

THE DAY BEFORE

- ✓ Review your organization research and your resume. Create a short list of why your skills and experience match the position. Prepare 3-5 questions for the employer. If you have a portfolio of your work, mark relevant pages to refer to during the interview. Identify why you are the best candidate for the position.
- ✓ Lay out your clothes. Bring 10 copies of your resume, paper, and a pen. Use a professional portfolio or bag to carry your materials.
- ✓ If you are not sure where the interview is taking place, map the location using Google maps. If you are still unclear about where to go, drive to the location to familiarize yourself with the area.
- ✓ Get plenty of sleep.

APPROPRIATE INTERVIEW ATTIRE

Women

- ✓ Think professional and reserved.
- ✓ Dress in a dark or neutral colored suit (matching jacket & skirt/pants), conservative shoes (closed toe, no higher than 3.5 in. heel).
- ✓ Keep make-up as natural as possible. Nails should be clean and filed (no chipped nail polish).
- ✓ Minimize jewelry: avoid bangles and large earrings, take out facial piercings.

Men

- ✓ Wear a freshly pressed jacket and tie.
- ✓ Polish your shoes.
- ✓ Make sure you have a clean shave.
- ✓ Your hair should be neat, clean, and trimmed—including your sideburns.
- ✓ Keep your hands groomed—clean and trimmed nails.

INTERVIEW DAY

- ✓ Eat a light meal to boost your energy prior to your interview.
- ✓ Review your resume and notes.
- ✓ Practice answering potential questions.
- ✓ Schedule your time to arrive at the location 15 minutes prior to your scheduled interview. When planning your route, allocate time for traffic.
- ✓ Avoid heavy perfume/cologne or smoking prior to the interview.
- ✓ Do not wear outerwear into the interview. Overcoats should be taken off before you go into the interview.

10 Minutes Before

- ✓ Arrive with time to stop by the restroom for any last-minute touch-ups.
- ✓ Be courteous to all support staff including the security guard(s).
- ✓ While waiting for the interview to begin, people watch and pick up clues to office culture.
- ✓ Turn off your cell phone prior to the interview.
- ✓ Still nervous? Take 6 slow, deep breaths to help you relax.

During the Interview

- ✓ A firm and brief handshake with eye contact and a smile is important to start the meeting.
- ✓ Wait to be seated and sit in the chair in a straight position.
- ✓ Try not to convey nervousness (cracking knuckles, swing legs, playing with items on desk).
- ✓ Maintain eye contact with interviewer(s).
- ✓ Don't interrupt the interviewer. Carefully listen to questions and don't respond until the entire question has been asked.
- ✓ Speak with confidence and enthusiasm.
- ✓ If you don't know an answer to a question, don't pretend that you do.
- ✓ Take your time answering questions; be thoughtful in your answers.
- ✓ Remember to ask what the next step is and when you can expect to hear from them.
- ✓ Be yourself!
- ✓ At the end of the interview, ask for business cards.

After the Interview

- ✓ Take time to write down impressions of the interview. List the names of the people you met.
- ✓ Within 24 hours of completing your interview, write a thank you note or email to the people you met.
- ✓ Evaluate the interview. What questions were most difficult? Make notes for yourself about how you can improve your interviewing skills before the next interview.
- ✓ If you have additional questions about the employer, contact the USC Career Center for a Trojan Network Contact within the organization.
- ✓ If you have not heard from the interviewer by the date they gave you, contact them.

THINGS TO AVOID

- ✓ Don't take notes during an interview as it prevents you from focusing on your interviewer.
- ✓ Don't place your portfolio on your interviewer's desk space. It's best to keep it on your lap at all times.
- ✓ Don't chew gum or breath mints during the interview.
- ✓ Don't criticize others, including past employers or associates.
- ✓ Don't give one or two-word answers. Develop answers that use your personal and professional history to show you are the best candidate.