

PREPARING FOR SKIDMORE RECRUITMENT DAY

Before the Interview

- Research the employer. During the interview you may be asked what information you know.
- Prepare for the “tell me about yourself” question. This question is an opportunity to describe your qualifications and career aspirations, not your love for Netflix and ramen. Your answer should consist of a 2-3 minute overview of your professional and academic experiences and accomplishments. You should highlight the things that are most relevant to the job/internship. This could include: coursework, projects, internships, research, on-campus jobs, and service/leadership opportunities.
- Practice interview responses. It’s important to be prepared for the types of interview questions that an employer will ask. A majority of the questions you will be asked during your interview may be behavioral interview questions. Behavioral interview questions evaluate your past experiences to give the employer a sense of how you might perform in the future. These questions should be answered by crafting specific stories or examples using the STAR format (see below). Each answer should be 2-3 minutes long and highlight your role in the story. A list of commonly asked behavioral interview questions can be found on the last page of the tip sheet. Also, review the experiences, projects, and activities on your resume. Know what you’ve done in each opportunity and be able to explain it using the STAR format.

STAR stands for Situation, Tasks, Action & Results

So we can see that **STAR** is just (another) clever acronym for a bigger idea, but let’s take a second and break down exactly what each letter means.

Situation:

Think of a situation similar to what the interviewer is asking you about that had a successful outcome. It doesn’t necessarily have to be work related as long as it’s relevant. Remember to include the **who, what, where, when** and **how**.

Task:

Describe the task you were responsible for in that situation. **Keep it specific but concise.** Make sure to highlight **any specific challenges you faced**.

Action:

This is the part where you **describe exactly what you did**. How did you complete the task you were assigned? Remember to focus on what you did and highlight traits (qualities) that a hiring manager will find desirable (initiative, teamwork, leadership, dedication, etc.)

Result:

This is where you get to be introspective. Share what the **outcome of the situation was** and how you specifically **contributed to that outcome**. What did you accomplish? What did you learn? What were the results of your actions?

□ Prep yourself for the day-of events. You should arrive 10-15 minutes before the interview. Be sure to dress appropriately—typically this means business professional or business casual. Bring extra copies of your resume as well as your portfolio or any work samples that are relevant. You should also bring a list of questions you plan to ask the interviewer.

During the Interview

- Be confident and positive. Remember, everyone you meet that day is an “interviewer.” Be courteous and cheerful to everyone you interact with. Be sure to greet your interviewer with a firm handshake and a positive attitude. Try to relax, be yourself, and think of the interview as a conversation between you and the interviewer.
- Respond to questions with strong answers. A strong answer should include a specific example or story that you use to showcase your skills and qualifications. Be sure to share the result of your story or solution to the specific problem. The best way to organize your answer is using the STAR format (see previous page).
- Ask thoughtful questions. Prepare a list of 5-8, well-researched questions to ask the interviewer at the conclusion of each interview. Your questions should reflect the amount of research you have done on the employer. A list of sample questions can be found on the last page of the tip sheet.

After the Interview

- Evaluate your performance. Each interview should be a learning experience. Write down everything you think you handled right and wrong, so you can adjust your responses for the next interview. Also, make a note of any information you may need to include in your thank you notes.

□ Send thank you notes/emails. It's important to follow up after your interview. Send each interviewer a personalized thank you note—email format is common practice. In the note, emphasize your qualifications and skillset in relation to the position. Try to mention something you and the person talked about that made this a memorable or enjoyable experience in order to personalize the letter. Send separate thank you notes to each individual you interviewed with, and make sure they are different from one another.

Sample Behavioral Interview Questions

Behavioral interview questions will focus on a variety of topics and skills including teamwork, customer service, your ability to adapt, time management, communication skills, and your motivation and values. Using the STAR format, practice with some of the questions below.

- 1) Give me an example of a time you faced a conflict while working on a team. How did you handle that?
- 2) Tell me about a time when you made sure a customer was pleased with your service.
- 3) Tell me about a time you failed. How did you deal with this situation?
- 4) Describe a long-term project that you managed. How did you keep everything moving along in a timely manner?
- 5) Give me an example of a time when you had to explain something fairly complex to a audience. How did you handle the situation?
- 6) Describe a time when you saw some problem and took the initiative to correct it rather than waiting for someone else to do it.
- 7) Tell me about your proudest accomplishment.

Questions to Ask During an Interview. Prior to your interview, you should prepare thoughtful questions to ask after each interview. The sample questions below can be adapted and tailored to meet your individual situation.

- 1) What do you enjoy most about your job? Least?
- 2) What other departments/divisions do you interact with the most?
- 3) How will my performance be evaluated?
- 4) Which parts of the job are most challenging?
- 5) Is there an onboarding or orientation process? What does that involve?

Taken from Prep Materials for Career & Internship Connections.