

INTERVIEWING ETIQUETTE

Your appearance gives the first impression, but your manners and general behavior become important immediately afterward. The combination of these factors (appearance, manners and behavior) form the basis for the interviewer's hiring decision. The interview has its own "code of honor". Learn the rules, wear the right clothes and always be polite and respectful.

Rule 1

Arrive early. If you are running late, you are going to be frantic. If you are frantic, you will not be at your best; in addition, the interviewer will be annoyed. No one likes to be kept waiting. The interviewer will assume that if you are not on time for this first meeting, you will not be on time for work either. Being on time, or early, is usually interpreted by the interviewer(s) as evidence of your commitment, dependability, and professionalism.

Plan to arrive 10 to 15 minutes early. Take a trial run before the interview to see how long the trip takes, check your directions and determine whether there are detours or construction that might cause delays.

Rule 2

Project a professional image while you are waiting for the interview. Do not smoke, chew gum or listen to your radio. It's best to try to find some college literature to read. Breathe deeply to calm yourself down. Take off your outer coat if necessary and organize your belongings. When the interviewer arrives, you will be poised and prepared.

Rule 3

Be ready for the handshake. You are probably going to have to shake the interviewer's hand so dry your palms if they are sweaty. You do not want to offend the interviewer. Bring a tissue with you or go the bathroom and run your hands under cool water. Be sure to smile when you shake hands.

Having a firm handshake is very important. It may sound ridiculous, but interviewers can form a poor opinion of a candidate based on a weak or clammy handshake. If you are not experienced at shaking hands, find someone to practice with.

Rule 4

Come prepared. Carry your interview folder with you. If you need to refer to your resume you will have it handy as will the other material you have prepared. This will project preparedness.

Also, know how much time you will have for the interview and the number of questions that have been developed. This will let you know how much time to allow for each question.

Rule 5

Do not sit until you are invited to do so. Introduce yourself before you are seated or after the committee has been introduced, whichever feels most comfortable to you.

Show self-confidence. Make eye contact with the interviewer(s) and answer questions in a clear voice.

Remember to listen. Communication is a two-way street. If you are talking too much, you will probably miss cues concerning what the interviewer is asking for. When the interviewer(s) starts to explain something or wants to show you something, lean towards him/her. This shows you are paying attention.

Rule 6

Do not wear your outer coat into the interview and do not hold your purse or briefcase on your lap. You do not want to look like you are ready to fly out the door.

Rule 7

Do not yell or whisper. Try to match the volume of your voice to that of the interviewer.

Rule 8

Avoid negative body language. An interviewer wants to see how well you react under pressure. Avoid these signs of nervousness and tension:

- Frequently touching your mouth
- Faking a cough to think about the answer to a question
- Gnawing on your lip
- Tight or forced smiles
- Swinging your foot or leg
- Folding or crossing your arms
- Slouching
- Avoiding eye contact
- Picking at invisible bits of lint

Don't look puzzled. If the interviewer is talking rapidly, jot down your concerns on a pad of paper and ask at the appropriate time.

Rule 9

Make eye contact. Look directly at the interviewer when answering or asking a question. Reflect before answering a difficult question. If you

are unsure how to answer a question, you might reply with another question.

Rule 10

Be positive. Don't make negative comments about current or former employers.

Rule 11

If the interviewer introduces himself or herself with a first and last name, use the last name when addressing them. If the interviewer is a woman **do not ask if it is "Mrs. or Miss"**. Many women find the question offensive; it could be "Doctor". Try to find out ahead of time. If you are sure she is not a doctor, use "Ms".

Rule 12

Do not talk too much, do not talk too little. Your responses to the interviewer's questions should be concise, but not monosyllabic.

Show you want the job. Display your initiative by talking about what functions you could perform that would benefit the campus, and by giving specific details of how you have helped past employers

Rule 13

When it is your turn, ask the questions you have prepared in advance. These should cover any information about the department, campus or job position you could not find in your own research.

Do not ask questions that raise red flags. Ask too many questions about vacation may cause the interviewer to think you are more interested in taking time off than helping the department. Make sure the interviewer understands why you are asking these questions.

End the interview with a handshake and thank the interviewer(s) for his or her time, and let the committee know you want the job. An example would be: "I would like to thank you for taking the time for this interview. The position is exactly the job I want and I hope you will strongly consider me for it."

Rule 14

Be natural. It may be difficult when you are trying to follow all of these guidelines, but being natural is probably the most important rule. Think of the interview as a conversation, not an interrogation.

Rule 15

Send a "Thanks for the Interview" note. After the interview, send a brief thank-you note to the committee chair.