INTERVIEWS – How to Dress

What should your interview outfit say about you?
• You are a professional, not a student
• You care about your image and making a good first impression
• You understand the nature of your target industry
• You respect the person/company with whom you are interviewing

General Tips for Everyone
Outfit is clean & neatly pressed
Minimal fragrance/cologne – preferably none
Cell phone stays in the car
Sunglasses stay in the car or in a bag

Shoes are clean & polished
No gum or candy
Take padfolio and pen
Well-groomed hair and nails

For Men
Suit:
2 piece matched suits are best in a dark color (dark grey, navy, black)
Suit jackets typically have stitches to hold vents on the back and on the sleeves – remove them if they are still in tact. Also the tag stitched on the outside of the sleeve is not meant to stay there for show – cut it off!

Shirt:
Long sleeved button down, even in hot weather! Choose a white, light blue or a light pastel color. Avoid being too trendy.

Tie:
Select good quality silk ties. Avoid extremes such as characters or bold graphics.

Shoes:
Dark color, leather, business shoes.

Socks:
Dark color, mid-calf length so no skin is visible when you are sitting.

Belt:
Dark color, preferably same color as shoes.

Facial Hair:
If worn, be well-groomed. Neatly trimmed mustache, but preferably no facial hair other than mustache. Observe others in your industry to see what is acceptable.

Rings & Jewelry:
The only rings you should wear to an interview are a wedding ring and/or a college ring. Removing earrings is safest.
INTERVIEWS – How to Dress

For Women

**Suit:**
2 piece matched suits are best. Choose a conservative color – nothing too bright or bold.

**Suit – Pant/Skirt:**
Tailored pants suits are appropriate. Pants should be creased and fit well – not too short or too long. Skirts should be knee length so that no thigh is showing when you are seated. Be sure look at yourself sitting in the skirt facing a mirror to ensure it projects a professional image and is not distracting. A small slit is appropriate in a skirt, but high slits are not. Remember to project a professional image – you are not going out on the town!

**Shirt:**
Choose a tailored blouse or fine-gauge knit shell to wear underneath the suit jacket. Do not show cleavage.

**Shoes:**
Closed-toe pumps are best with a 1-2 inch heel. Avoid sandals, stilettos, wedges, and platforms. Be sure you can walk comfortably in the shoes – hobbling in uncomfortably heels is not the image you want to send. And on-site interviews may include a good bit of walking.

**Hosiery:**
Choose a sheer shade close to your skin tone or a neutral color. Sheer is preferred over opaque (tights).

**Jewelry:**
Keep jewelry simple and to a minimum. No over-sized earrings or rings. No more than 1 ring per hand is appropriate.

**Cosmetics:**
Keep makeup light and natural. Nails should be a clear or neutral polish color.

**Purse/Bag:**
Choose either a small purse and padfolio or a business-like tote bag that will hold your padfolio and conceal personal items. Avoid purses or bags that have bold prints, look like beach/pool bags, or are little-girlish.
Interviewing can be stressful, but the more prepared you are, the better you will perform. The best way to prepare for an interview is to practice answering questions. The Office of Student Enrichment offers mock interviews to CBBS students. OSE Mock Interviews are targeted toward your major and/or desired industry. To schedule a mock interview appointment, contact the OSE at 864.656.2478 or stop by our office in 374 Sirrine Hall.

What is the # 1 thing recruiters say students need to do to be better interviewers?

**RESEARCH THE COMPANY**

- What does the company do/make/distribute?
- Where are the various facilities located?
- What are the career paths?
- Are there new market ventures or
- Are there plans for expansion?
- Is the workforce diverse? Engaged?
- What is the organizational structure?
- Who are the majors competitors?
- Are there recent accomplishments?
- How are sales & financials?
- Are their guiding company values?
- What is the corporate culture like?

Where to find company information:

*Employer’s web-site* - check the Home Page, Careers Page, Current News/Press Releases, Business Report, etc.

*Google* – look for news stories regarding the employer

*Employer LinkedIn page, Facebook page, Twitter feed, YouTube content*

*LinkedIn research* – Do you have any connections who work at the company? Search for the company name to learn various job titles and what those people do. Where did current employees work prior to working with the company?

*Employer Information Sessions on campus* – if the employer conducts an information session, be sure to attend. Many companies “highly encourage” attendance at the information session before an on-campus interview – this means you need to make it a priority to attend because they will notice if you did not!

**Use your research to create solid questions**

Once you have thoroughly researched the company, use the information you gathered to prepare a list of questions to ask during the interview. You can show your interest in the position by asking good questions based on your research. Prepare more questions than you think you will need in case some are answered throughout the interview. You always want to ask a couple of targeted questions at the end of the interview to show your interest.

**Add’l Prep Tips:**

Know where you are going for the interview – consider traffic during the time you’ll be traveling

Know your resume

Think about major accomplishments, projects, strengths, and have specific examples ready to present

Be ready to “tell me about yourself” with a short, concise summary of your professional and academic qualifications.
INTERVIEWS – Day of Interview

Prior to entering building/office:
• Ensure you have plenty of time to get to the interview site without feeling rushed.
• Arrive 10-15 minutes early – if you arrive on-site earlier than 15 minutes prior to your interview, you can wait in your car or a public area and collect your thoughts before heading in to the office.

During the interview:
• Start off with a good handshake when the recruiter greets you.
• Wait to be seated until the recruiter sits or offers you a chair instead of seating yourself.
• Jot down a few notes during the interview if you need to – this will not only help you remember the details, but also shows your sincere interest.
• An ideal interview is conversational with questions from you interspersed. Follow the lead of the interviewer to gauge when you should ask a follow up question. Ideally, you should be talking about 50% of the time.
• Unless the recruiter brings it up first, steer clear of the topics of salary, benefits, time off, etc. Wait until after an offer has been made to ask questions about these items so that you can fully weigh the job offer.
• Remember that it is okay to have a few seconds of silence. You do not need to fill every second with words. This habit leads to over-sharing. If you need to take a moment to think about your answer, do so.
• Maintain good eye contact, but do not stare down the interviewer.
• Try not to sound “rehearsed.” Some candidates have prepared answers for questions - just be sure to use natural tone and inflection.

End of the interview:
• Typically, the interviewer will ask if you have any questions for them. Be sure to have a couple of solid questions to ask at the end of the interview.
• Your final question at the end of the interview should be about the next steps in the process. Make sure you know the timeline for follow up before you leave.
• Leave on a positive note by reiterating your interest in the position.
• Be sure to thank the interviewer for their time.
• Get the names and contact information of all of the people involved in the interview.
• After the interview (as soon as possible, but within 24 hours), send each person involved in the interview a thank you email. Make the message unique for each person.
• If there is time before they will make a hiring decision, also send a handwritten thank you card to the interviewer(s). Thank you emails and cards sometimes make the decision between you and another candidate!
• If you do not hear from the interviewer within the timeframe you were given, follow up with a call or email to check in.
• Continue to follow up with the recruiter – but do not monopolize them or their time. An email once every 2 weeks or so should work well. If they tell you they have filled the position, ask that they keep your information on file for any other opportunities which may fit your skillset.
The on-site visit means that you passed the first hurdle in the interview process! However, now that the company has narrowed down their search pool to a few candidates, they are searching for the very best person for the job. The company wants to find out if the first impression you made in the screening of on-campus interview is valid. There is a big difference in a 30-minute interview and a 1-day visit!

You will likely be meeting with a variety of people from the company, including your potential new boss. Interviewers want to know a lot of the same information about you, so expect to be asked some of the same questions numerous times by different people. Maintain your enthusiasm and attempt to answer each question as if it is the first time you have been asked.

**Logistics & Agendas...**

Your company contact person (likely someone from the HR office) will assist you with the logistics as much as possible. Sometimes companies will pay for travel upfront and sometimes they will reimburse your travel.

Your hotel will likely be covered by the company. Be considerate and do not charge personal calls, order room service or pay-per-view movies, etc. Keep records of any out-of-pocket expenses by saving your receipts and documenting mileage on your personal car.

You will likely be sent an itinerary for your visit, however, if not, it is acceptable to request one from the employer. Also, be certain to ask what items you might need to bring with you.

If you are in an unfamiliar city, it is advised that you drive by the interview site the evening before your interview (if possible). By doing this, you will alleviate your stress over finding the site and it will let you know exactly how much time to allot to get there. Be sure to allow extra time for traffic, road construction, or any other circumstance that may be out of your control.

**Employment Testing...**

While on site, it is not unusual to be asked to take a personality inventory or basic skills test. Do not stress out! This is a good sign since it means they are willing to spend money and time to test you to see if you’re a potential fit for the job.

**You Have a Choice Too...**

Throughout the interview process, you should be evaluating the company just as much as they are evaluating you. Consider their answers to questions you have asked about training, advancement opportunities, etc. Check out the company and whether it feels like an environment where you want to spend the majority of your day. Do people seem happy? Do you sense negativity? Keep in mind the things that are most important to you and remember to be evaluating them during your visit.

*Don’t forget to write thank you notes immediately following the visit!*
INTERVIEWS – Question Types

Typically, interview questions will be from the following categories:

- **Traditional** - Designed to learn how your specific qualifications will benefit the organization.
- **Behavioral** – The employers wants to see how a candidate would handle situations basing answers on past behaviors. The idea behind this type of question is that past behavior is a good indicator of future performance. Answer these questions using the STAR method.
- **Case Interviews/Brainteasers** – Depending on the industry and company, you may encounter questions that show the interviewer how you apply knowledge & skills to real-life situations. These questions may be in the form of problems to solve.

INTERVIEWS – Traditional Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your goals?
- Where do you see yourself in 3-5 years?
- What are your strengths?
- Why did you choose to interview with this organization?
- Define success.
- What is your biggest accomplishment?
- Who are your role models? Why?
- What motivates you?
- What do you know about our organization?
- How would a good friend describe you?
- How would a former supervisor describe you?
- Why should we hire you?
- What qualities should a successful manager possess?
- What are attributes of a good leader?
- How do you work under pressure?
- What can you tell us about our company?
- What do you know about our competitors?
- Do you plan to pursue further education?
- Why did you choose your major/university?
- Do your grades accurately reflect your ability?
- If you were to start over, what would you change about your education?
- Describe your leadership style.
- Do you prefer to work under a supervisor or on your own?
- What kind of boss do you prefer?
- How are you a team player?
- Have you ever done any volunteer work?
- What frustrates you?
- What challenges are you seeking in a position?
Behavioral Interview Questions

Before you begin interviewing, consider these questions and your possible responses. Questions that ask for a story should be portrayed in a positive light. Also be sure you are providing clear, unrehearsed answers.

- Tell me about a time you had difficulty working with a fellow student or co-worker.
- Describe a time when you were not satisfied or pleased with your own performance.
- Tell me how you feel about allowing subordinates to make decisions. Can you give me an example of how you have made decisions with a group? What was the result?
- How do you handle a challenge? Give an example.
- Give me an example of a time you worked under the pressure of a deadline.
- Tell me about something you are committed to. How did you become committed? What action(s) have you had to take to become/remain committed?
- Can you tell me about a time when you worked with little or no supervision?
- Tell me about the best decision you have ever made.
- How do you deal with competition?
- Tell me about a time when someone disagreed with your ideas.
- Tell me about a time when you tried and failed. What did you do?
- Give an example of a time you had to conform to a policy you did not agree with.
- Tell me about a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty.
- Describe a creative work project you have worked on.
- What process do you use to establish priorities? Be specific.
- Describe a time when your schedule was interrupted by unforeseen circumstances. How did you handle it?

STAR Interview Method

The STAR Method provides you with a foolproof way to answer behavioral based questions. A Behavioral Interview Question may be: “Tell me about a problem with a co-worker or teammate” or “Tell me about a time you tried, but failed. What did you do about it?”

S = Situation – Set up the situation – not too many details, just the basic scenario. You will want to think of a good situation, and it often helps to consider several types of scenarios when preparing for an interview so that you can show a variety of your successes.

T = Task – What is the task you needed to accomplish? What needed to happen?

A = Action – What action(s) did you take? What were the steps involved?

R = Result – What was the final result? What did you learn? What did you do to resolve the situation? You will want to choose situations that typically end on a positive note rather than ones that go unresolved.

For Behavioral interview questions, it’s always best to prepare by thinking of scenarios to pull from once you are in the interview. Try to think of situations:

- From a variety of roles (internship, student organization, team sport, study abroad, etc)
- That show your experiences in a positive light
- That show you are continuing to learn/improve
Case Interviews are often used in the consulting industry – but are becoming more common in the financial industry as well as sales and marketing. Case interviews typically fall into a few categories: **Brainteasers, market size questions, and business cases.**

In general, a case interview will evaluate your:

- Creativity
- Common sense/logic
- Analytic ability
- Poise
- Enthusiasm

Typically, you will have the opportunity to ask clarifying questions once the case has been presented. Asking insightful questions is one way to help set yourself up for success in a case interview. Try to view the case as a structured conversation – and be sure to talk the interviewer through your thought process. Discuss the initial evidence, then draw conclusions from the evidence, and finally, propose possible solutions or recommendations. In most cases, there is no right answer. The interviewer wants to see how you formulate your response, if you can think logically, and if you can present your thoughts and ideas coherently.

Students preparing for a case interview should contact the Career Coach in the Office of Student Enrichment to learn more details about this type of interview.

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**Case Interview Questions/Brainteasers/Zingers**

- If you roll 2 dice, what is the probability the sum of the numbers is odd?  
  (reportedly from Guardsmark)
- What do wood and alcohol have in common? (reportedly from UBS)
- What’s the square root of 2000? (reportedly from UBS)
- How many pairs of boxers are sold in the US each year?  
  (reportedly from USBank)
- How are M&M’s made? (reportedly from USBank)
- How many ridges are there around a quarter? (reportedly from Deloitte)
- Rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 how weird you are. (reportedly from Capital One)
- Why do you think only a small portion of the population makes over $150k?  
  (reportedly from Deloitte)
- Your client produces hair products. It is thinking about entering the sunscreen market. Tell me if you think this is a good idea.
- Your client wants to undertake a major advertising effort in Atlanta as a regional launch for a new concept in hair care. In order to understand how much to spend on this effort, your client asks you to estimate the size of the shampoo market in Atlanta.
INTERVIEWS – Questions for YOU to ask

It is vitally important to prepare a list of questions prior to the interview! Ensure that you have enough questions so that, even if some of the questions are answered during the interview, there are still a few to ask at the end of the interview. The questions you ask can tell the recruiter a lot about you and whether you have done your research on the job/company. Some of your questions may be general questions that you would ask at every interview – but you want to have some questions that are company-specific as well.

Sample questions to ask

• Why was this position created? (Is it a new position or did the last person move up?)
• What will I be doing initially? How will that change over time?
• What is the training program like?
• How does this position fit in with the organizational structure?
• Does this person work with a team? If so, what is the team dynamic?
• How will I be evaluated? How often?
• What is the most challenging part of the job?
• Can you give me a description of the type of person who performs well in this position?
• What is the company’s management style?
• How has the company changed over the past 5-10 years?
• What do you like about working for this company?
• I read that _____ product is in development. Will the person in this position be involved with that product? How?

Questions NOT to ask:

• What are the benefits?
• How much vacation time do you provide?
• When would I expect a promotion?
• How much will I earn?
• What does your company do? (you should already know this from your research!)
• How long is the lunch break?
INTERVIEWS – Illegal Questions

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits employers from discriminating against any person on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin or disability. In addition, interviewers should not ask questions regarding age, children/child care arrangements, pregnancy, arrest records, disabilities of applicant or family members, or drug or alcohol addiction. Questions about conviction records, driver's license, residency, height and/or weight, language proficiency, or credit rating should be asked only if the answers are relevant to the person's ability to perform the job.

Occasionally, you may encounter an illegal interview question. Sometimes it is perfectly innocent and the interviewer considers it small talk. Other times, you may be interviewed by a manager who is not as well-versed in interview ethics as someone from HR would be. Many times, it's the wording of the question that makes it illegal – not necessarily the intent behind the question.

Remember – these are questions that an interviewer cannot legally ASK. However, if you wish to disclose any such information in an interview, that is your option.

Either way, it’s important to consider your options for how to answer any illegal question during an interview ahead of time so that you are not caught unaware. Also, consider whether you would want to work at a company that allows illegal questioning in interviews.

Essentially, you have 3 options:
1. Refuse to answer the question and tell the interviewer that the question is improper.
2. Answer the question, but have your privacy invaded.
3. Answer the “intent” or concern that lies behind the question.

What Can and Can’t an Interviewer Legally Ask?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic: Nationality</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illegal Question(s): Are you a US citizen? Where were you born? Where were your parents born? What is your “native language”?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal Questions(s): Are you authorized to work in the United States? What languages do you speak, read, write fluently? (This question is okay, as long as this ability is relevant to the performance of the job).</td>
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<tr>
<th>Topic: Age</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illegal Question(s): How old are you? When did you graduate from college? What is your birthday?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal Questions(s): Are you over the age of 18?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Topic: Marital/Family Status</th>
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<tr>
<td>Illegal Question(s): What is your marital status? Who do you live with? Do you plan to have a family? When? How many kids do you have? What are your childcare arrangements?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal Questions(s): Would you be willing to relocate in necessary? Travel is an important part of this job – would you be willing to travel as needed? (This question is okay, as long as all applicants are asked it). This jobs requires overtime occasionally – would you be able and willing to work overtime as necessary? (Again, this question is okay as long as all applicants for the job are asked it).</td>
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# What Can and Can’t an Interviewer Legally Ask?

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<tr>
<td>Illegal Question(s):</td>
<td>To what clubs or social organizations do you belong?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal Questions(s):</td>
<td>Do you belong to any professional or trade groups or other organizations that you consider relevant to your ability to perform this job?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Note:</td>
<td>The illegal question could lead to information about religious or political affiliations, which could lead to discrimination. However, telling an interviewer that you are a member of Delta Sigma Pi, the Student Media Club, or any other professional group would be relevant to the job.</td>
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<td>Illegal Question(s):</td>
<td>How tall are you? How much do you weigh?</td>
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<td>Legal Question(s):</td>
<td>Are you able to lift a 50-pound weight and carry it 100 yards, as that is part of the job?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Note:</td>
<td>The only time questions about height or weight are acceptable is when there are minimum standards essential to the safe performance of the job.</td>
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<th>Topic:</th>
<th>Disabilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illegal Question(s):</td>
<td>Do you have any disabilities? Please complete the following medical history. Have you had any recent or past illnesses or operations? If yes, list and give dates. What was the date of your last physical exam? How is your family’s health? When did you lose your eyesight?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Question(s):</td>
<td>Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job with or without reasonable accommodations? (This question is okay if the interviewer thoroughly described the job).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Note:</td>
<td>As part of the hiring process, AFTER a job offer has been made, you may be required to undergo a medical exam. Exam results must be kept strictly confidential. Medical/Safety personnel may be informed if emergency medical treatment is required. Supervisors may be informed about necessary job accommodations, based on the exam results.</td>
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<th>Arrest Record</th>
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<td>Illegal Question(s):</td>
<td>Have you ever been arrested?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal Question(s):</td>
<td>Have you ever been convicted of _____?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Note:</td>
<td>The crime should be reasonably related to the performance of the job.</td>
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<td>Illegal Question(s):</td>
<td>If you’ve been in the military were you honorably discharged? In what branch of the Armed Forces did you serve?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal Question(s):</td>
<td>What type of training and education did you receive in the military?</td>
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