On-Site and Second Interviews

In the interview process, the next step after a screening interview (or on-campus interview) is typically an invitation for an on-site interview. This second interview is a more in-depth look at your qualifications and your match with the position. To be successful, be sure to follow these recommendations.

Preparing for Your Trip

- Clarify travel arrangements prior to visit. Some employers will prepay tickets or provide you with a travel advance.
- Confirm your hotel, car rental, and flight reservations.
- Ask your contact for an agenda. This will help you to prepare for the day.
- Obtain a map of the area.
- Bring extra cash/credit cards.
- Travel light. If you are taking a plane, carry your luggage on board in an overnight case or suit bag.
- Have a contingency plan. If flights are canceled due to weather conditions or if your departure is delayed, what should you do? Ask for both business and cell phone numbers so that you can keep your host informed during and after business hours.
- Be certain you have done your homework. Read up on the company (see handout on researching employers for ideas). Know their products, services, major competitors, locations, the names of the CEO/president, and any recent press they have received.
- Keep records and receipts for all activities. If you arrive the night before your interview, you will most likely have dinner in the hotel. Keep receipts for taxis, tolls, parking, and meals.
- Bring extra copies of your resume, an unofficial transcript, work samples, your portfolio if you have one, three to five references, and a list of questions you wish to ask.
- Always carry an extra pen and a padfolio with you.
- Get a good night’s sleep and be ready early.

The Interview

- Interviews are typically 1/2 hour - 1 hour each. You will typically meet three to five individuals during the day. Most will be involved in the evaluation process. If alumni are employed by the company, you will likely also meet some of them.
- Make a positive impression on everyone you meet. That includes the receptionist who will likely be the first person to greet you.
- Above all, be enthusiastic and genuine.
- Ask questions. Know your priorities.
- Take notes. Jot down names, titles of people with whom you speak (if you have not already received an agenda), and important points. Try to get business cards if possible.
- Clarify the next step. Be sure you understand what action will follow the plant trip.
- Remember, a verbal job offer is not an offer. Get it in writing.

Follow-up After Your Trip

- Complete the expense report immediately. Reimbursement can take 4 - 6 weeks.
- Increase your visibility. Send a “thank you” letter/note to your host and everyone with whom you interviewed within 48 hours. If the employer is far from where you live or an immediate employment decision will be made, send your messages via email.
- In the message to your host, recall something that impressed you about your visit to the company. Ask a question requiring further correspondence.
• If you do not hear from the employer within the previously specified amount of time, call your host. Ask about the status of your candidacy.
• If you receive an offer in writing, respond immediately! Offer thanks and a date by which you will inform them of your decision. Restate and confirm the terms of agreement in your letter: starting salary, job title and duties, location, etc.
• If you are rejected: Do not grieve! Perhaps there was not an appropriate match. Think about it. Were you, in fact, really enthusiastic about the position? Did you convey this to everyone you met at the company? If you wish to assess your marketability, you may call your host and request feedback. This may be helpful.

**Things to Think About**

**Salary**
Go armed with good information. Know last year’s range for your discipline and degree level. Check the CCPD website for this information as well as other salary surveys online. Try not to state specific salary requirements. This will box you in a corner. It is best to wait for them to make you an offer first, and then evaluate the offer. If they do pressure you, provide a suitable range based on your research of competitive salaries. Providing a range rather than a specific salary amount will allow you room to negotiate.

**Location**
If you have the opportunity to look around the area while you are visiting the company, you may feel more comfortable making a job choice. Some companies include a “city tour” in your visit. If they do not, try to arrange one yourself.

**Dress**
Dress appropriately for the position. When in doubt, wear a conservative suit. Women should take along an extra pair of shoes with flat heels. Always ask your host about recommendations as to the attire that you should bring.

**Spouse/Fiancé**
Some employers will make provisions for a spouse to visit the company with you. If you are very serious about the opportunity and you feel it would be important for your spouse/fiancé to see the area, let your host know sometime prior to your actual visit. Often this request can be accommodated.