Interviewing Tips

Presented by:
Nada Abdelhack, MA, GCDF
Welcome and thank you for attending. So, to begin, Before I tell you about my self, I want to remind you to please sign-in if you have not done so already.

My name is Nada Abdelhack. I coordinate the internship & Job placement programs for the School of Engineering, and I am also one of the ESS team who are here to help students succeed at UNM. As a certified career advisor, I help students with revising their resumes and cover letters, but that is not all, I also provide tips on interviewing, including how to dress for interviews, how to make the most out of career fairs, and essentially, I’m available to address anything career related, including jobs and internships.

ESS is the Engineering Student Success Center. We are here to serve engineering and computing student needs, so make us your go to place, or your starting point if you will, when you need help finding resources and to talk about issues you might be having.
Let’s start with preparing for an interview. Interviewing is stressful so what can you do to help alleviate some of that stress? A good place to begin is to take the time to plan ahead and to prepare for your interview. To help you do this, break down the tasks you need to complete before you go to your interview. We will go through and talk about:

(*) analyzing the job you are getting ready to interview for.
(*) Matching your qualifications to those listed in the job posting.
(*) The importance of researching the company you applied to.
(*) We’ll also talk about tips on practicing interviewing ahead of time.
(*) And thinking about the clothes you will be wearing for your interview.
(*) We’ll end with tips about etiquette.
It is very important to take the time to analyze the job posting you are interested in. As you review the job description, consider what the company is looking for in a candidate. Make a list of the skills, knowledge, professional and personal qualities they’re looking for and that are required for the job. Read the posting many times over to really understand what they are looking for and decide if you are a good fit. We will look at a sample job posting so you can get a better idea.
Once you’ve listed the qualifications for the job,
make a list of your own assets and match them up. These might include skills, qualities, certifications, trainings, experiences, professional qualifications, abilities, computer skills, and knowledge bases.
You can also talk about some of these assets when you explain to the employer why you are an excellent fit for the job.
Also, jot down examples from past work experiences that show you have these qualities. This way, if the interviewer asks you to describe a time when you demonstrated a particular skill or ability, you’ll be ready.
How important is it to research a company you’re going to interview for? Well, it’s normal for applicants to spend up to seven hours researching a company before their interview.

(*) Before you attend a job interview, it’s important to find out as much as you can about not only the job, but also the company. This is a critical part of interview preparation because it will help you prepare to answer interview questions about the company, and it also prepares you to ask the interviewer questions about the company. Doing your research before hand also gives you a chance to find out whether the company and its culture are a good fit for you.

(*) To get a good understanding of the company, check out the company website, specifically the “About Us” page.

(*) Get a sense of how the company compares to other organizations in the same industry by reading articles about the company and about the industry. You can find those articles in industry magazines or websites as well as business section of the newspapers.

(*) You can also look up company reviews from clients, and from current and former employees.

Another tip is to spend time tapping into your network to see if you know someone
who can help give you an interview edge over the other candidates by providing you some tips.
It's also important to take the time to practice answering interview questions you'll probably be asked. This exercise will also help calm your nerves because you won't be scrambling for an answer while you're actually being interviewed. It might be a good idea to practice interviewing with a friend or family member ahead of time.

Try to conduct the practice interview in the same format as the real interview. For example, if it is a phone interview, ask a friend to call you to practice answering questions over the phone. If it is a panel interview, ask a couple of friends to pretend to be a panel.

If you're interviewing virtually, be sure that you're comfortable with the technology, review common job interview questions and answers job and think about how you will respond, so you are prepared to answer. I will post a helpful website you can visit to get sample interview questions and possible answers in the chat. One tip that people find helpful, is to practice introducing your self and your responses to questions you will be asked out loud in front of a mirror. It's also a good idea to prepare anecdotes to share with the interviewer. Such as something pleasant you heard on the news, or share updates about your favorite sports, or a book you just read (it can be related to the field you are in) that you found interesting.
For a list of sample job interview questions and possible answers go to https://www.thebalancecareers.com/job-interview-questions-and-answers-2061204 (POST IN CHAT)
Don't wait till the last minute to get your interview clothes are ready. Your interview clothes should be ready to wear at all times. This will save you the trouble and time of having to think about what you're going to wear while you're scrambling to get ready for a job interview. Now, regardless of the type of job you're interviewing for, that first impression should be a great one. And one way to pull off a great first impression is by the way you dress.

So, let’s say you're going to an interview at a company where no one ever wears a suit – not even the CEO. Should you still dress formally for the occasion, or will you look out of place?

Well, regardless of what everyone else at the company is wearing, it’s essential to take particular care with your appearance during a job interview. A candidate who dresses professionally, will usually make a much better impression than the candidate who doesn’t. When dressing for an interview, its recommended that you dress in business attire or at the very minimum, business casual. This goes for both men and women.

No matter what you wear, make sure it looks freshly pressed and well tended, if not new. Skip gym clothes or club gear.

Keep your hair neat.

Accessories or makeup should be understated.
Tattoos should be covered

Your aim is to draw less attention to what you look like and more attention on your skills. Your interviewer should remember your skills and experience, not your outfit.

I give a more detailed discussion about how to dress for an interview another presentation, but I just wanted to touch on it a bit because it does tie into our talk today.
Having these items ready the night before your interview will save you time and the unneeded stress of having to run around to gather them.
Imagine walking into an interview with gum in your mouth? It is not only not professional, but also bad manners especially when you are trying to impress.

(*) The last thing you need is to spill something on your clothes. Don’t take a chance. Remember you will be nervous, and accidents can happen.

(*) Keep your jewelry to a minimum. Earrings are okay, a watch, a small bracelet, but no more than that should be worn.

(*) Lastly, cover the tattoos as much as possible. Remember your goal is to impress them with your talents.
Some the main takeaways here are:
(*)Read
(*)Read
(*)Read
(*)Read
(*)Read

https://www.thebalancecareers.com/how-to-dress-for-an-interview-2061163 (POST IN CHAT)
This company is looking for a software engineer. Let’s take a look at this sample job posting and read the skills this company is looking for. You would go down the list one by one and highlight the skills they are looking for that match up to skills you have.

For example, are you experienced in analyzing information? Perhaps you had an assignment that required you to analyze certain data, or perhaps, you did this during a job you held, or it could be that you learned to analyze information while volunteering. Remember, it all counts as experience.

Problem solving and teamwork, these skills are usually learned through experience. The reason instructors like to assign team projects is so that students can experience the benefits teamwork can provide, it also reflects real-world field work. In reality, it takes working together as teams to solve real-world problems.

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<tr>
<th>Sample Job Posting: Software Engineer Qualifications/ Skills</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing information</td>
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<tr>
<td>General programming skills</td>
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<td>Software design</td>
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<td>Software debugging</td>
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<td>Software documentation</td>
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<td>Software testing</td>
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<td>Problem solving</td>
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<td>Teamwork</td>
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<td>Software developments fundamentals</td>
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<td>Software development process</td>
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<td>Software requirements</td>
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So here you can see the list of job responsibilities the hiring company is expecting from. So, if you were applying for this job, you would read through the list of responsibilities carefully and highlight the ones you're experienced in or proficient in. So, a simple example here is, as a software engineer employed with this company, they expect you to be able to “Investigates problem areas”. Think about past experiences, again, in class, at home, at a prior job, or maybe a hobby you have where you did some trouble shooting and list them. Do this for all the listed tasks. You are not expected to know or be experienced in everything they list, but let them know that you can be a quick learner and are eager to be trained.
Every job posting will have the required education, experience and licensing requirements an applicant must have. Again, read carefully every item listed and highlight the ones you meet. You might also want to make a note adding skills you have that they don’t list. They might find that they can use someone like you.

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<tr>
<th>Sample Job Posting: Education, Experience, and Licensing Requirements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s and/or Master’s degree in Computer Science, Computer Engineering or related technical discipline</td>
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<tr>
<td>5+ years of professional software development experience</td>
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<td>Proficiency in Java or C++, and object-oriented design skills</td>
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<td>Application architecture and design patterns</td>
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<td>Experience serving as technical lead throughout the full software development lifecycle, from conception, architecture definition, detailed design, scoping, planning, implementation, testing to documentation, delivery and maintenance is preferred</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge of professional software engineering and best practices for the full software development life cycle, including coding standards, code reviews, source control management, build processes, testing, and operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience in development of distributed/scalable systems and high-volume transaction applications</td>
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It is also important to touch on etiquette.

Remember, you need to make a good impression on everyone you meet. This will include the receptionist, the secretaries, your interviewer and everyone else you meet by being polite, pleasant, and enthusiastic. Look professional and confident.

It's also important to mention here that, if you are a top candidate, employers may want to test your social skills and your communication skills and, not to mention, how you handle yourself under pressure when meeting new people. They can observe you and learn a lot about you by inviting you to a panel interview. Or, if you're being interviewed for jobs where there is a lot of client interaction, they may invite you to a lunch or dinner interview. Good manners will give you an advantage over other candidates, so take some time to brush
up on your table manners and to be aware of good interview dining etiquette.

For more information go to: https://www.thebalancecareers.com/tips-for-interviewing-while-dining-2061318  (Post in Chat)
I would like to conclude with saying I selected only highlights of what goes into interviewing, so if you have specific questions about interviews, resume writing, cover letter writing, or anything associated with all of that, I am available M-F 8-5. I am also available to help you with your other career development needs so please reach out. My email address is nabdelha@unm.edu.

When things become normal again and we can hold in-person meetings, please visit me at my office located in ESS.
And with that, I welcome feedback, so please provide it here, and I’ll past the link in the chat.

(*) Also, don’t forget to follow us on social media, (*) and check out all of our other services and upcoming events through our website or our succESS app.

(*) Thank you for your attention and for inviting me here this evening and I’ll take your questions.

Sign-In:
https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=MJiqJfngK0iJfho7P!VeXAOyIGi5zhRLor2Al_gK0mhURFFKRUZFTExRVVPMEFQVkJZSUDU2Q1dFUy4u
Feedback: goto.unm.edu/ess-feedback