

# Interviewing

FULTON SCHOOLS  
OF ENGINEERING | **career**  
center

**ASU** Ira A. Fulton Schools of  
**Engineering**  
Arizona State University

This presentation is for technical majors seeking technical degrees.  
Other fields? Hiring practices differ, so the content and format may differ from the  
advice in this presentation.

## Your Goal, at any interview

- **Confident**
- **Competent**
- **Enthusiastic**
- **Someone that I/we can like and trust**

# Types: Phone and Video Interviews

- **DO know EXACTLY what time zone the call is in**
- **DO prepare for mechanical problems:**
  - Quiet area without interruptions
- **DO practice the details for a video call:**
  - Wear interview clothes
  - Check background behind you
  - Camera – look at it, not your screen or keyboard



Time Zone: this is a big issue for Arizona, due to the Day Light Saving time change 2/year in Arizona. Pay close attention to how your call is scheduled.  
Best advice: be prepared for the call to happen an hour EARLIER or LATER than scheduled.

Goal: want this to appear as if you are there in the room with the interviewer(s).  
Be ready for questions. Know your interviewer, look it up, use your network... and be ready for mechanical problems.

Mechanical problems: happen, but you do not want to be flustered by them. Being ready prevents this. What can you do to be ready in case of a problem?

May want to stand up for this – your voice projects differently when you are standing compared to when you are seated. Dress up and act like you are there.

Video: This is more complex interview setting, and more to go wrong. But this also allows you to make a strong positive impression to the hiring organization. It is very important that you set your camera correctly: most of the time, when you look at the screen, the camera “sees” you as looking down. You want to set up your hardware so that you are looking at the camera, and thus the person on the other end of the call. This may take some practice, or changes in your computer hardware. Check all of this with a friend before the call.

So, let’s presume that all has gone well, and the organization invites you to interview on site.... Let’s take a look at some do’s and don’ts...

# Interview Strategies

- **DO prepare: General, Behavioral, Technical**
- **DO use ~1 minute to answer the question**
- **DO answer the question directly, OR with something close**
- **DON'T end with "Does that answer your question?"**



Goal: Impress this person that you have the qualifications for this position, have performed in similar positions, and will contribute to the team quickly with minimum support. Goal is to advance to next step of hiring process.

Behavioral interviewing: practice answers. The goal: these are designed to allow you to show how you have performed in similar situations.

Technical questions: using white board: know the question. Ask for boundary conditions. Talk through it: describe the logic that you are using, how you are making decisions and selecting techniques, and how you might test the outcome, against any conditions you have or have identified.

All questions: relate what you do know. You want to show that you don't stop and stall out. Example: encountered an unsafe situation – you did not proceed, but you did find someone who could perform the task.

And ideally, your answers to any questions relate back to your resume. Tie your answer to some experience that is on your resume – so that the example reinforces how your experience and expertise ties to the position that you are interviewing for.

Be confident! Something about you has attracted them.

# General Interview Preparation

- **“General” interview questions are designed to:**
  - Let the applicant talk about a familiar subject
  - Assess communications skills

These questions also test your “interviewmanship” – did you care enough to prepare?

Are you authentic in your answers? Too many students look up these answers on the web. They see ‘experts’ telling them to pick weaknesses that are actually strengths. Then everyone says they’re a perfectionist. Interviewers know you’re making this stuff up and you lose credibility.

You can make a strong or poor impression right at this point of any interview for any position. Be prepared to make a strong impression here – let’s look at the typical questions.

# General Interview Questions

**Tell me about yourself.**

- 1. Why did you choose your major?**
- 2. Why do you want to work here?**
- 3. What are your strengths and/or weaknesses?**
- 4. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?**

Be crisp, professional, and prepared. This is a place to demonstrate confidence. Keep answers related to the position and the qualifications. Here are examples:

The interviewer does not want to know the history of your family, you, and blah blah. Keep this focused and target information about how you have gotten to the point of being a professional ready to contribute. Avoid distracting information.

1. This is an opportunity to show your engagement in your profession outside the classroom, and your persistence in attaining your degree. This may be an opportunity to show how you overcame wrong turns on your way to your degree, and what you learned.
2. Your answer here displays your knowledge of the organization and perhaps the industry.
3. Strengths and weaknesses can be technical (Pspice, Solidworks, Aerodynamics) and non-technical job related (attention to detail, devil's advocate, informal leader). When discussing an actual weakness of yours, give the interviewer examples of how you overcame the weakness or what you do to mitigate its effects. A good strategy is to identify a specific area of the job and how you will address your gap. For example, it's obvious that you have never worked in the semiconductor industry. Your plan to come up to speed is ---. You can describe how you did something similar when you

went to work in \_\_\_, or just acclimated yourself successfully to some other new circumstance.

4. In technical fields, it's hard to see 5 years into the future. After all, it's only around 10 years ago that the iPhone was introduced (!). Align your answer with any information about the company and the industry. Do not stray off path here – as in, “I plan to go back to school to complete a PhD”.

# Behavioral Interviewing

“Describe a time when...”

Why are these questions used? Because research shows that past behavior is the best predictor for success. For example, people who have overcome barriers and persevered in the past will do so in the future, even in another setting. These questions are actually great opportunities for students, because they allow you to describe your behaviors in settings other than professional work roles.



# Interview Preparation Grid

Think about situations which match typical behavioral interviewing questions

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Story #1</b>	<b>Story #2</b>
<b>Teamwork</b>	Undergraduate research project	FSE 100 class project
<b>Communication</b>		
<b>Problem Solving</b>		
<b>Conflict Management</b>	Study time in residence hall	
<b>Initiative</b>		
<b>Leadership</b>		

8

Think about situations which match typical behavioral interviewing questions.  
Create a matrix of typical questions and the situations you will use.  
Practice! You may want to record (audio or video) yourself.

# Behavioral Questions: STAR Technique

- Use this outline:
  - Situation or Task
  - Action
  - Result
    - Positive outcome OR
    - What you learned from past mistakes
  - *RELEVANT* to the role

When using the STAR technique, it is important to remember the following:

1. Situation: Provide some background for context, but don't go overboard. Remember what you were asked and don't get off track.
2. Action: What was done? What did YOU do/contribute? Be clear about what you did, what you helped others to do, etc. Remember, the question is "... when **you** ...".
3. Result: What was the outcome? Don't leave the interviewer hanging. They need to know the 'end' of the story.
4. Relevant: best answers are relevant to the role, and/or relate to something on your resume. If you are not able to answer the question with a work experience or experience that is listed, be sure to "add more words" to orient the interviewer. For example, start the description of the situation with information to show that this is not part of an experience from your resume: "I have experience with overcoming a difficult co-worker. I don't have it listed on my resume, but when I was volunteering at ---, I worked with a --".

# Technical Interview

- **Job description indicates a need for experience with ---**
  - **Be able to explain your experience with ---**
  - **Be able to explain what --- is best suited for**

10

Students should be able to do this for any technical requirement of the job.

If you are asked about a skill you don't have or software you've never used, be honest. If you've used something similar (SPSS vs SAS for example), discuss what you have done, demonstrate both competency and an ability/willingness to learn quickly.

Only do this if the other skill and/or software is both related and relevant.

# Questions for Them

**Demonstrate your professionalism, business acumen, and competence**

**AND**

**“Can you tell me the next steps and time frame for your hiring decision?”**

**NOT**

**“What is the pay...vacation...retirement plan...?”**

11

1. **Can you describe a typical day for the \_\_\_ in your organization?**
2. **Could you give me some examples of projects that I'd be working on?**
3. **What would you say are the three most important skills needed to excel in this position?**
4. **I've read about ---. Do you expect your organization to be affected by this?**
5. **Can you tell me the next steps and time frame for your hiring decision?**

Write out questions in advance so

1. You don't forget them when you're nervous
2. It shows that you prepared for the interview.

Don't ask about salary, benefits, vacation.....but be prepared to discuss if the interviewer brings it up.

If the interviewer does not cover it, ask about next steps and timeframes for the interview process.

## Next Steps: For You

- **Brief “Thank You” email**
  - **Subject: Your Name/Posting # (or title of the position)**
  - **Thank the interviewer**
  - **Restate your interest in the role and your skills**

12

If you do not have contact information for your interviewer, send this message to whomever you were in contact with, and ask that person to forward the message to your interviewer.

## Summary

- **Competent, Confident, Enthusiastic... how'd you do?**

13

### **Successful outcome:**

**Depends on many elements**

**Be ready for things not to go your way –  
stay on track!**

**Initial outcome is not the end of your  
relationship with the organization**

# Additional Information

- **Handshake** <https://asu.joinhandshake.com/login>
  - Learn about career fairs, company information sessions and other career events
  - Apply to internships and jobs
  - Schedule an appointment with the career center
- **Fulton Schools Career Center website** <https://career.engineering.asu.edu/>
  - 24/7 access to presentations and tools
- **SkillsFirst** <https://skillsfirst.com/organizations/asu-engineering>
  - Submit your résumé for review without an appointment

14

Here are some notes

# Backup

FULTON SCHOOLS  
OF ENGINEERING | **career**  
center

**ASU** Ira A. Fulton Schools of  
**Engineering**  
Arizona State University



# Common Behavioral Interviewing Questions

1. Describe a time when you needed to persuade a person or group to do something they didn't want to do.
2. Tell me about a time when you faced a lot of obstacles to achieving a goal.
3. Talk about a stressful situation you've experienced. How did you handle it?
4. Tell me about a time when you failed.

16

Often negative examples show your business acumen and your resilience. It also shows you have reflected on these difficult times and gained an understanding of yourself and hopefully planned how to improve yourself.

# Interviewing Skills

**STAR Technique Practice: Tell me about a time you demonstrated leadership at work.**

**S/T**

- During my last semester of school, I completed an internship at XYZ Corp.
- I was the first intern the department had ever had, and they decided they wanted to continue with an official internship program.
- In order to successfully launch this program, my supervisor asked me to create and administer a training curriculum for the new, incoming interns.

# Interviewing Skills

**STAR Technique Practice: Tell me about a time you demonstrated leadership at work.**

**S/T** During my last semester of school, I completed an internship at XYZ Corp. I was the first intern the department had ever had, and they decided they wanted to continue with an official internship program. In order to successfully launch this program, my supervisor asked me to create and administer a training curriculum for the new, incoming interns.

**A**

- To complete this task, I outlined all the procedures the new interns would need to learn, such as.....
- Next, I created a three day training agenda covering these topics.
- Finally, I piloted it with four new interns.

# Interviewing Skills

**STAR Technique Practice: Tell me about a time you demonstrated leadership at work.**

**S/T** During my last semester of school, I completed an internship at XYZ Corp. I was the first intern the department had ever had, and they decided they wanted to continue with an official internship program. In order to successfully launch this program, my supervisor asked me to create and administer a training curriculum for the new, incoming interns.

**A** To complete this task, I outlined all the procedures the new interns would need to learn, such as..... Next, I created a three day training agenda covering these topics. Finally, I piloted it with four new interns.

**R**

- The training was a huge success.
- On a survey completed after the training, all four interns rated the program a 10 out of 10 in the areas of usefulness and creativity.
- In addition, each intern rated my communication and leadership styles as “Excellent.”

# Behavioral Interviewing Pitfalls

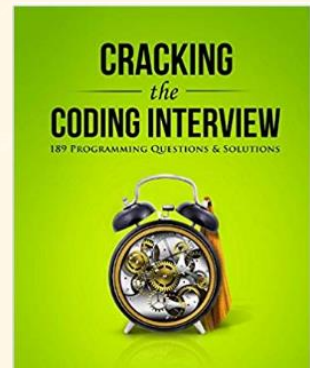
- **Redundant responses**
  - Don't use the same example (or two) for every question
- **Off target or abstract answers**
- **Incomplete answers (most common)**

20

Students need to have multiple examples to share. Most examples should be professional and from past positions. However, students with less work experience can use examples from academic projects, volunteer work, etc. as long as they are relevant and answer the question that was asked.

# Coding Interviews

- Available at Noble Library as reference



21

Add websites

And tell students to read the first part of the book, not just the problems ;)