengths/weaknesses?
7. How would you define success?
8. Why do you want to work for our company?
9. Why do you want to attend this school/program?
10. What stands out to you about our organization?
11. Describe your most ideal work environment.
12. Tell me about a time that you thrived at work.
13. Where do you plan to be in 3-5 years? What do you expect to be doing?
14. What do you find most attractive about this position?
15. What seems least attractive?
16. What are your most significant accomplishments?
17. What is your greatest failure?
18. Tell me about a time you set a goal for yourself and worked to achieve it.
19. What do you look for in a supervisor?
20. What other opportunities are you pursuing?
21. Tell me about your leadership style.
22. What are the essential qualities that you admire in a team member? A supervisor?
23. What qualities will you bring to the team?
24. What are the most pressing issues in our industry?
25. Why are you leaving your current position/did you leave your past position?
26. How would your friends/instructors/colleagues/supervisor describe you?
27. Who do you most admire in our industry?
28. What do you do in your free time?
29. Explain your experience with the software needed for the job.
30. Tell me about a book that you recently read/tell me about a movie you recently viewed.
31. Tell me about any patient contact that you have had.
32. Tell me about a time when you worked with a disgruntled team member.
33. How do you best receive encouragement? Criticism?
34. How would you describe your personality?
35. How do you handle stress?
36. Tell me about a situation or a decision that you would handle differently.
37. Tell me about a time you showed initiative.
38. What classes did you enjoy the most? Why?
39. What classes did you enjoy the least? Why?
40. What was your most meaningful extracurricular experience?
41. Tell me about a time you had to make a split-second decision.
42. Tell me about a time you worked with a difficult customer/patient.
43. Give me an example of a time you've done something to improve yourself.
44. What experience do you have giving presentations?
45. Tell me about a time you persuaded someone to your way of thinking.

Sample Behavioral Interview Questions

1. Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
2. Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation that demonstrated your coping skills.
3. Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
4. Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.
5. Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.
6. Give me a specific example of a time when you had to conform to a policy you did not agree with.
7. Please discuss an important written document you were required to complete.
8. Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty to get a job done.
9. Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do, and you were required to prioritize your tasks.
10. Give me an example of a time when you had to make a split-second decision.
11. What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.
12. Tell me about a time you were able to successfully deal with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).
13. Tell me about a difficult decision you've made in the last year.
14. Give me an example of a time when something you tried to accomplish and failed.
15. Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.
16. Tell me about a recent situation in which you had to deal with a very upset customer or co-worker.
17. Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.
18. Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.
19. Give me an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to solve a problem.
20. Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem.
21. Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventive measures.
22. Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.
23. Describe a time when you set your sights too high (or too low).
24. Describe a time when you disagreed with your supervisor on how to accomplish something.
25. Have you ever had a deadline you were not able to meet? What happened? What did you do?
26. Talk about a time when you had to adapt to significant changes at work.
27. How have you dealt with an angry or upset customer?
28. Have you ever gone above and beyond to help a customer? What did you do?
29. Tell me about a time when you had to fight for an idea at work.
30. Talk about a time where you had to make an important decision quickly. What did you decide? What were the results?
31. Have you ever been in a business situation that was ethically questionable? What did you do?
32. Tell me about a major setback you've had. How did you deal with it?
33. What have you done when colleagues have been stressed out by a project?
34. Have you ever had to defend a customer's/co-worker's point of view? What did you do? Why?
35. Describe a time when you were asked to perform a task or spearhead an initiative that went against your values. What did you do? What was the outcome?

Behavioral Interview Questions & S.T.A.R Method Answers

1. Tell me about how you worked effectively under pressure.

Situation (S): I had been working on a critical project that was scheduled for delivery to the client in 60 days.

Task (T): My supervisor came to me and said that we needed to speed up the project have it ready in 45 days, while also keeping our other projects on time.

Action (A): I made the unfortunate situation into a challenge for my staff. I first analyzed the tasks that needed to be done and determined, which could be outsourced to other departments and which tasks had to be done by my team. Then I had each of my staff add a few hours of work to their schedules and delegated a few extra projects/tasks to each of them, and

Result (R): My team and I not only completed the project, but we also got in done in 42 days instead of 45 days and the client was so pleased with the result that plan on making us he future long-term supplier.

Transferable Skills: Teamwork, allocation/delegation of tasks and critical thinking, problem-solving.

2. How do you handle a challenge? Give an example.

Situation (S): One time, my supervisor needed to leave town unexpectedly, despite us being in the middle of a touchy negotiation with a new sponsor.

Task (T): I was tasked with taking over the negotiation for my supervisor and had to present the deal to the client two days later. The only background information I had were my supervisors meeting notes and a short 10-minute briefing from his manager, who did not have much detail to add.

Action (A): I first analyzed my supervisor's notes and then did external research to determine the needs of the target company. I then paired our solution to the company's needs and charted how our solution would benefit the client in terms of cost-saving, time, production increases, etc. I created a PowerPoint presentation that included all of the data that I had gathered, and then practiced my presentation as many times as I could before I had to present it to the sponsor. Once I was with the sponsor, I presented our deal in an organized, concise, and straightforward manner.

Result (R): I successfully communicated the value of our solution to the sponsor resulting in us getting the sponsorship which was valued at \$875,000+

Transferable Skills: Analytical Skills, written/verbal communication, research skills, time management, flexibility/adaptability, technology skills, negotiation.

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