



# Interview Guide

Creighton  
UNIVERSITY

John P. Fahey Career Center



*Helpful tip*

Look for this symbol throughout the guide to point you to additional resources and helpful quick tips.

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## Visit the Career Center

Career advisors are here to help, both virtually and in person. Make an appointment via Handshake, Creighton University’s online Career Management system, anytime. Appointments are also free for life to all Creighton alumni!

**To access Handshake, scan the QR code.**

### Thank you to our employer sponsors



# Introduction to Interviewing

Congratulations, you've got an interview! You may be interviewed for an internship, a job, a leadership position, or for graduate or professional school. Now what? First, remember that an interview is used for a few specific purposes:

- by the organization to assess skills, knowledge and ability fit for a role
- by the candidate to assess if skills and /or role is an appropriate fit
- by both the organization and candidate to assess if both are a culture fit

**So, how do you prepare? Start with this guide!** We'll give you an overview of common interview practices and how to prepare. Keep in mind that organizations run their hiring and interviewing processes in different ways and at different paces, so don't be afraid to ask questions to make sure you understand. And you can always ask the Career Center. We're here for you!

## Step 1:

### What type of interview do you have?

#### In-person

In-person interviews can occur at an organization's location or in the Career Center/on campus. These can be an hour to a full day, depending on the organization.

When interviewing in person, make sure to double-check the location of the interview, and do a practice run of the travel ahead of time.

#### Virtual

##### Phone

These are often "screening" or first-round interviews. The purpose may be to tell you a bit more about the position or assess for skills.

##### Real-time video

Often held on Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams, these happen in real time with someone on the other end.

##### Pre-recorded

Often by using an online platform like HireVue or JobVite, candidates record their own answers to questions, allowing recruiters to view on their own schedule.

## Step 2:

### Do you know ... ?

- Time:** When is the interview?  
Be sure to check the time zone.
- Place:** Double-check your location/  
test your tech ahead of time.
- People:** Who will you be meeting with?  
Know your audience!
- Items:** Bring copies of your resume, cover letter,  
a padfolio and any other required materials.



#### Want to practice with a virtual platform?

The Career Center offers 24/7 practice through Big Interview, which allows you to practice with pre-recorded and virtual settings. Have an in-person interview? The program offers many helpful tips for prepping!

Scan the QR code to jump to the Career Center interviewing page.

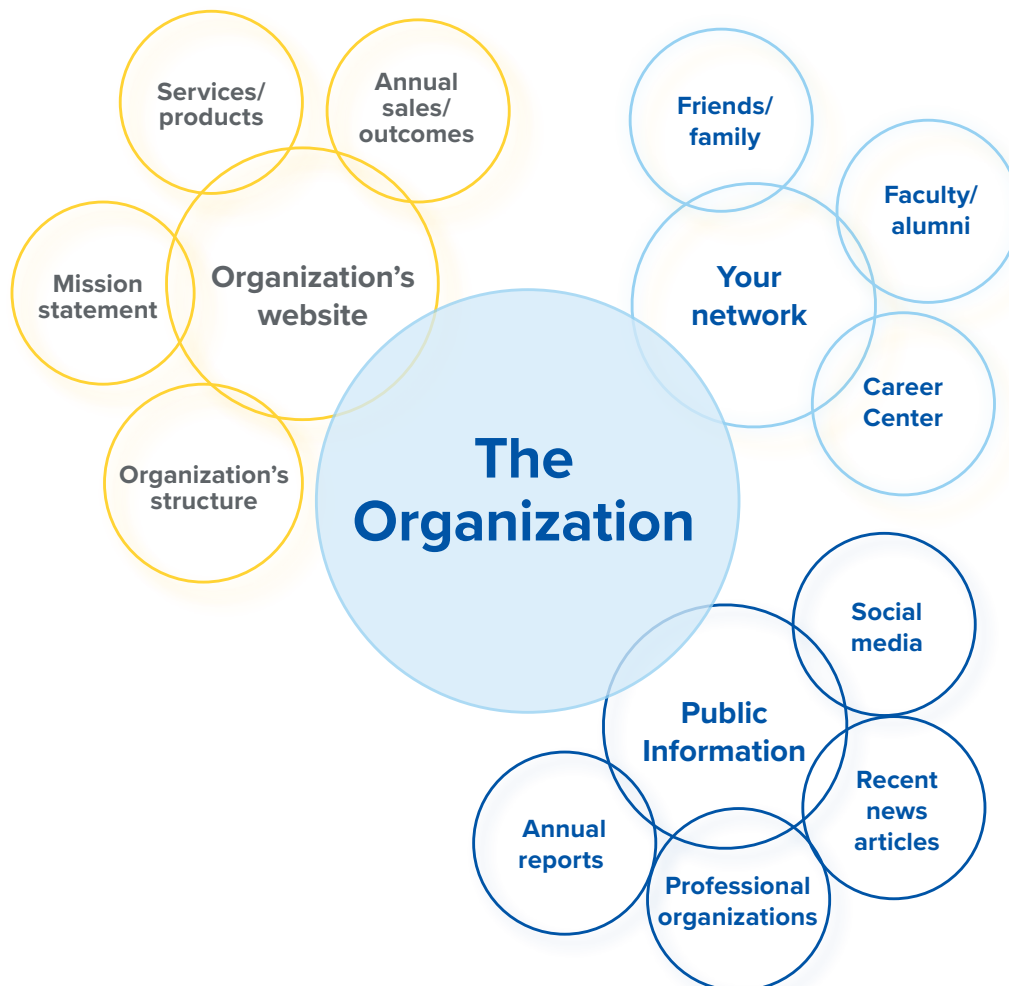


# Researching the Organization



So, you've got an interview. That's great! How do you start to prepare? Doing a little research can go a long way—and a great place to begin is with the organization/school/company you will be interviewing with, and ask yourself how you will fit and contribute to their mission, culture and goals. How do you know what those are?

*You can source information from many places—from the organization's website to your friends and family.*



## Helpful tip

Looking into graduate or professional school? Check page 11 of this guide for details on how to prep.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

**Job description** – This is like a playbook for the interview and can tell you what they are looking for in a candidate. Some descriptions are more detailed than others, but be sure to know what is listed if provided one.

**Industry information** – Talk with faculty, mentors, supervisors, alumni and friends who are familiar with/have experience in the industry to give you an extra edge. Insider information shows your preparation and interest in the field.

### Helpful websites:



# Researching Yourself

Remember, an essential part of the interview is for the organization to get a sense of who you are as a person and if you will fit the culture of the organization. What makes you unique and valuable for this organization?

## Exercises to help you prepare:



**Job description** – Next to each of the requirements, write down a time that you have done something similar. This will help you focus on if you can do what they are asking.



**Five stories** – Write down 5 to 10 stories from your work, education, extracurricular or volunteer experiences. Include details like who you worked with, what you worked on, any challenges and the outcome.



**Self-assessments** – Taking an assessment such as CliftonStrengths, FOCUS or CareerLiftoff can help you put into words what you already know and help you better describe your skills and abilities.



**Practice Interview(s)** – These interviews allow for a real-time setting to practice many of your interview skills.



**Salary research** – Ranges are based on your experience, education and the geographic region. Respond with “open” or “negotiable” if possible. A \$5,000 range is typically recommended.

Students and alumni may set up a practice interview or appointment to review self-assessments through Handshake, Creighton University's Online Career Management system.

## What employers want:

The Job Outlook 2021 Spring Update Survey from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE, 2021)\* found that the top 10 qualities employers seek when reviewing resumes of recent college graduates are:

- 1 Ability to work in a team
- 2 Problem-solving skills
- 3 Analytical/quantitative skills
- 4 Verbal communication skills
- 5 Written communication skills
- 6 Initiative
- 7 Leadership
- 8 Technical skills
- 9 Flexibility/adaptability
- 10 Strong work ethic

\* [naceweb.org/talent-acquisition/candidate-selection/key-attributes-employers-want-to-see-on-students-resumes](https://naceweb.org/talent-acquisition/candidate-selection/key-attributes-employers-want-to-see-on-students-resumes)



### Helpful tip

The interview is your chance to further express these top qualities, skills and talents. Practice sharing examples of these skills.

# Question Preparation



Be prepared for what employers are interested in knowing. Practice a few at a time so that you become comfortable with what they might ask.

*Below are the most common types of questions:*

## 1. “Tell me about yourself.”

While this question can seem complicated, it is a simple summary of who you are as a professional. A strong approach is to share your past or present and your future, as they connect to the position.

- **Background:** education, brief previous experiences, potentially some personal information
- **What makes you unique:** advanced coursework, an exciting internship or skill, something memorable
- **Where you are going:** career goals or aspirations, how this position fits into that goal

### Sample answer:

*“Hi, my name is Billy Bluejay and I am a freshman biology major from Omaha, Nebraska. I am a graduate of Omaha South High School where I participated in track and field and speech. At Creighton, I am involved in the Freshman Leadership Program and the Pre-Medicine health community on campus. I had the opportunity to travel to Costa Rica on a service trip in high school and I provided free health care services to residents there. It was through that experience that I found my interest in health care and I hope to explore different health care career options through volunteering and shadowing over the next few years. I think this opportunity as a greeter at Children’s Hospital will help me to practice my interpersonal skills and familiarize myself with hospital operations as I pursue my biology degree and prepare for medical school.”*



### Helpful tip

Want to hear a stellar example?  
Scan the code to watch a  
Big Interview answer example.



## 2. Skills and Qualifications

These straightforward questions are asked to find out whether you have the right background and experience the employer is looking for.

### Sample questions:

- What qualifications do you have that make you think you will be successful in this position?
- Tell me about your experience in managing projects.
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What is your experience working with Microsoft Excel?

## 3. Case/Problem-solving

These types of questions provide you with a case or scenario in which you must think on your feet to analyze the information given and provide a solution. These types of questions are often found in technical roles, which can span many science and business disciplines.

### Sample questions:

- If you were to fill this room with inflated balloons, how many would fit?
- You are asked to analyze a sales report for the last quarter. Describe your process and questions you would ask.

## 4. Personality

These questions aim to get a sense of you as a person. Employers want to know beyond your experience or technical skills whether you would be a good fit for the office environment and culture.

### Sample questions:

- How would you describe yourself?
- What do you look for in a supervisor?
- In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
- Do you prefer to work alone or with others?

## 5. Behavior-based

The employer is looking for a real-life experience you have had and how you handled the situation. Provide concrete examples from your work, school or extracurricular involvement. These are often the majority of questions you are asked in an interview. This method helps you to give concrete examples rather than vague generalizations.

### Use the S.T.A.R.T. method to structure your answers:

- **Situation** – Outline the situation. Provide the context of the experience.
- **Task** – Identify the task or assignment.
- **Action** – Describe what you did to accomplish the task.
- **Result** – Explain the result of the situation based on the actions you took.
- **Takeaway** – Finish with your takeaway and how it relates to the position/program.

### Sample Q&A:

**Q:** Tell me about a time when you were on a team and one of the members wasn't carrying their weight?

**A:** *I was assigned to lead a team to perform 30 hours of community service for a class. One team member wasn't showing up for meetings, despite knowing how important attendance was for us to meet our goal. I reached out to the student and asked to meet in private and explained the frustration of the other team members. I then asked him if there was anything I could do to help. He said he was preoccupied with a really tough class, so I connected him with a friend who was a tutor and would be willing to help. This friend was able to help with tutoring and the team member started showing up for meetings. I was happy to have helped my team member while also problem solving for the group. I ended up with 40 hours of service at the end of the class and so did my team members.*

**Additional examples found in Appendix B**

## Did you know?

As the interviewee, it is also YOUR responsibility to prepare questions. You should ask 3–5 questions at the end of your interview. Not having any questions is never a good sign. Tip: When considering questions, ask yourself, “Is this information I can find myself?”

### Questions for the interviewer:

Questions need to be informed and intentional, but not complicated.

- What does an average day look like for someone in this position?
- What would the training for this position entail?
- How would you describe the management style of this department?
- What are some of the challenges this department/organization faces?
- Would I have opportunities to work on special projects?
- What are the department's goals? How do they relate to the overall organization's goals?
- How would you describe the culture of the office?



### Helpful tips

Keep answers strong but brief (between 30 seconds and 2 minutes) and always answer the question asked, even if you need to circle back to it at the end of your answer.

## 6. Strengths & Weaknesses/Failure

This is a way to share your self-awareness to the employer, while also explaining why you have a skill they desire. Have 2–3 prepared in case they ask for more than one.

### Strengths:

Share something that you are proficient at doing. Include evidence that demonstrates your strength. You can use a short version of START to respond.

### Weakness/failure:

There is no “good” weakness that you can use. Think of something that you could get better at, that doesn’t come easily, or that you could improve upon.

- Take a moment and reflect on what you have improved in the last few years.
- Consider asking a former supervisor or someone that knows you well.
- What have you overcome since high school or your first year of college?

### TRY:

- 20% is a real, authentic characteristic/skill you’re not great at or a failure.
- 80% is what you learned and how you overcame it.
- Asking yourself what might you do differently if you could go back in time?

### AVOID:

- Sharing a skill from the job description that is important to succeeding in the role.
- Using cliches such as “I work too hard/I’m a perfectionist” or “I care too much.”
- Not ensuring your strength and weakness are distinct and different from one another.
- You don’t need to share your greatest weakness, even when asked.



### Helpful tip

Keep your tone and words positive and take a few moments to gather your thoughts before speaking.

# Illegal Questions



Three laws prohibit employers from asking specific questions about race, religion, age, marital status, number of children, etc.: Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964), Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (1991), and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (1997). The laws do not prohibit employers from asking anything about these topics, but rather prevent them from asking specific questions. They are allowed to ask questions that relate to the requirements of the job.

TOPIC	ILLEGAL QUESTION	LEGAL QUESTION
<b>National origin or citizenship</b>	Are you a U.S. citizen?	Are you authorized to work in the U.S.?
<b>Marital or family status</b>	Do you have children?	Travel is an integral part of the job. Would you be able and willing to travel as needed by the job?
<b>Age</b>	How old are you?	Are you over the age of 18?

### Options for answering illegal questions:

1. Politely refuse to answer the question or ask, “How is this pertinent to the job?”
2. Answer the question, but keep in mind that you are giving information that is not job-related.
3. Consider the intent behind the question and try to respond with an answer as it might relate to the job. For instance, if an interviewer asks about your marital status, they may be wondering if you will be available to work overtime. An appropriate response would address whether you are available for overtime. No explanation is needed for your circumstance.

### THE BOTTOM LINE:

Remember to answer the question in a way that expresses your concern. If an employer is asking several illegal questions, consider if you want to work for this organization.



# Interview Attire

How to present your physical appearance for an interview can be overwhelming and intimidating, especially if you feel you do not have the correct clothing or experience in these settings. Attire, grooming and hygiene are all important parts of your presentation.

What is most important to remember is to represent your true self—your culture, your personality, your comfort—but in a polished way. This shows respect to the organization and the people you are meeting, and shows your care for yourself.

The Career Center is here to help you navigate this preparation, including access to discounted clothing, etc.

## PERSONAL CARE



Ensure personal cleanliness (mitigate body odor, dirty fingernails, chipped nail polish or uncombed hair)



Make sure clothes are clean, wrinkle-free and fit correctly. No iron? No problem! A cheap steamer or hot shower room can help!



Practice walking and sitting in your interview outfit, including shoes, to check fit and necessary range of movement.

## BUSINESS FORMAL



- Suit (typically a dark color) – tailored jacket, tailored pants or knee-length skirt
- Shirt/blouse (white, solid color or subtly patterned)
- Tie – conservative, coordinates with suit and shirt
- Shoes – dark, polished shoes with matching socks, no more than 1- or 2-inch heels

## BUSINESS CASUAL



- Jacket, blouse, cardigan or conservative top with pants, or knee-length skirt
- Simple knee-length dress
- Dark pants or khakis
- Collared button-up shirt or a collared knit polo shirt

### KEEP IN MIND:

- **Jewelry** – minimal and conservative
- **Make-up** – subtle, natural
- **Hair** – clean style, conservative
- **Facial hair** – trimmed, shaped and well maintained
- **Avoid colognes, perfumes and body sprays**
- **Tattoos** – policies varying among organizations, so do your research ahead of time

**Still not exactly sure what to do? Remember that your career advisors are here to help. Come in and see us!**



### *Helpful tip*

Ask retailers about student discounts. Many will provide discounts or tailoring services to students and new grads.

# Body Language

Beyond your appearance, your actions (facial expressions, arm position, body position, etc.) give an employer or new acquaintance a first impression of you. Sometimes the impression we are giving off is not intentional, but it can harm how this person sees your interest and excitement about meeting them or discussing an opportunity.

Review these helpful reminders on body language and expressions:



**Body position** – Be mindful of the position of your body. Crossed arms, slouching and shifting your weight can show you are uncomfortable or uninterested.



**Eye contact** – Keep a consistent level of connection. This shows interest and attentiveness.



**Virtual Interaction** – The best practice is to balance your eye contact with the camera and the face of the person on your screen. This way, you appear attentive and “keep eye contact” while also being able to appropriately react to those on screen. If possible, position the video screen just below your camera for easy transitions.



**Fidgeting** – Try to minimize foot tapping, playing with hair, picking at nails or hands, and other non-verbal ticks. Not sure if you fidget under pressure? Come into our office and see a career advisor for a practice interview.



**Handshake** – Make a firm grasp and keep eye contact as you shake. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, some may not offer a handshake. A hand on your chest or simple wave gesture can also convey a warm greeting.



**Hand gestures** – Imagine you have a box on your lap—that’s your gesture zone! Keep hand movements below the chin, above the waist and no wider than the shoulders.



**Personal space** – In most instances, an arm’s length or personal bubble is acceptable, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic.



**Smile!** – Rather than chance a resting face that may be unfavorable, a smile shows authenticity and engagement.



Scan the code to visit the [Creighton Handshake page](#), where you can make an appointment with a career advisor and access additional resources.

# Graduate/Professional School Interviewing



Looking into graduate or professional school? The interviewing preparation can look slightly different, but the same general rules apply. Each institution is different in the way that it organizes interviews for graduate and professional school, and it is appropriate to ask the admissions office or the school contact about what to expect before your arrival. Below are a list of possible interview structures and factors to consider before your interview:

## Day or ½ Day Interviews:

Some interviews are a combination of informational sessions and 1-1, group or panel interviews. The entire day is used to evaluate you as a candidate, and for you to evaluate them as a program and organization. Maintain your energy throughout the day, stay professional and engaged throughout each part of the day.

## Group Interviews:

While it can be nerve-racking to interview with a group of other candidates, listening well to interviewers and other candidates is the key to success. This interview structure is designed to evaluate both your answers and how you interact with a team of colleagues.

## Multiple Mini Interviews (MMI):

MMIs allow you to demonstrate how quickly you think on your feet and try to simulate the type of interaction many physicians have with their patients. You are typically provided with a scenario for 2 minutes and have 7–9 minutes to present your response. Questions or prompts include role-playing scenarios, ethical dilemmas and typical interview questions.

## Open or closed file?

Some schools provide their interviewers all your application materials (open) while others are provided no background information (closed). You will want to provide a proper amount of context for answers depending on which interview you have.

## Before the interview:

- **Why this school?** Come prepared to answer what stands out to you, and why you like this school above all others. It helps the school see how you envision yourself as part of their mission.
- **Deficiencies?** Know what weaknesses are on your application and how to address them. This can take some practice; there is a fine line between explanation and making excuses for actions. You also do not want to linger too long on your weaknesses; the focus should be placed on how you overcame a deficiency.
- **Review your application.** Read through your personal statement and any supplemental documents before arrival and be able to reference them directly. Many interviewers use your application to shape their questions.

## After the interview:

- **Thank you notes:** Write them! For useful tips on thank you notes, please see page 12.
- **Exit interviews:** If you did not get a spot in the coming year's class, many schools offer a period where you can schedule an exit interview to ask questions about improving your application for the following admissions cycle.





# Thank You Notes and Follow-up

You did it! Job well done on pursuing that opportunity. What comes next? It is always best practice to send a note of thanks and stay diligent on your follow up. This can solidify your interest and excitement about the position and show an employer your professionalism.

## THE REAL QUESTION: How soon is too soon to follow up?

Always follow THEIR timeline. Most interactions will conclude with the interviewer outlining the next steps in their process—perhaps another interview or an offer. Keep in mind that it may take some time to review these next steps—like background checks and finishing other interviews. It’s a fine balance between being annoying and staying attentive.

**A general rule of thumb is TWO WEEKS. If you haven’t heard back two weeks after a deadline or offer date, it is safe to reach out.** Here’s an example following a two-week timeline:



## THE BOTTOM LINE:

Timelines are tricky, and it’s hard to know how much is too much or too little communication. Your career advisors are here to help you navigate this uncertainty and can help you write messages that are professional and attentive.

## Thank You Notes

Thank you notes should be short, to the point and personalized. It’s a great chance to show your genuine appreciation and remind them of why you are a great candidate!

### Email or snail mail?

While hand-written notes do show extra time and care, sometimes timelines are too short for the notes to be effective. And, following the COVID-19 pandemic, many employers are not in their physical spaces and may not receive the note. In that case (and anytime a decision will be made in less than 5 business days) an email thank you is acceptable.

But, if you do write an email thank you, personalization is *especially* important, as emails can be forwarded to others. Make sure to slightly change the content within each email when sending to more than one person.

### Sample thank you:

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. \_\_\_\_\_:

*Thank you for taking the time to meet with me this week regarding the Research Assistant position. The experiences you shared were helpful in understanding the culture of the office. I was particularly impressed by your state-of-the-art facilities and how they allow you to serve clients better. This type of environment would match my technical skills and customer service background.*

*Thank you again for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you.*

*Sincerely,  
(your name)*

# Job Offers



You've been offered a new opportunity—and while celebration may be in order, there are still a few steps to remember as you move forward. Each offer requires consideration and patience, even if you know you want to accept. Follow the timeline and tips below to ensure you cover all your bases.

## 1. Take your time

ALWAYS take time to consider the position, even if you want to immediately accept. Taking even 24 hours can allow you to think through any questions you may have, to research the salary offer made, or to reflect on other opportunities. Often several days to a week is customary consideration time.

## 2. Ask for time if needed

When asking for more time, be clear in communicating when you will be giving your decision. Especially when juggling multiple interview processes, you may need 1–2 weeks. It is up to you whether to disclose other processes or offers you may have.

## 3. Consider the offer

Beyond your own reflection, you may want to discuss this offer with family, friends, advisors and/or professors. Be sure to weigh the many considerations and reach out to a Career Center advisor for assistance.

## 4. Do your research

Many resources are available to find starting salaries and career trajectories within most industries. Knowing your “worth” can be helpful when negotiating, both the base salary and other bonuses and benefits. If an employer asks for a desired salary, we encourage providing a range, usually spanning about \$5,000.

### When (and how) do I negotiate?

First, you may need to ask the employer if the salary is negotiable—many programs and companies do not negotiate for entry-level programs. Do your research ahead of time and consider other aspects (benefits, bonuses, education credits, etc.) Wait until an offer has been made to bring up negotiating.

## 5. Communicate your decision (to all applications).

**Accepting:** A written confirmation should be sent to you following the verbal agreement. We recommend following up with an additional thank you and expression of your excitement to join their organization. (And let the Career Center know so we can celebrate you!)

**Declining:** Not all opportunities are the right fit. When declining, be respectful and thank them for the time spent with you and be prepared to explain why you are declining if they ask. Be careful not to burn any bridges, as employers and recruiters share information. Be polite, honest and open. Once you have accepted an offer, you **MUST** contact any other organization you may have applied with to let them know you have accepted another offer. While it may seem advantageous to see what other offers may be made, this is unethical and very unprofessional.

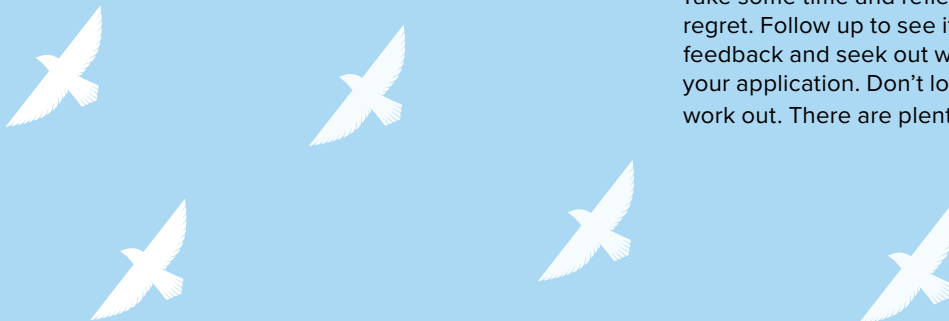
*Once you have accepted an offer, you **MUST** contact any other organization you may have applied with to let them know you have accepted another offer. While it may seem advantageous to see what other offers may be made, this is unethical and very unprofessional.*

### Avoid renegeing on an acceptance!

The reason you must withdraw other applications once one has been accepted is to avoid renegeing or backing out after you have accepted an offer. This is the fastest way to hurt your reputation (and Creighton's!) and possibly burn bridges with companies for future opportunities.

### But what if I don't get the offer?

Rejection is never fun, but it is part of the learning process. Take some time and reflect before doing anything you may regret. Follow up to see if you can receive constructive feedback and seek out ways to improve on these aspects of your application. Don't lose hope—sometimes it just doesn't work out. There are plenty of opportunities ahead!



### Helpful tip

Feeling overwhelmed here? You're not alone! Reach out to your Career Center advisors. We are here to help you with every step of this process.

# Career Conversation

Professionals in your field of interest can provide realistic information about career options, employment trends and job responsibilities. A career conversation can provide insight regarding a career field, an organization or industry.



## How to request a career conversation:

Lead with a commonality you have, whether it be Creighton, interest in a certain field or have a contact in common. Then provide them a brief description of who you are, what you want and how you can be contacted.



### Helpful tip

Mention your interests, involvements and what you are doing to work w your goals.

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr.:

My name is Billy Bluejay, and I am a Creighton student majoring in psychology. I came across your profile in the Creighton University alumni group on LinkedIn. I'm very interested in learning more about **your career and industry/company** as I am currently exploring which career path to pursue. **I am very interested in sports administration and am on several campus committees devoted to promoting events. My ultimate goal is to be in sports marketing and sponsorship sales**, but I am also interested in other areas. I would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you to discuss sports administration and any advice you may have for me. If you are willing to meet, please feel free to **contact me at 402.280.0000 or at BillyBluejay@creighton.edu**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,  
Billy Bluejay



### Helpful tip

Insert your specific career and industry to make it more personal.

### Helpful tip

Provide them multiple ways to connect with you.

## What do you discuss in career conversations?

Details about a particular job, company, field or industry are great topics for career conversations, as are the educational and professional history of the person with whom you are meeting. Feedback and advice for you are also important topics to cover; however, remember this interview is an opportunity for you to learn about them, not vice versa.

### Sample questions:

- Tell me about your background. How did you get started in the field?
- What kind of preparation is typically necessary to get into this field? Is it required, or just the typical approach?
- What was your biggest surprise or challenge when you entered this field or career?
- What is your typical day or week like?
- What do you like most about your job? What do you like least?
- What is a typical career path for someone in this field? What ensures continued advancement?
- Where do you see yourself in 5–10 years?
- Could you explain the typical hiring process?
- What skills are needed in this field?
- What advice can you offer me as a student/ someone in my position?
- Are there other colleagues you know of who would be willing to be contacted by me?

# Elevator Pitch



An elevator pitch is a brief introduction—a message that you could share with someone in a short amount of time without any prior context or introduction. Your pitch should introduce yourself, highlight your primary skills, experience and educational background, and convey your professional goal. The total pitch should be **no more than 30 seconds** in length.

## SAMPLE PITCHES:

“Hello, I am Billy Bluejay! I am a junior marketing major at Creighton University. Currently, I serve as a marketing intern at ABC Company, where I coordinate social media and print marketing projects. I also have experience mentoring youth through Big Brothers Big Sisters. With my interests in marketing and helping youth, I hope to make a positive impact by utilizing my skills to advance worthwhile causes for youth. I am interested in your nonprofit organization because of the work it does to provide critical educational opportunities to children.”

“My name is Cocoa the dog, and I’m a psychology sophomore at Creighton University. I am currently doing research regarding the effects of binge-watching TV shows, and the effect it can have on sleep patterns. I also have experience serving marginalized populations with my weekly service at the Siena Francis House. My hope is to become a licensed therapist, where I can support the refugee population. I am interested in your organization because of the opportunities you have with working with children and social interaction.”

“Hi, I’m Brenda Bluejay and I’m a sophomore at Creighton, working toward a degree in health care. As a nursing major, I am driven by the desire to help others. I am a Certified Nursing Assistant, Certified Medical Assistant and have taken numerous health care classes. My professional experience includes employment as a CNA at a nursing home, lifeguard at a local pool, as well as years of volunteer work at Midlands Hospital. My favorite group of people to work with is the elderly, as they have so many great stories to tell and just like to have someone to listen to them.”



### *Helpful tips*

Remember that the words you say are just part of the first impression! Brush up on your non-verbal communication and body language on page 10 of this guide.

Ever wonder why they are called elevator pitches? The idea is that the length of the pitch (around 30 seconds) is about as long as an elevator ride. If you only have a few floors to introduce yourself, having something quick and impactful ready to share can make a great impression!



Want to hear a stellar example?  
Scan the code to watch a Big Interview answer example.

# Job Search Resources

There are many steps to a job search, and it can be time-consuming, but with the proper preparation and approach, your search can be more directed, efficient and useful. It is important to use a variety of approaches during your job search, and remember, it usually takes 3-6 months to find employment.

See below for some helpful resources. Also, visit the Career Center website, [creighton.edu/careercenter](http://creighton.edu/careercenter), use the Networking Guide, and make an appointment with a career advisor for support.



## Meet With a Career Advisor

Remember that meeting with a career advisor is a great place to start. We can assist in preparing and reviewing resumes and cover letters, as well as make a plan for your search, including how to network effectively and find open positions.



## Build and Use Your Network

- Talk to friends, family and acquaintances about job opportunities; you can also talk to people they know in companies or occupations that interest you.
- Conduct career conversations with individuals who work in the profession you are interested in or who work for a company where you would like to work.
- Join and update your LinkedIn account. Join the Creighton University and Creighton Career Center groups to connect with alumni, along with professional associations to connect with professionals in your industry.



## Use Professional Affiliations

- Search for industry-specific professional organizations to use their job posting boards and directories to identify possible employers.
- Consider joining a professional association as a student at a discounted student membership rate to network at conferences or communicate with other members.



## Online Career Resources

- Handshake – Visit the John P. Fahey Career Center job posting site: [creighton.edu/careercenter/handshake](http://creighton.edu/careercenter/handshake)
- Chamber of Commerce – If you are looking in a specific geographic area, view the local Chamber website; they often provide a directory of employers in the city.
- Human Resources for companies – If you have some employers in mind, bookmark their Human Resources page to view current openings and complete applications.
- City, state and federal websites – Search for the individual city and state websites, or [usajobs.gov](http://usajobs.gov) for federal postings nationwide.
- Other job websites and search engines:
  - [careerlink.com](http://careerlink.com) (Omaha jobs)
  - [indeed.com](http://indeed.com)
  - [linkedin.com/jobs](http://linkedin.com/jobs)
  - [simplyhired.com](http://simplyhired.com)
  - [careerbuilder.com](http://careerbuilder.com)



## Helpful tip

What if plans A, B, C and more don't work out? First, don't panic! Working for a temporary agency is a great way to gain exposure to different companies and receive an income while job searching. Part-time jobs or post-graduate internships may also be common in certain industries. And, these kinds of temporary positions often turn into full-time positions or build connections that lead to a full-time role.



# Appendix A

## SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why should we hire you over the other qualified applicants?
3. Why are you interested in this position?
4. Why are you a good fit for this position?
5. Tell me about a time that you worked under pressure and with deadlines.
6. What are your strengths/weaknesses?
7. How would you define success?
8. Why do you want to work for our company?
9. Why do you want to attend this school/program?
10. What stands out to you about our organization?
11. Describe your most ideal work environment.
12. Tell me about a time that you thrived at work.
13. Where do you plan to be in 3–5 years? What do you expect to be doing?
14. What do you find most attractive about this position?
15. What seems least attractive?
16. What are your most significant accomplishments?
17. What is your greatest failure?
18. Tell me about a time you set a goal for yourself and worked to achieve it.
19. What do you look for in a supervisor?
20. What other opportunities are you pursuing?
21. Tell me about your leadership style.
22. What are the essential qualities that you admire in a team member? A supervisor?
23. What qualities will you bring to the team?
24. What are the most pressing issues in our industry?
25. Why are you leaving your current position/ did you leave your past position?
26. How would your friends/instructors/colleagues/ supervisors describe you?
27. Who do you most admire in our industry?
28. What do you do in your free time?
29. Explain your experience with the software needed for the job.
30. Tell me about a book that you recently read/ tell me about a movie you recently viewed.
31. Tell me about any patient contact that you have had.
32. Tell me about a time when you worked with a disgruntled team member.
33. How do you best receive encouragement? Criticism?
34. How would you describe your personality?
35. How do you handle stress?
36. Tell me about a situation or a decision that you would handle differently.
37. Tell me about a time you showed initiative.
38. What classes did you enjoy the most? Why?
39. What classes did you enjoy the least? Why?
40. What was your most meaningful extracurricular experience?
41. Tell me about a time you had to make a split-second decision.
42. Tell me about a time you worked with a difficult customer/patient.
43. Give me an example of a time you've done something to improve yourself.
44. What experience do you have giving presentations?
45. Tell me about a time you persuaded someone to your way of thinking.

# Appendix B

## SAMPLE BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS

1. Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
2. Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation that demonstrated your coping skills.
3. Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
4. Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.
5. Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.
6. Give me a specific example of a time when you had to conform to a policy you did not agree with.
7. Please discuss an important written document you were required to complete.
8. Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty to get a job done.
9. Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do, and you were required to prioritize your tasks.
10. Give me an example of a time when you had to make a split-second decision.
11. What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.
12. Tell me about a time you were able to successfully deal with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).
13. Tell me about a difficult decision you've made in the last year.
14. Give me an example of a time when you tried to accomplish something and failed.
15. Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.
16. Tell me about a recent situation in which you had to deal with a very upset customer or co-worker.
17. Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.
18. Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.
19. Give me an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to solve a problem.
20. Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem.
21. Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventive measures.
22. Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.
23. Describe a time when you set your sights too high (or too low).
24. Describe a time when you disagreed with your supervisor on how to accomplish something.
25. Have you ever had a deadline you were not able to meet? What happened? What did you do?
26. Talk about a time when you had to adapt to significant changes at work.
27. How have you dealt with an angry or upset customer?
28. Have you ever gone above and beyond to help a customer? What did you do?
29. Tell me about a time when you had to fight for an idea at work.
30. Talk about a time where you had to make an important decision quickly. What did you decide? What were the results?
31. Have you ever been in a business situation that was ethically questionable? What did you do?
32. Tell me about a major setback you've had. How did you deal with it?
33. What have you done when colleagues have been stressed out by a project?
34. Have you ever had to defend a customer's/co-worker's point of view? What did you do? Why?
35. Describe a time when you were asked to perform a task or spearhead an initiative that went against your values. What did you do? What was the outcome?

# Appendix C

## SAMPLE S.T.A.R.T. METHOD ANSWERS

### 1. Tell me about how you worked effectively under pressure.

**Situation (S):** I had been working on a critical project that was scheduled for delivery to the client in 60 days.

**Task (T):** My supervisor came to me and said that we needed to speed up the project and have it ready in 45 days, while also keeping our other projects on time.

**Action (A):** I made the unfortunate situation into a challenge for my staff. I first analyzed the tasks that needed to be done and determined which could be outsourced to other departments and which tasks had to be done by my team. Then I had each of my staff add a few hours of work to their schedules and delegated a few extra projects/tasks to each of them.

**Result (R):** My team and I not only completed the project, but we also got it done in 42 days instead of 45 days.

**Takeaway (T):** The client was so pleased with the result that he decided to make us their long-term supplier.

**Transferable Skills:** Teamwork, allocation/delegation of tasks and critical thinking, problem solving.

### 2. Tell me about how you worked effectively under pressure.

**Situation (S):** I worked in customer service and had to deal with an irate customer over the phone. Our product had failed on them, and they wanted their money back. The company policy was stringent on “no refunds,” and this customer was a rare unsatisfied one, as our products were often quite dependable.

**Task (T):** Customer service is about making the customer happy, and being an effective communicator is a big part of that. I began explaining our policy to the customer.

**Action (A):** I stayed calm, remained polite, and offered a store credit, coupons and other solutions. The customer was adamant that they needed a refund for their purchase. I continued to calmly offer solutions outside of a refund.

**Result (R):** The customer did not have any of it and let me know we would not receive their business again before hanging up. I was able to note down their concern and product and passed it on to my supervisor in the instance the customer called again.

**Takeaway (T):** From this experience, I learned that working within the policies of a company can indeed be difficult. However, I could have taken more time to listen to the customer’s concerns and level with them, rather than throw solutions out there.

**Transferable Skills:** Analytical skills, written/verbal communication, research skills, time management, flexibility/adaptability, technology skills, negotiation.



# Creighton UNIVERSITY

John P. Fahey Career Center

The John P. Fahey Career Center, as part of the Creighton EDGE, is committed to assisting students and alumni in exploring purpose and opportunities, developing career-related skills, and implementing goals that reflect their unique roles in the world of work and their commitment to a life of service to others.

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*(when classes are in session)*