

# **Guide to... Interviewing**



**Dickinson College  
Career Center**

# INTERVIEWING

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## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Going through this guide will better prepare you for most types of interviews. As you read, think critically and intentionally about your skills as they relate to the position you are seeking.

Some of the pages in this book are set up like a workbook. You may want to take notes in the margins to help you remember the experiences you have had and how they relate to the job you are seeking.

While it is good to use the information in the next few pages to help you prepare, it is important to understand that every interview is different. The information included here can give you general guidelines, but cannot encompass every possible interview question you might hear.

It is best to use the information included here as a guideline, rather than a script to memorize. The best candidates are ones that can be flexible and adaptable to questions, rather than rigid in their answers.

You will find sample questions on [pages 12 and 13](#). While these are not the only questions you may be asked or ask, they will help you start thinking about some of your skills.

Interviewing is a skill that can be practiced and developed. The more you practice, the more your skills will improve. The Career Center counselors are available to conduct practice or "mock" interviews with you to help you prepare, and are also available for further interviewing tips or if you have questions.

## PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Preparation is the key for a successful interview. There are many steps to take in the days prior to your scheduled interview:

- **Research the organization**  
Some great resources for company information include websites, books in the Career Center Library, and company literature. Another great way to gather information about a company is through informational interviewing, which is talking with people you know in the organization, or people who are familiar with the organization or career. To learn more about informational interviewing, visit the Career Center's website at [www.dickinson.edu/student-life/resources/career-center/content/student/Networking/](http://www.dickinson.edu/student-life/resources/career-center/content/student/Networking/)
- **Research the position**  
If you do not have a detailed description of the position, call the organization and ask for one.
- **Utilize the resources of the Career Center**  
Schedule an appointment with a Career Counselor to seek advice about the interview process. Or schedule a mock interview, which is a great way to find out what you do well in an interview as well as what you can improve upon.
- **Know yourself**
  - Study your resume so that you can speak eloquently about your education and experiences and how they relate to the position for which you are interviewing.
  - Refer to the list of "Sample Questions Candidates May be Asked" on [page 12](#). This will help you prepare for answering similar questions asked by your interviewer.
  - Be prepared to discuss your strengths as well as your weaknesses. Always have a weakness, but make sure it has a redeeming quality and show the interviewer that you are trying to improve upon that weakness.
  - Think about the skills you may bring to the position and have examples for each. See below for more information on identifying your skills and articulating them to an employer.

## IDENTIFYING & ARTICULATING YOUR SKILLS

Employers interview many prospective candidates. Those who get the job are the ones that can prove they have the skills that employers are seeking; but first you need to understand what employers are looking for and how your skills match up. A great tool to help with this process is the job description for the position for which you are interviewing. Carefully review the job description to identify key skills and qualifications the employer has outlined. Be sure to think about the education and skills you have developed match those requested by the employer.

The following list outlines many skills that employers may be seeking. Go through the list and pinpoint skills that you have. Then write down a word or phrase that will remind you of a time you demonstrated that particular skill. At the bottom of the page, there is space for you to document additional skills and examples of when you used them.

What an Employer Wants	Example of a Time I Demonstrated It
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<b>Adaptability</b> (you can be flexible with changing needs or expectations)	
<b>Analytical</b> (you are able to decipher information to problem solve, make decisions, or anticipate needs)	
<b>Assertive</b> (you ask for what you need)	
<b>Creativity</b> (you can think outside the box or you are artistically creative; you find different ways to accomplish a task, or sell an idea or product)	
<b>Decision Making</b> (you are able to make good decisions and understand the process to make insightful decisions)	
<b>Goal Setting</b> (you are able to envision your expected outcome and create a plan to accomplish the goal; you are good at reaching your goals)	

<b>Good Communication</b> (you are able to understand the needs of others and communicate in such a way that those needs or goals are met)	
<b>Leadership</b> (you are able to gather support and excitement for tasks; you demonstrate strength of character)	
<b>Organization</b> (you are able to structure your time, resources, and responsibilities)	
<b>Problem Identification</b> (you are able to anticipate potential pitfalls to various courses of action; you can troubleshoot to identify problems)	
<b>Teamwork</b> (you work well with others and can play a critical role within the group)	

## TECHNIQUE FOR ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Many people don't realize that skillful interviewing takes technique and practice. Consider this: a lot of candidates have organizational skills, creativity, and can work well with others. So what will make you stand out? If you want to rise above your competition, the technique you use to explain your skills is critical. Using examples is the best way to demonstrate that what you are saying is actually true.

**The S.T.A.R. Technique:** S.T.A.R. is an acronym for **S**ituation, **T**ask, **A**ction, & **R**esult. If you include each of these components in your answers, your answers will be well developed, more memorable, and ultimately more credible. Here's how to use it:

**Q. Tell me about a time you demonstrated creative thinking in order to get a task completed.**

**A.** When I was a sophomore in college, I was the Vice President of the Dickinson Historical Society (**Situation**). In previous years, membership had declined and the leadership decided we wanted to make an effort to increase membership (**Task**). In order to do this with a limited budget, we had to decide how to creatively market. We brainstormed for a while and I threw out an idea for t-shirt giveaways, which our organization had never done. We thought it would be a good idea, since t-shirts are a good way to get name recognition on campus (**Action**). The group decided to go with my idea and I was able to design the t-shirt. We handed out 150 shirts and as a result, our membership increased by 20% (**Result**).

**Q. Tell me about a time when you worked as part of a team.**

**A.** During the summer before my junior year, I was an intern in a senator's office. There were about 3 other interns in the office (**Situation**). The interns were charged with putting together a proposal that would help streamline the correspondence between Pennsylvania residents and the senator's office (**Task**). Because the office was busy, the interns had to decide how to approach the assignment. Individually, we gathered information about how the current process of correspondence worked. Then we met together twice a week to come up with a better plan. We found that each person in the office was spending 2-3 hours a day answering questions and emails. Often the questions were repetitive and could be answered simply by having an FAQ section on the website and directing the constituents to that page. We decided to develop an FAQ page and an email address for all questions to be streamlined. We then designated one person in the office to delegate the emails based on who was the most well qualified staff person to answer that question (**Action**). The four interns presented our idea at a staff meeting and it was accepted. The staff implemented our ideas and we now have an FAQ page and one centralized email address for all questions. The staff seemed to be very satisfied with the time it saved them (**Result**).

**Now, think of examples from your own experiences:**

**Q. Tell me about a time you demonstrated creative thinking in order to get a task completed.**

**A.** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (**Situation**)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (**Task**)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## DIFFERENT TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

### Behavioral Interviews

Behavioral interviewing is one of the most popular types of interview styles. Employers prefer behavioral questions because your answers help them determine how you might handle various work-related situations, based on how you've handled similar situations in the past.

Behavioral questions invite you to tell a story about an experience you've had. Questions that begin with "Tell me about a time when..." are behavioral. Sometimes behavioral questions are disguised. They may not start out by inviting you to tell a story, but you may still have the opportunity to do so. Some examples are below.

#### Some examples of behavioral questions are:

- Tell me about a time when you had to solve a problem
- Tell me about your leadership experience
- Describe the most creative work-related project that you have carried out
- Tell me about a time when you achieved a great deal in a short amount of time
- Tell me about a time when you were especially creative
- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a personality conflict
- Give me an example of a situation when you had multiple high-priority demands on your time
- Tell me about a time when you used facts and reason to persuade someone to accept your recommendation
- Give me an example of a time that you identified potential problems and resolved the situation before the problems became serious?
- Tell me about a time when you were highly motivated and your example inspired others
- Tell me about a time when you were in a situation when events and circumstances changed rapidly

One of the best ways to answer behavioral questions is to apply the **S.T.A.R. technique**: Situation, Task, Action, Result. This will ensure that you have given a complete answer; well-told stories help back up claims made on your resume.

*Practice the S.T.A.R. technique by telling a story using one of your examples from page 4.*

### Conversational/Unstructured Interviews

Sometimes employers choose to interview candidates in a much more informal manner and it may seem as though you are simply chit-chatting. An interview may begin unstructured and move to a more formal method, or it may be informal the entire time; either way, you will want to be prepared.

Conversational interviews are important because it shows the employer that you are able to carry on a conversation in a professional environment.

While conversational or unstructured interviews may seem casual, the danger is that **you may not get a clear opportunity to discuss your qualifications**. Don't forget to put in a plug for your award-winning thesis or the challenging internship you had!

#### Some examples of conversational questions:

- What do you think of the current economy?
- How has your job search been going?
- Do you like your classes?

- So, are you ready to graduate?
- How was the trip? Did you find the office easily?

*Just be yourself and remember to look for opportunities to talk about your qualifications!*

### **Phone Interviews**

Phone interviews are a way for employers to screen candidates before bringing them to the site to interview in person. Typically, they will ask you the same types of questions that would be asked in a face-to-face interview, so you will need to prepare in the same way. The [S.T.A.R. Technique](#) should be employed in this type of interview, just as it would be during a face-to-face interview.

#### **Before the interview:**

- Turn off your TV, computer, other phone(s), and electronic equipment that may make noises in the room. For example, a friend may IM you while you're on the phone with an employer. Even if you are not distracted by them, noises may indicate to the employer that you are not taking the interview seriously.
- Be sure you have a clear phone line with consistent service. Cell phones are not always the best option for a phone interview; you don't want to have a dropped call with an employer. If you don't have a land line, you can use a land line in the Career Center. Simply contact the Career Center to schedule the use of the phone.
- Dress up. This can make you feel more professional and you will ultimately portray that image of professionalism in your speech.
- Have the following items on hand:
  - Your resume, as well as an outline of some key points you would like to remember to mention. It's important to be prepared and have all of the information handy and in front of you. However, remember to *refer* to this information, don't read from it. You don't want your answers to sound scripted.
  - Pen, paper, tissues and water.
  - A prepared list of questions which you can ask the interviewer when they have completed their questioning.
  - Calendar/Planner – at the end of the phone screen, the employer may want to schedule time for you to come for an in-person interview.

#### **During the interview:**

- Make sure the interviewer(s) can hear you clearly, and that you can hear them. Be sure to listen carefully; and never interrupt the interviewer!
- Show your enthusiasm. Without the benefit of non-verbal cues/body language, it's sometimes difficult to convey your interest in the position. Here are some tips for better expressing your enthusiasm while being interviewed over the phone:
  - Make sure your voice inflection portrays interest. A flat tone conveys boredom, so be sure to speak with genuine enthusiasm.
  - Smile. Tone of voice can be positively affected by smiling.
  - Stand up or sit up straight when talking. The positioning of your body can impact your voice quality.
- Write down the name of the person(s) conducting the phone screen. You may need to address them later in the interview. Additionally, it is appropriate to send a thank-you note to each interviewer following a phone interview.
- At the conclusion of the interview, when you have the opportunity to ask questions, be sure to inquire about the next steps in the interviewing process.

- Do not inquire about salary during a phone interview. The time to discuss salary is at the end of the interview process, not the beginning. If an employer asks you what your salary requirements are, tell them you do not know enough about the position to determine that, however you would be happy to discuss it later in the interview process. Not only is this a true statement, but it will also reinforce your interest in proceeding further in the process.

### **Virtual or Skype Interviews**

Interviewing candidates virtually, most often through the use of Skype, is becoming much more common. The purpose of interviewing virtually is much the same as phone interviews: it is a way for employers to screen candidates before bringing them to interview in person. The benefit of interviewing via Skype rather than the telephone is that employers can actually see the candidate.

#### **Before the interview:**

- Ensure that Skype is working properly. Check your microphone and webcam settings, do a test call through Echo/Sound Test service, and try a quick test call to a friend.
- Set up your laptop on a table—do not have it perched on your lap for the interview.
- Turn off your TV, music, phone(s), electronic equipment that may make noises in the room, and any pop-ups that you may get while online (IM, email, etc.). Even if you are not distracted by them, noises may indicate to the employer that you are not taking the interview seriously.
- Make sure the lighting is good, and that the webcam is pointed at the appropriate angle. Also, from your shoulders up should be visible. What is the point in having a virtual interview if the interviewer can't see you?!
- Dress up, just as you would for an in-person interview. The employer will be able to see you.
- Have the following items on hand:
  - Your resume.
  - Pen, paper, tissues and water.
  - A prepared list of questions which you can ask the interviewer when they have completed their questioning.
  - Calendar/Planner – at the end of the virtual screen, the employer may want to schedule time for you to come for an in-person interview.

#### **During the Interview**

- Make sure the interviewer(s) can hear and see you clearly, and that you can hear and see them. Be sure to listen carefully; and never interrupt the interviewer!
- Sit up straight and try not to move around too much, which can be dizzying for the person on the other end.
- Look into the camera when speaking to the interviewer, not at the image of the interviewer on your computer screen.
- At the conclusion of the interview, when you have the opportunity to ask questions, be sure to inquire about the next steps in the interviewing process.
- Do not inquire about salary during a virtual interview. The time to discuss salary is at the end of the interview process, not the beginning. If an employer asks you what your salary requirements are, tell them you do not know enough about the position to determine that, however you would be happy to discuss it later in the interview process. Not only is this a true statement, but it will also reinforce your interest in proceeding further in the process.

## Group Interviews

There are two types of group interviews:

### Group interviews with other candidates.

These interviews are intended to judge how you get along with others or how well you handle yourself in a team. What role do you play in a group? Are you able to share your thoughts appropriately when there are multiple people present? Here are a few tips:

- **Don't** get distracted by questions that ask you why you're *more* qualified than others in the room. You have no idea what the qualifications of your competition are. **Do** stick with what you know: your own skills. Focus on what you do well and avoid comparing yourself with others.
- **Don't** try to stand out as a leader so much that you become overbearing.
- **Do** use examples in your answers
- **Do** familiarize yourself with their website, literature, and the job description for that particular job so that you can answer questions with answers that are specific to their needs

**Group interviews with multiple interviewers.** These interviews allow multiple people in the organization to meet you and ask you questions. They can save time and also help both you and the interviewers to get a feel for how well you would “fit” in the office (do you get along with the group? Is it comfortable?). Here are a few tips:

- **Do** pay close attention to the names and titles of each interviewer so that you can address your answers to the specific needs of each person.
- **Don't** forget to collect business cards at the end of the interview so that you can follow up with thank you letters to each person.
- **Don't** just focus on the person who asked you the question; **Do** look around the room at others when you're answering questions. This helps keep the group involved and engaged in your answers.

## Stress Interviews

If you are applying for a high-pressure position (such as sales, air traffic control, some mental health positions, etc.) you may encounter stress questions. These questions are intended to demonstrate how well you handle yourself in stressful situations. Sometimes students leave the interview thinking “some of those questions had nothing to do with the job.” They may be thinking that way because they were asked some stress questions.

Stress questions may sound like they have nothing to do with the job, but in reality, they show the interviewer how you react to stressful situations. For example, if an interviewer asks, “How would you redesign the teddy bear?” what would you do? Would you show the interviewer that you aren't shocked by the question or would you gasp and stammer? What if you were asked to “sell me this chair”?

The important thing to remember is to maintain composure. Try not to giggle nervously or show your anxiety. Instead, think quickly and creatively! *Remember, sometimes your answer to a stress question is not as important as how you act when they ask it. Demonstrate that you calm and collected in the face of pressure.*

## Case Studies

Case studies are a good way for interviewers to gather information about how you would respond to certain situations. They may be used in fields such as engineering, counseling, and business. Here you will be asked to read or listen to a story and respond using theories, formulas or ethical lessons you have learned.

Refer to Vault.com for more information on preparing for Case Study interviews. Once in the Vault system, click on the link “Download Guides.” Then, under the Interview/Resume Guides tab click on the “Vault Guide to the Case Interview.”

### **SAMPLE QUESTIONS CANDIDATES MAY BE ASKED**

In addition to job-specific questions (questions that are expressly related to the particular position for which you are applying), here are some questions to help you prepare for interviews. **Remember: use examples** when you answer questions! Refer to page 6 for advice on how to best structure your answers.

#### **Behavioral Questions**

1. Tell me about a problem you’ve had and how you dealt with it.
2. Tell me about a time you were especially creative.
3. Describe your most rewarding college experience.
4. Tell me about a time when you were highly motivated and your example inspired others.
5. Tell me about a time you worked with a group or a team to accomplish a task.
6. Tell me about a time you had to accomplish a task with no direct supervision. How did you organize your time? How did you motivate yourself?
7. Tell me about a time you saw a better way to do something. What did you do? How did you communicate your ideas?
8. Tell me about a time you had to change plans because of circumstances of other people. How did you handle the changes?
9. Tell me about a time when you knew an extremely busy week was ahead. How did you plan accordingly?
10. Describe a time when you recognized a problem in the way your group was doing work. How did you help correct it?
11. Tell me about a time when you had difficulty reaching a goal due to poor planning. What do you think you could have done differently?
12. Tell me about a time when you took action to improve the quality of your work. What specifically did you do?
13. Describe a time when you were working on a project and your boss asked you to change the way you were proceeding, yet you did not agree with him/her. How did you react?
14. Tell me about a time when you felt your existing procedures weren’t resulting in a satisfactory level of quality. How did you respond?
15. Describe a time when you were exposed to a new way of doing things. How did you react to the change?
16. Tell me about a situation where you were following a process that you did not agree with. What bothered you, and how would you have changed it?
17. Describe an example of a mistake you’ve made. How did you apply this experience to future situations?
18. Tell me about a time when a calculated risk you took paid off. What were the benefits of your decision?
19. Tell me about a time when an employee, peer or boss came to you with a new idea that you knew wouldn’t work. How did you know, and what was your response?
20. Describe a situation when you were asked to change the way you did your work. How did you react?
21. Tell me about a situation where you took initiative to alter the way you did work. Why did you change, and what was the result?
22. Describe a time when you used previous knowledge or past experience in a new situation.
23. Describe a time when, in hindsight, you should have adopted a new way of doing things, but instead took the older, more established route. In retrospect, what did you learn?

24. Describe a time when a supervisor made an urgent request. How did you manage your work to complete the task?
25. Tell me about a time when you had to go “beyond the call of duty” to reach your goals. What did you achieve?
26. Describe a time when your unit was falling short of an important objective. How did you contribute to the resolution?
27. Tell me about a time when you had to look for external resources to get a job done. Where did you turn for assistance?
28. Describe a time when you had to work with a group to reach specific results. What was your role in the process?
29. Tell me about a time when a project you were working on failed to reach its goals. What could you have done differently?
30. Tell me about a time when you were part of a successful group. What was your role? Why was the group successful?
31. Tell me about a time when you helped to focus the activities of your work group.
32. Describe a situation where you developed goals with your work group. What steps did you take in planning?
33. Tell me about a time when you were part of a team that failed to meet its goals. What could you have done differently?
34. Tell me about a time you had a conflict with someone – a roommate, professor, co-worker, etc. – and how you handled it.
35. Tell me about a time you persuaded someone to do things your way.
36. Tell me about a time you had to go above and beyond the call of duty to get something done.

### **Stress Questions**

1. What would you do if you caught a fellow employee stealing?
2. If your home were burning, what 3 objects would you save?
3. What is your favorite color?
4. If you could meet anyone, dead or alive, who would it be?
5. Why isn't your GPA higher?
6. How do you feel this interview is going?
7. What would you change about the design of a hockey stick?

1. Why should I hire you?
2. What are some reasons I should not hire you?
3. What makes you think you can do this job?
4. Tell me about your weaknesses.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your long range and short range goals?
3. What do you see yourself doing 5 years from now?
4. Please take a few minutes to guide us/me through your resume.
5. What are your career goals?
6. What do you look for in an employer?
7. Explain what you found to be the most valuable part of your education.
8. Why did you choose your major?
9. How would you describe yourself?
10. Why did you select Dickinson?
11. Describe your ideal job.

12. How would your friends describe you?
13. How do you plan to achieve your goals?
14. What strengths would you bring to this position?
15. What has been your best achievement? Why?
16. What do you expect to be earning in 5 years?
17. How has your college prepared you for this job?
18. What motivates you to put forth your best effort?
19. Do you work better independently or as a team?
20. What qualifications do you have that make you the most successful candidate?
21. How can you contribute to this organization?
22. What qualities should a successful manager or supervisor have?
23. Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and employee.
24. Do you have any plans for continuing education?
25. In what part time or summer jobs have you been the most interested?
26. What have you learned from your participation in co-curricular activities?
27. Do you think your grades are a good indication of your academic achievement?
28. How do you work under pressure?
29. In what kind of environment are you most comfortable?
30. What do you know about our organization?
31. Do you have a geographical preference?
32. Are you willing to travel?
33. How do your skills relate to our needs?
34. What do you think it takes to be successful in a position like this?

*There is no way to prepare for every possible question. Just remember to look at the job description – that will help you make educated guesses at the types of information they want to hear.*

### **SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES TO ASK**

Most interviewers will ask *you* if you have any questions for *them*. Asking questions shows that you are interested in the position; conversely, not asking questions shows an employer that you are uninterested. Below are some ideas of questions you might ask - of course, you don't want to ask all of them, but you might choose some that are of particular interest, or ask some of your own.

1. What is the growth potential of your organization?
2. Are there additional expectations you have, beyond what is outlined in the job description?
3. What is the organizational structure? Would you describe it as more of a hierarchical structure or more flat structure?
4. What kind of training is provided for new employees?
5. Does the organization promote and support professional development (involvement and membership in professional organizations)?
6. Does your organization offer incentives for continuing education?
7. How is an employee evaluated? How often are employees reviewed?
8. How are employees promoted?
9. What is a realistic time frame for advancement?
10. Can you describe a typical first year on the job?
11. What are some of the challenges of this position?
12. What is the retention rate at this organization?
13. Where do you think the organization can grow the most?
14. How would you describe your organizations management style?

15. Do you encourage teamwork or independent work?
16. Can you describe the working environment?
17. Why do you enjoy your job?
18. What does an individual need in order to be successful in your organization?
19. When can I expect to hear from you?

*Type out your questions and have them ready for the interview. Always ask what the next step in the process is! This helps you know what to expect from them.*

### **TIPS FOR PRACTICING**

- Practice out loud. Hearing your answers in your head sounds a lot different than when the words are audible.
- Practice in front of a mirror. When you can see your face and your gestures, you are able to tell how you're coming across to an interviewer.
- Ask a friend or roommate to help. Give them a list of questions (either the questions on page 9 or questions you have made up that you think are specific to the internship or job for which you are applying). Then have them give you feedback about your answers. Was your tone of voice appropriate? Did you demonstrate enthusiasm? How fast or slow did you speak? Did you use examples? Did you answer the question well? Was your answer too long or too short? Etc.
- Don't memorize your answers. Have an outline in your mind of the points you want to cover, but answers that are too scripted sound fake.
- Practicing takes time! If you can help it, don't cram the night before.
- Contact the Career Center to do a mock interview. This interview can be videotaped at your agreement. Seeing your responses and behavioral cues can help you to visually and audibly understand other ways to improve your interviewing skills.

### **MOCK INTERVIEWS**

Receiving feedback from reliable and knowledgeable professionals on your interviewing skills can be invaluable at helping you to become more skilled at interviewing. A Career Counselor can identify your strengths in the interview, as well as point out the areas in which you need further development. We can also provide you with information and tools to help you develop the aspect of your interviewing skill-set that needs further improvement.

A mock-interview typically takes 30-45 minutes. The majority of the mock interview consists of a typical question and answer session. The Career Counselor will then provide feedback and offer further information on the interview process. An optional component of the mock interview is to have the interview recorded. Recording your interview assists in the review process, and you can take the recording with you after the mock interview. While recording your interview is not mandatory, being able to review your interview will only help you to improve your interviewing skills.

Following are the steps to prepare for your mock interview:

- Schedule a mock interview by calling the Career Center or stopping by. There will be a minimum of two days between the time you schedule your mock interview and your actual appointment time to ensure that the Career Counselor has sufficient time to prepare for the mock interview.
- Provide the Career Counselor with a job description and a copy of your resume
- Refer to the Interviewing Basics handout

## THE DAY OF THE INTERVIEW

- **Bring the Following to the Interview**
  - A padfolio to hold your resume, a pad of paper, business cards, etc.
  - Extra copies of your resume in case anyone on the interviewing committee does not have one.
  - A list of references – the interview is usually when an employer asks for your references.
  - 7-10 typed questions. At the end of the interview, the employer will likely ask if you have any questions – never say “no”! We recommend you have 7-10 questions to ensure that you have some leftover in case the employer has answered any of them throughout the interview. If all of your questions are remaining, it is not advisable to ask all of them; you don’t want to make the employer feel as though they are the one being interviewed. Select three to four of the questions you feel are the most important, one of them should be about next steps in the process. You should not ask about salaries or benefits. It is recommended that you type your list of questions because when you refer to it you don’t want the employer to see your potentially messy handwriting – or worse, you not being able to read your own handwriting!
  - A nice pen.
- **Be sure to arrive approximately 10-15 minutes early for your scheduled interview** Arriving early will give you a chance to collect your thoughts. If you arrive earlier than 10-15 minutes go somewhere else and then return when it is 10-15 minutes before your interview time.
- **Dress appropriately for the interview**

Dressing appropriately means, in most cases, wearing a professional-looking suit with minimal accessories. If you have questions about what to wear, contact the Career Center.
- **Firm handshake**

A firm handshake is extremely important because it is one of the first items an employer will notice about you. Practice your handshake with your friends – make sure it is not too weak (portrays a lack in confidence) and not too strong (portrays aggressiveness and over-confidence) – it needs to be in the middle.
- **Speak clearly and enthusiastically**

The way in which you speak is extremely important. You want to portray confidence, a genuine interest in the position, passion for your prior experiences, communication skills, etc.
- **Maintain eye contact**

Like a firm handshake, eye contact portrays confidence in what you are saying. It also shows that you have a genuine interest in what others are saying. Often when you break eye contact it is because you are formulating an answer to a question. If you have prepared appropriately you should be able to come up with your answer easily and you will naturally be able to maintain eye contact.

## AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- **Take notes**

Be sure to take time immediately after each interview to take notes about how the interview went, including the questions, your answers, anything important from the conversation you want to remember, etc. These notes will help you to prepare for a possible second interview with the organization and even interviews with other organizations.

- **Send thank-you notes**

Immediately after your interview, **send thank-you notes**. Be sure to send a note to each person with whom you spoke, so if you were interviewed by two recruiters you will need to send two thank-you notes. This is a courteous way of acknowledging your gratitude, and it gives you one more chance to express your interest in the position. An example of a thank-you note is included in the Career Center's Style Guide booklet.

- **Follow up**

If you have not heard from the organization within the time frame that they stipulated, or they didn't indicate when they would be in touch and a week has gone by, it is appropriate to follow up with a phone call. This will allow you the opportunity to reiterate your interest, offer the opportunity to further explain to them your skills and qualifications, and offer to answer any additional questions they may have.

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### **Dickinson College Career Center HOURS**

#### **By appointment**

Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

#### **Career Coach Drop-Ins**

Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Tue. & Wed. Library Hours, 8:00 - 10:00 p.m.

**[www.dickinson.edu/career](http://www.dickinson.edu/career)**

**[career@dickinson.edu](mailto:career@dickinson.edu)**

**717-245-1740**

### **Vault Career Insider**

Want to know more about the company with which you're about to interview? Looking for information on specific occupations or career fields? In Vault Career Insider, you will find company profiles, detailed industry overviews, career overviews, career advice articles, and downloadable career guides. There are also message boards where you can observe or participate in discussions on specific companies, career topics, and graduate school.

**Access Vault Career Insider via the Student Resources tab in Gateway.**