

The background of the slide features a photograph of a grand, classical-style building with a portico supported by white columns. The building is partially obscured by trees with green and yellowing leaves, suggesting an autumn setting. The right side of the image is faded into a white background where the text is located.

Interviewing for Success

SUNY Cortland Career Services



Career Services can help you reach your own success

- Conversations about majors and careers
- Document reviews (resume, cover letters, and personal statements) stop by Drop-In Hours!
- Teacher certification information
- Mock interviews
- Internship program
- Student Employment Services
- Volunteer opportunities
- Opportunities to connect with employers (local, state and nationwide) and graduate schools
- Job search



This presentation will discuss...

- An overview of different types of interviews
- Before, during and after interviews
- How to develop your story and articulate your skills and experiences
- Types of interview questions
- Practicing for optimal performance!
- Increasing your knowledge and confidence and decreasing your stress and uncertainty



Types of interviews

- Phone interviews
- Skype (or other videoconference)
- Individual interviews
- Group interviews / panel interviews
- Behavioral interview
- Case-study/working interview
- Second/ on-site interviews
- AI/ Hirevue interviews
- Meal interviews

Before the interview

- Preparation – do not wing it.
- Know yourself and know the organization.
- Read the job description carefully.
- Develop your story and talking points.
- Plan what to wear (know the organizational culture).
- Location, location, location (confirm location and know how to get there on time or set up Skype location and test it).
- Keep all communication with all organizational contacts professional/respectful/friendly.
- Practice! Mock interviews with Career Services are a great idea.

How to develop your story

As an exercise... get out a piece of paper. Assess yourself!

- Step outside yourself and think about how others would describe your personality . . . List 5 main descriptors.
- What would some of your supervisors or peers say about your strengths/ special skills and competencies.
- Now jump back into yourself and think about some key experiences you have had both positive and negative... things you have learned from related to your career goals.
- Match these qualities to things in the job description to think of examples and small stories you can share.
- Anticipate possible questions and practice in the mirror or with a friend.



Research and preparation

- Research the organization (website, print materials, staff profiles).
- Carefully study the job ad and make a list of the job requirements.
- Understand where the position fits in the organization.
- Develop a list of references that will be needed for reference checks.
- Anticipate possible questions and create “talking points” for each job requirement.

More preparation!

- Be ready for a version of “tell me about yourself” and “why do you want this position?”
- Be ready with at least five stories that demonstrate with examples of your most relevant skills/ competencies.
- Prepare some questions to ask at the end of the interview. (You can come in with them written down).
- Research and set your salary range (typically not discussed during an interview, but rather during an offer).

During the interview

- Arrival (not too early, 5-10 minutes early is ideal)
- Have something to write on (pad folio) and copies of resume or other portfolio materials
- Greet each person professionally. Practice your handshake 😊
- Keep it positive. Be diplomatic. Never badmouth a previous employer!
- Display relaxed and confident body language
- Maintain good eye contact and show active listening
- Be alert, calm and enthusiastic



During the interview

- Participate, don't dominate.
- Communicate thoughtfully, honestly, and be confident (but not cocky).
- It's okay to use "the pause" and it is okay to ask for a question to be repeated to be sure you understand it.
- Demonstrate appropriate sense of humor.
- Know how to close. Reiterate interest in the position and offer to provide any needed follow up.
- Make a good first, middle and last impression.

Types of interview questions

- **Traditional questions** – straightforward about experience, background or personal qualities
- **Behavioral questions** – based on the premise that past behavior is the best predictor of future performance. “Tell me about a time when you demonstrated...”
 - Interpersonal skills
 - Leadership
 - Communication skills
 - Planning and organization
 - Initiative
 - Flexibility
 - Decision-making
 - Creativity
- **Technical or Case Questions** – discipline specific. Good to have a strategy for showing how you would solve/ approach problem.

Sample interview questions

- Tell me what you know about our organization.
- Why is customer service so important in business today?
- Tell me about a time when you had a disagreement with your boss.
- Tell me about a time when you were swamped with work and how you handled it.
- Describe a difficult decision you had to make.
- What is an accomplishment you are proud of?
- Tell me about your strengths and weakness.
- What qualifies you for this position?
- Where do you see yourself in....?



Questions you might ask...

- What are the top 3 skills required to be successful in this role?
- What does the 30/60/90 day time frame look like for this role?
- Why do you like working for this organization?
- What challenges might you see for this role?
- What is your timeline for the hiring process?
- How does this role work with others in the organization?

After the interview

- Send a thank you note
 - Email is acceptable
 - Written notes stand out
 - Professional and positive
- Stay in pursuit – follow up but don't haunt
- Be patient
- Keep job searching... multiple offers lend to more choice and may lead to negotiation

Practice

- Prompt #1:
 - Develop a list of questions, and ask a friend or family member to role play with you. Start by having the “interviewer” ask a traditional question like, “please tell me about your experience and why you are interested in this job.”





More Practice

- Role play with an “interviewer” asking you a behavioral question such as...

“Tell me about a time when you showed initiative at work.

What did you do?

How did it work out?”

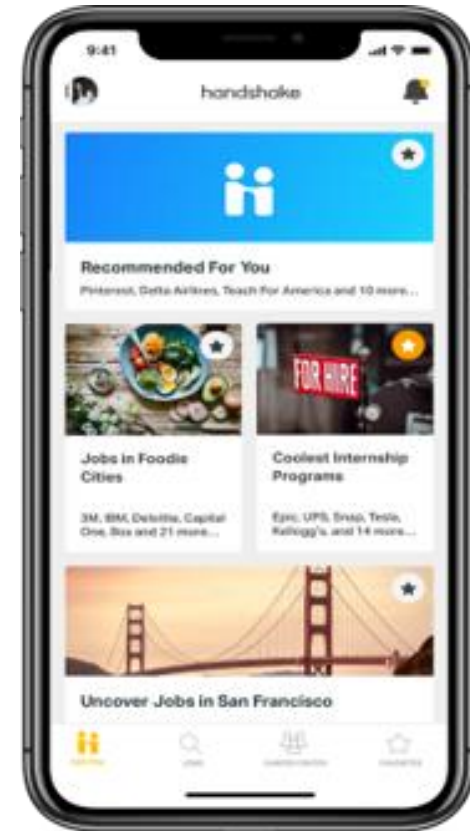
Articulate Your Soft Skills



- National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) *Career readiness is “attainment and demonstration of requisite competencies that broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition into the workplace.”*
- Know the difference between soft skills and hard skills
- Why do these skills matter?

Handshake

- Your job search tool!
- Jobs, internships, volunteer opportunities.
- All students and alumni have access: It's FREE!
- You can set up appointments with Career Services staff.
- cortland.joinhandshake.com



Next Steps

- Come to Career Services! Resume drop-in hours:
 - Mondays and Thursdays: 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.
 - Tuesdays: 4:30 - 7:00 p.m.
- Schedule mock interview and other appointments:
 - Handshake! cortland.joinhandshake.com
 - Call 607-753- 4715
 - Stop-in Van Hoesen Hall, Room B-5.



Preparation today... a career tomorrow!



Acknowledgement to sources: National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), University of Michigan School of Information Career Development Office