



THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT  
**RUBENSTEIN**  
SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT  
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

# The Basics of Interviewing

Undergraduate Internships, Jobs, Research

Spring - Summer 2023



## OVERVIEW – What does the employer/site/research team want to know?

- Why are you interested in the position and company/team?
- Why should you get the position? What are your skills?
- What are you like? What are some of your strengths, weaknesses, values, motivations, cultural competencies, personality traits...?

# SELF-EVALUATION – how do your experiences, skills, and qualities meet the needs of the position and team?

- Identify relevant SKILLS for the specific position (top 5)
  - Also think about:
    - What would faculty/past supervisor/etc describe as your strengths?
    - What makes you stand out?
- Identify situations and scenarios where you have demonstrated those skills:
  - In an internship, volunteering, class, job, lab, student organization, etc.
  - Look back to examples highlighted in cover letter

# DO SOME RESEARCH – What does the company/site/team do?

- Go through materials – webpages, social media, current and past employees who you may be connected to, alumni
- Are there RSENR alumni who work there? (Look at [RSENR LinkedIn](#))
- Do organizational values/initiatives speak to you?
- What does culture seem like through web and socials?
- Look for indicators of commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion
  - Do materials reflect commitment to social justice?



# INTERVIEW PRACTICE & PREPARATION!

- **Practice some common questions:**
  - On your own, out loud
  - With roommate, friend, family member
  - Make appointment with RSENR Student Services staff, UVM Career Center
- **Use tools to help practice:**
  - [Uldaho Interview Brainstorm](#) worksheets
  - [Google Interview WarmUp](#)
- **Prepare questions for interviewers:**
  - What programs are currently in place to promote inclusion?
  - What are the day-to-day responsibilities of this job?
  - What are the attributes of your most successful employees in this position?
  - Could you describe your company's management style and the type of employee who fits well with it?
  - What kind of internal and external training do you provide new employees?
  - How would you describe your company culture?
  - How does your company support diversity in the workplace?
  - What do you most enjoy about your work with this organization / company / agency?
- **Prepare arrival logistics** (parking, building location, online logistics)
- **Print materials (resumes, thesis, etc)**

# Common Interview Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
  - Why should I hire you?
  - What specific skills can you bring to this job?
  - What can you tell us about our company?
  - What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
  - Why did you choose your major?
  - How has your college experience prepared you for a career in this industry?
  - What are your experiences in working with people different from you?
  - Have you completed any internships? What did you gain from the experience?
  - What do you think it takes to be successful in a company like ours?
  - What are your short-range and long-range career goals?
- **Common Behavioral Interview Questions:**
  - What was your biggest challenge as a student, and how did you handle it?
  - Give me an example of a team or group project where you had to work with people from different backgrounds.
  - Describe the most significant written document, report, or presentation that you've completed.
  - Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to achieve it.
  - Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks.
  - What is your commitment to diversity? Tell me about a time when you demonstrated this commitment.
  - Give an example of a time when you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision.
  - Tell me about a situation in the past year in which you dealt with a very upset customer or coworker.
  - Describe a situation where others you were working with on a project disagreed with your ideas. What did you do?
  - Tell me about a mistake and what you learned from it.
  - Sometimes it's easy to get in "over your head." Describe a situation where you had to request help or assistance on a project or assignment.
  - Give an example of when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. Why was this person difficult? How did you handle that person?

# EXAMPLES of FIELD-SPECIFIC Qs:

- **Field Experience**

- – What is your experience in the field?
- – Have you ever lived in a remote field station?
- – What certifications do you have?
- – Tell me about a time you worked in inclement weather conditions.

- **Technical Experience**

- – What is your experience with (region's) birds/trees/prairie grasses/soil types?
- – Have you ever completed \_\_\_\_ surveys?
- – Tell me about a research project that you've led or worked on.
- – What is your proficiency with ArcGIS?

- **Office/Leadership Experience**

- – Tell me about a time that you disagreed with a supervisor and what you did.
- – What is your management/leadership style?
- – Why do you want this job?
- – Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

# DURING THE INTERVIEW:

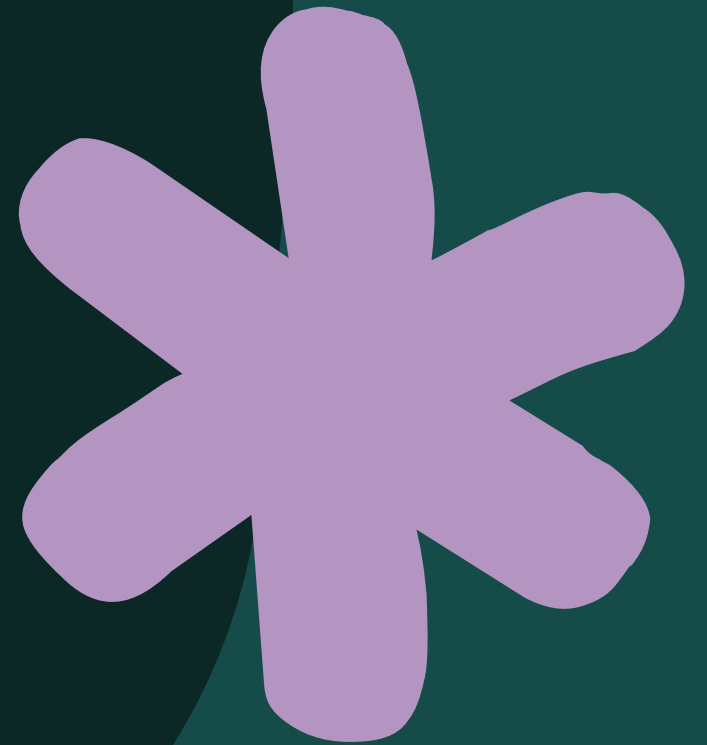


- Arrive 5-10 minutes early
  - Grounding and confidence building activities
    - Breathwork, power poses, mantras
- Turn off/silence and put away phone
- Introduce yourself
- Don't rush into questions – take a breath to reflect before responding (“let me think about that for a moment...”)
- Do not bad mouth past employers
- Ask thoughtful questions
- Express confidence and excitement
- Ask about next steps
- BE YOURSELF!!



# AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Send thank you note or email (within 24 hours)
  - Keep it short
  - Thank folks for their time
  - Re-express interest in position and company
- Follow up if you don't hear from them in timeframe communicated



# REFERENCES – great info!

- <https://www.unh.edu/career/students/resources/interview-skills>
- <https://careers.uw.edu/blog/2021/11/30/environmental-job-interviews-101-wildlife-and-environmental-science-job-interview-tips-shared-article-from-wildbiologist-com/>
- <https://www.uidaho.edu/current-students/career-services/students-and-alumni/interviews/interview-kickstart> (**GREAT VIDEOS!**)
- <https://www.uidaho.edu/-/media/Uidaho-Responsive/Files/current-students/career-services/interview-brainstorm-worksheet.pdf?la=en&hash=157912FDDFA2018F60AEDB8D8DC28E80796DE9A3>
- <https://www.uvm.edu/career/your-guide-interviewing>