



THE CENTER FOR ACADEMIC ADVISING & CAREER ENGAGEMENT

Behavioral Interview Preparation, Questions, and Techniques

Employers want to know how a candidate will behave in certain situations. Behavioral interview questions come in two forms: asking the candidate how they would act in a *hypothetical situation* or asking the candidate to give an example of *how they behaved* in a situation in the past. Be prepared to give a specific example from a past experience.

How to prepare:

- Reflect on your past experiences (work experience, internships, class projects, athletics, activities, volunteer experience, etc.), and identify several experiences where you demonstrated skills that employers look for in candidates.
- Think about examples from past experiences that start out both positively and negatively – but and end with a positive outcome or a learning/growing experience.
- Vary the examples you select. For example, they should not all come from one job you had in the past.
- Ensure your examples are recent. *Avoid using examples from high school if you're a junior or senior college student, for example.*

Use the **STAR approach**, a behavioral interview technique to answer questions. It is recommended that you follow the letters in order when describing an example.

Situation or Task (ST): Describe the situation that you were in and the task that you were tasked with completing. Give the employer enough details for him or her to understand the context.

Action (A): Next, describe the action you took to complete the task. Even if you are discussing a task that you worked on as a team, focus on yourself and the action that you took as part of the team to complete the task.

Result (R): Next, do not forget to explain the results of your action. What happened? What did you accomplish? What did you learn?

The following are some examples of situational/behavioral questions:

- Tell me about a time when you had a disagreement with a coworker.
- Please give me an example of a time you had to handle many projects at once.
- Tell me about a time when you disagreed with a peer or person in authority?
- Describe a time when you failed at something. What did you learn?
- Tell me about a time when you had to work under pressure.
- Give me an example of a time you had to work on as a team.
- Give me an example of a goal you set for yourself in the past and how you reached it.