

INTERVIEWS

Each year, an average of 3,500 - 4,000 on-campus interviews occur at CSM, scheduled by the Career Center. Types of interviews include initial one-on-one, panel, phone, video (including Skype), second, and on-site interviews. From freshman to PhD, acquiring an internship or full-time position usually depends on full involvement and competence in the interview process.

REMEMBER THE 5 P'S OF SUCCESS:

Plan	Know the time, location, have the proper attire clean/pressed, documents ready.
Prepare	Review company research and the details of your own projects, skills, qualities.
Practice	Practice (do not memorize) your greeting and responses to typical questions.
Personal Appearance	Arrive on time (10 minutes early), dressed for success.
Performance	Listen well, respond confidently, have good questions to ask the interviewer.

Watch DiggerNet well in advance to submit an interview request by your resume and cover letter, then await the recruiter's pre-selection decision to discover if you have been chosen to interview. If an information session is offered before the interview date, it is critical to attend, offering additional information that will improve content of your interview answers. If you were not selected for an interview but do believe you are a good candidate, it is especially important for you to attend the information session to meet and show the recruiter you would be good to fill an opening. Qualities that employers plan to evaluate during interviews include:

- Self-confidence, realistic assessment of strengths and limitations, goal setting, initiative.
- Mature behavior and judgment in handling assignments and situations.
- Communication skills, the ability to interact with others, and ability to listen.
- Leadership potential, demonstrated both in extra-curricular activities and on the job.
- Personality, enthusiasm, poise, cheerfulness, flexibility, sense of humor.
- Patterns of accomplishment, process of problem solving, and basic analytical abilities.
- Interest in and knowledge of your career field. (Passion for your major and future.)

“30-SECOND INTRODUCTION” EXPANDED TO 2 MINUTES FOR THE INTERVIEW

As you can see by my resume, I am currently a junior in Engineering Physics. From the time I was a kid standing on a chair to help my dad work on cars, he called me “the engineer.” I came here



from Washington State, appreciating Mines as the toughest (and best) school around. I chose my major from the many at Mines because it gives me a deep understanding of practical lab and shop skills, plus the fundamental way things work. I saw that this can apply to a variety of industries and am especially interested in manufacturing since my field session class toured your Littleton plant, seeing similar equipment to what we are using here at Mines, and

learned more about the amazing projects you are involved in. I really enjoyed our classes using oscilloscopes and vacuum equipment, especially the team projects. In addition to my technical abilities, I offer your team my experience working with diverse groups both through school projects and my involvement in a number of student organizations. I have an extremely strong work ethic, as I am quality driven and very detailed oriented and organized. That's why I'm glad to be here discussing an internship with you, Lockheed Martin, because I'd love to be part of important work your teams are doing, and I've been looking at your projects on your website.

THE STAR TECHNIQUE

S	Situation	Explain the why/when/where of this experience.
T	Task (or Trouble)	Describe the project and/or challenges faced.
A	Action	Detail your own efforts to make the experience successful.
R	Result	Report positive outcomes, including success and/or learning.

ANSWERING AN INTERVIEW QUESTION USING THE STAR TECHNIQUE:



“In my EPICS Team Project course, our multidisciplinary team of freshmen interested in physics, computer science and mechanical engineering were assigned a project for a local businessman wanting to improve utility costs **(S)**. Our task was to investigate and evaluate an option of a small wind turbine to be installed on a site in the middle of Golden. At first this seemed overwhelming to us as new students, but we dived in to see what we could find. One of the difficulties we countered is that of our team of five, there were two individuals who, for whatever reason, were unable or unwilling to devote the amount of time that was clearly needed. **(T)** I had been chosen by the team to be the Team Lead, which primarily meant that I interacted with the client, scheduled our team meetings, and made sure we stayed on top of deadlines. I also realized that I had to do my best to motivate and encourage the ones who were not attending, so I tried various means to communicate - sending emails so all times were clear, texting and phoning, and even went tried to catch them in the cafeteria to talk with them about the needs for the team. **(A)** In the end, I was able to find out that one was worried about other classes and helped get him to tutoring for that; the other was not agreeable, and so three of us divided up those tasks to add to our own, for the sake of the project. As a result, our project was completed in time to present to the judges in both a well-compiled technical report, and a public presentation. What I learned about this is how important it is to establish communication early... as soon as a problem is noticed, and work together to fix it. **(R)**”

MY PERSONAL STORIES / EXPERIENCES

This is a worksheet to allow you to jot down a few keywords that illustrate answers in interviews.

	Situation	Task	Actions	Result
Choice of Mines/Major:				
Team Projects:				
Individual Projects:				
Taking Initiative:				
Risky Decisions:				
Top Strengths:				
Experience with Diversity:				
Weakness / How Corrected:				
3-5 Year Plan:				

TYPICAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Tell me about yourself.
- What was it about our job description that attracted you to apply for this job?
- Why did you choose this school and the major you are studying?
- Tell me about a time that you worked with a team – what was your role?
- Tell me about a project that did not turn out very well – what did you do to improve it?
- What would you say are your top qualities that you would bring to our team? And a weakness?
- Tell me a time that you had to make an ethical decision...or a risky one...or an unpopular one.
- Why should we hire you instead of one of the other School of Mines applicants?
- How will you gain the respect of the employees who have been in the company a long time?
- Do you think your GPA is a good indication of your academic ability and type of employee you are?
- How do you work under pressure, or with multiple projects and deadlines?
- How would a past employer describe you?
- What are you most proud of...what are your major accomplishments?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?

QUESTIONS THAT YOU CAN ASK THE INTERVIEWER

- Can you explain a typical project that I would be working on?
- What would “a day in the life” of this position look like?
- Why did you come to work with this company? What is it that YOU most value about this company?
- What do you see as the qualities or concepts that the company most values in an employee?
- How are employees’ leadership responsibilities and performance measured? By whom?
- What is the organization’s plan for the next five years, and how does this department fit in?
- What do you think is the greatest opportunity facing the organization in the near future? New products or services? New geographical areas?
- What are the significant trends in the industry that affect this company the most?
- Now that we’ve had a chance to talk, is there anything else I can tell you to show I would be a good fit.
- Twelve months from now, I want you to tell me that hiring me was the best decision you have made this year. What needs to happen for us to have that conversation?.
- What is the next step in your hiring process? Will you be the one who will be contacting me?
- May I have your email address (IF you have not received a business card—for sending a thank you).



QUESTIONS TO NEVER ASK THE INTERVIEWER

- What does your company do?
- How long is the vacation? How about sick days?
- Would I have to work overtime in this job?
- How much would I get paid?
- When could I move to a different job in the company?
- Does your company do drug tests? Or credit checks?
- Does your company look at Facebook before hiring?

ADVICE FROM A STUDENT....

“The interview section was a great help. I found that the biggest help I received from the book was the “30-Second Introduction” Expanded to 2 Minutes for the Interview. Two of the questions listed under “Typical Interview Questions” were asked of me during the interview and, since I had prepared to answer any of the questions, the interview was much less stressful and came across to the person I was interviewing with as professional and prepared.”

D.S, Bachelor of Science Geology and Geological Engineering

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW

Employers use a variety of interview techniques and settings to determine your skills and fit. The face-to-face interview is the most common.



Before the Interview:

- Do have your “dress for success” clothes ready, and gather extra resumes, list of references, unofficial transcript, the job description, a few examples of technical writing, Excel use, SolidWorks, and notepad / pen. Use a simple but attractive padfolio to organize materials and convey professionalism.

When You Arrive:

- Do arrive 10 minutes early (not too early and **never** late). Greet the receptionist or assistant and all representatives of the organization with courtesy and respect.
- Don't chew gum. Do accept a small drink (water) from your interviewer!
- Do turn OFF your cellphone. Unless there is a true impending emergency, it will wait.

During the Interview:

- Do keep answers honest, positive, using specific examples to illustrate and to leave a clear impression. The STAR technique can help keep you on focus, concise, and timely.
- Do smile, have good but relaxed posture, eye contact, and enjoy the conversation.
- Do allow yourself time to pause and consider before formulating answers. Do breathe!
- Do have good questions to ask the interviewer(s) about the company, job, your fit for the team.
- Do close the interview by telling the interviewer(s) that you want the job and ask what the next step is.

Follow-Up for Any Interview Situation

- Assess the experience, making notes of particular conversation items that either strengthened your interaction, or that you feel you can add more comment to. Send a thank you within 24 hours, personalizing it to reference the conversation so that they can better recall who you are.



PHONE INTERVIEWS

Screening and sometimes more in-depth interviews may be conducted over the phone to help employers determine if you meet the basic qualifications for a position. Screening interviews are generally handled by a representative of the HR team and tend to follow a set format, often asking behavioral or situational interview questions. General rules for interviews still apply:

- Do prepare as for any interview with current research of the company and review of your resume.
- Do request a time that is ideal and choose a location to insure that reception (and battery) will not present difficulties. Mines' Career Center can help schedule a private interview room with a landline phone or Skype set-up.
- Do have a few bulleted notes on research, resume and support materials in clear sight in front of you.
- Do listen carefully to questions, take brief notes to keep answers focused on the stated questions.
- Do answer concisely but thoroughly, giving specific examples to illustrate qualities and skills. Use STAR.
- Do be aware of body language even if the interviewer cannot see you: good posture, smile while talking to give voice inflection and interest, perhaps stand to give voice depth.
- Do not hesitate to ask for repetition or rephrasing If you cannot understand the interviewer's question; repeat back the question to be sure you answer appropriately.
- Do ask questions you have developed from your research for the company to show your interest.
- Do ask for the interviewer's contact information and about the next step in the hiring procedure.

PANEL INTERVIEWS

Group interviews are generally conducted by three or more people, presenting varied departments with the company. Representatives generally ask questions that relate to their areas of interest and expertise.

- Do gather business cards and arrange in front of you in configuration of their seating in the room.
- Do direct your answer to the person who asks the question, but maintain eye contact with others.
- Do consider it an enjoyable conversation and chance to get to know several people.
- Do send a thank you note to each of the participants, personalizing with comments or questions specific to that individual or division.



SKYPE OR VIDEO CONFERENCE INTERVIEWS

With the increase of technology and also increase in time demands on employers, more distance interviews are being conducted. The Mines Career Center can provide you with a professional setting for these types of interviews, scheduling location and time for you and the employer. If you receive notice from a company that they will be utilizing this form of interview, contact the Career Center immediately with contact information for the interviewer. Scheduling a “practice session” with Career Center staff can help you to present in a natural and focused way.

LUNCHEON INTERVIEW OR “SOCIAL EVENT”

The purpose of a less formal setting to “get to know you” is still an interview, as you will be observed to determine both your fit for the team and to assess how well you handle yourself in social situations. You could be dining with your potential boss and co-workers along with HR professionals. Wear appropriate attire, staying more conservative and professional. Choose your food carefully, and select light, healthy and easy things to eat. Steer clear of spaghetti or other potentially messy foods. Gracefully declining, or at least minimizing alcohol even if others drink, is best. Have your “30-second introduction” ready as you meet various members of the group.



INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

This is not a tactic for acquiring a position – it can clarify your career direction into a particular industry, or type of position by having conversations with workers already in these positions. The advantages include learning more about the realities of working in a particular occupation or field to confirm or clarify your preconceived ideas, discover areas you can improve in your resume or interview skills, expand your network of business acquaintances.

- How did you get interested in your career? Would you make the same choice again?
- What knowledge, skills and experience are necessary?
- What education and training are useful beyond the degree that I have now?
- What do you do in a typical day?
- What do you like best about your career choice? Dislike?

“Please come prepared to have good conversations and always ask questions!”

Williams

“Be on time and ready with questions for the interviewers. Provide multiple examples of projects to discuss.”

Woodward

SITE VISIT INTERVIEW

A site visit is an invitation to travel to the employer's location to be further evaluated. The primary purpose is to allow the employer to get a better idea of you as a member of the "team," to screen you for fit. Much of the hiring decision at this point will result from good personal chemistry, whether the additional employees you meet are comfortable with you and can envision easily interacting with you in the workplace. Whether accepting or declining a visit, it is important to acknowledge all invitations for site visits in writing. Only accept invitations from employers in whom you have a genuine interest.

PREPARING FOR THE VISIT

Contact the recruiter to clarify all travel details. You will want to write down this information or have it sent in writing. Be certain that you clarify the date, itinerary of the visit, lodging, local transportation, on-site contact person's information, travel/flight information, and reimbursement procedure. In addition, it is important to find out what you need to bring and prepare (such as a presentation) prior to the visit.

Carefully consider your wardrobe for the on-site visit. Plan to bring outfits appropriate for the environment. Normal business attire such as you wore to the campus interview is appropriate. You will also want to ask your contact person for additional wardrobe suggestions or requirements (such as steel-toed boots or safety goggles). Other items to bring can include coursework for evenings or lulls in travel, extra resumes, career portfolio, padfolio, extra money, water bottle, pens, and pencils, travel clock, and laptop.

Mentally summarize your on-campus interview. What went well or was well-received? Whatever it was will give you clues to what the company is really looking for in a candidate. Conduct some additional company research so you know what work is done or products manufactured at the specific location you are visiting. Review your resume, career portfolio materials, personal experiences, projects, and prior interview questions.



THE INTERVIEW

Anticipate a full day or weekend of interviews, meeting people, seeing facilities, and gaining a glimpse of the community. Plan to make notes of pertinent facts and impressions about the visit whenever you have the opportunity. You will be exposed to a lot of information and insights into the job. Many employers schedule several candidates for visits each day. Some of these individuals may be from other schools. Keep in mind that you are not only being measured against these other applicants, but also assessed on how well you might work on a team with the other candidates. You should always retain your professional poise.

Be prepared for a very busy schedule while you're with the company. You can expect to be asked the same questions over and over. Occasionally you may be interviewed by a group of people or find yourself one of a group of candidates doing a project. An employer may outline a problem which the company is currently facing and ask you for suggestions on how to solve it. Remember, most employers won't really expect a brilliant solution, but they will be interested in how you approach the problem to analyze possible alternatives as an individual and/or a team. Stay calm and think carefully about your answers. Take your time. Your performance will be a measure of your maturity in difficult situations.

After the visit, make sure that you write a thank you note to the individuals with whom you met. Also, quickly settle travel expense repayments - make a copy of all receipts before sending them to the employer.