Athens Technical College
Career Services Presents
A Student Success Seminar on
Interviewing Skills
Purpose of an Interview

For the Prospective Employee:

- This is an opportunity to convince the employer of your potential as a future company employee.
- An opportunity to find out more about the job and the company.

After the interview, ask yourself:
- "Is it right for me?"
- "Do I want to work for this employer?"
- "Do the conditions/prospects fit in with future career goals?"

- The perfect opportunity to expand on the information presented in your application and/or resume.
For the Employer:

- This is the occasion to assess your abilities in relation to the requirements of the job position.

  Employers want to know:
  - "How your skills and knowledge match the job announcement?"

- The chance to discuss training, experience, knowledge and abilities in more detail in order to determine the most qualified candidates and future employees.

- An opportunity to see what drives and motivates you and to determine whether you will be able to fit in with both the team and the company as a whole.
Job Candidates MUST:

- Research the company and the job position prior to the interview.
- The Company – What do they do? What is the size of the organization? Where is the position located? How does the position relate to the company's mission and/or goals? Has the employer been in the public eye lately?
- The Job – How does the job fit into the organization? How has the job been done? What could you provide in addition to the written job duties expressed in the job announcement? How can you differentiate yourself from other applicants?
• What do you see yourself doing 5 years from now?
• What are your greatest strengths and greatest challenges?
• How do you accept direction?
• How do you handle ethical dilemmas?
• How do you think a friend or professor who knows you well would describe you?
• Consider using the S-A-R (situation-action-result) technique to answer interview questions

  o Sample Question: Explain an ethical dilemma which you have encountered in your previous work history? What actions did you take? While working at a child care center, I saw another employee act neglectfully towards a child under our supervision. (Situation) I immediately removed the child from the worker’s care and reported the incident to the owner. (Action). The employee was terminated and the parents of the child were notified of the incident. I was given an accommodation by my employer for my role in the event. (Result)
• 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.

Interview Questions regarding leadership/management experience
Interview Questions related to educational achievement

• In what ways have your college experiences prepared you for a career?
• Describe a contribution you have made to a project on which you worked.
• If you could do so, how would you plan your academic studies differently?
• What have you learned from participation in extracurricular activities?
• 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?
• Why did you decide to seek a position with our organization?
• 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?
• Why did you leave your last job?

Interview Questions related to prior employment
• In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
• How do you work under pressure?
• What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?

Interview Questions regarding one’s desired work environment
• Think of professional characteristics that are required by the job, such as meeting deadlines, clear communication, working with others, etc.
• Think of examples to illustrate how you have those characteristics and skills and how you have used them in the past.
• Practice giving answers to questions about yourself aloud, so you become comfortable with how to formulate the answers to questions. Try to be specific when you answer questions about yourself.
• Practice with others or in front of a mirror to prepare for the interview.
• Be positive.

Rehearse
• Poor handshake
• Talking too much
• Talking negatively
• Showing up late or too early
• Asking about benefits or salary
• Verbal ticks
• Not enough or too much eye contact
• Failure to match communication styles

Common Bloopers
• Consider the company culture when deciding the appropriate interview attire.
• Is the company known for being creative, innovative, traditional, conservative, etc.
• When in doubt, consider wearing a business suit or other professional interview attire.
• Under-dressing is worse than over-dressing. Keep your hair neat. Avoid strong perfume and too much makeup or jewelry because they can be distracting.
• A good rule of thumb: Dress for the job you want, not the one you have.

Dress for Success
• Always shake hands with those you meet in an interview situation.
  o You should shake them when you meet and when you leave.
  o This immediately connects you with others.
• Take care not to shake too firmly (ouch!) or too lightly (yuck!).
• Look someone in the eye (and smile) while shaking their hand.

Handshake Etiquette
• As the interview draws to a close, employers ask if you have questions for them.
• Be prepared! Questions directed to the employer show your interest in the company and the job.
• Sample questions include:
  o Can you describe a typical assignment?
  o Are there opportunities for advancement?
  o How do you train employees?
• Shake hands with everyone present at the interview
• Write notes after you leave the interview to prepare yourself in case you need to interview with the company twice
• Prepare thank you cards and turn in immediately

At the end of the interview
• Thank you notes – send a formal thank you note to everyone who you met with during your interview. Show appreciation for them taking the time.
• Follow-up on any connections you may have made while in the interview.
• Be patient… Call only after the period of time the company indicated they would contact you has passed.

Interview Follow-up