

## **Interview Tips**

When a potential employer requests an interview, it indicates that they are impressed with you on paper, and therefore wants to meet with you in person to further assess your qualifications and experience, as well as assess your personality, motivation and communication/interpersonal skills.

### ***WHEN A POTENTIAL EMPLOYER CALLS***

Be sure to request/confirm the following information:

- Time, date and location of the interview
- Number of interviewers
- Contact number
- Format of the interview
- Their name(s) and position(s)

If you have already been offered a position elsewhere and need to decline the interview, explain the situation and thank the employer for their consideration.

### ***PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW***

*Prepare what you want to share about you*

- Carefully consider what you would like the interviewers to know about you and how you want to convey this information verbally
- Think of specific examples from your past experiences which highlight your skills, qualifications and achievements, and demonstrate the match between your skillset and the employer's needs.
- Review each of the experiences on your CV and think about how/why you got involved, what you learned and achieved, and any transferable skills of relevance to the position you are interviewing for.

*Do your research on the employer*

Be sure to spend some time researching the employer in order to target your CV and Cover Letter, and to help you anticipate the type of questions you may be asked.

- Research the industry, employer and position
- Make use of professional organizations, business councils and relevant websites
- Consider how your skills and values fit with the stated goals and structure of the organization
- Brainstorm questions you would like to ask in the interview

*Anticipate*

- (Re)connect with your references so that they know what positions you are interviewing for and are aware they may be contacted in the near future.
- Anticipate the kinds of questions you may be asked based on this employer's needs, and think about how you will answer them. This is especially important for difficult questions concerning conflict, weaknesses and salary expectations.

Employers will definitely want to know about your:

- Work history and experience
- Motivation and interest in the position
- Specific skills and qualifications related to the job. For each skill, come up with a few examples that demonstrate your abilities. Don't assume that the interviewer has read your CV.

### *Practice*

Sometimes things sound great in your head, but don't come out the way you planned. Practicing will help you feel more poised and confident, and ensure that you are communicating clearly. Ask a friend to run through sample questions with you.

## ***DAY OF THE INTERVIEW***

### *Dress for success*

- While norms vary greatly by industry/location, you absolutely need to look like the most polished and professional version of yourself
- If in doubt dress on the more conservative/formal side of professional attire
- Pay attention to personal grooming and avoid heavy fragrances and excessive jewellery
- "Test drive" your outfit a day or two before to make sure you are comfortable sitting and moving

### *Be prepared and punctual*

- Bring extra copies of your CV, a list of references, and a portfolio if applicable
- Arrive 10-15 minutes prior to the start time
- If you are delayed or cannot make it call as soon as possible to apologize, explain and see if they are willing to reschedule
- Turn off your cellphone/mobile device

### *Be aware of both verbal and non-verbal communication*

Remember that the interview starts the minute you walk in the door of the organization. Aim for a positive and attentive attitude and be friendly and respectful towards everyone you meet.

- Shake hands confidently and firmly
- Make direct eye contact, sit up straight and smile naturally

- Provide answers which are clear, complete and truthful
- Avoid slang and unnecessary fillers (“um...ah...”) and stay on topic
- Be a good listener as well as a good speaker
- Wait until after the interview to take notes

#### *Skype and telephone interviews*

- Minimize background noise and distracting visuals
- Dress for success even when you can't be seen
- Listen carefully and clarify information when needed
- Test run any relevant technology the day before
- Look at the camera rather than at the screen

#### *Follow up*

It is crucial to remind the interviewers of your interest in the days and weeks following.

- Send a thank you note within 24 hours of your interview. Thank the interviewers for their time, mention anything you found particularly interesting, and be sure to indicate your continued interest in the position.
- Follow up with the interviewers and inquire about the status of your application if you have not heard from them within the agreed time frame.

If you have additional questions or would like further practice, please contact one of our Guidance Counsellors.

**\*\*McGill CAPs has two appendices of sample questions/questions to ask employers.**