

INTERVIEW PREPARATION & TIPS

www.citadel.edu/career_services/Interviewing.htm

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The Citadel
THE MILITARY COLLEGE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
CAREER CENTER



Review the following information and tips regarding your preparation for an interview, as well as how to handle yourself at the interview.

Before The Interview:

1. **Know your schedule** in order to determine a time that fits your needs, as well as those of the company inviting you to interview. The Citadel Career Center cannot excuse students from their classes or other obligations to interview on or off campus. Cadets should obtain permission for off-campus interviews per the usual channels with their TAC Officer. Students should also notify instructors in advance if scheduled classes will be missed.
2. **Keep a file** for each position you apply. Keep a copy of all correspondence you send and receive. This will help to keep record of each position and the process, as well as to aide you in creating future documentation. (I.e. Most employment applications ask for the same information, however, each employer needs its own form. Use your copies to easily help complete each new document).
3. **Carefully complete** a company application or form when asked to do so. (You may be asked to bring a completed application to your interview or send it ahead, or it may be after the interview before an application is requested). Remember that such forms are considered as samples of your work and demonstrate your ability to follow directions.
4. **Line up your References** before you begin interviews. Make sure you have their permission. Supply them with a copy of your resume and the position descriptions of the jobs for which you are applying. Refer to www.citadel.edu/career_services/Resumes/ReferencePageInfo.pdf for Reference information and a sample page.
5. **Be Aware of Third Party Recruiters.** As you conduct your job search you will find that some employers hire third-party organizations to assist them in identifying and hiring college students. Many college career centers allow third-party recruiters to work with students through their offices. Some have special policies that apply to how, when, and where third-party recruiters can work with students. **The Citadel Career Center** recommends that you be aware of issues that are pertinent to working with these organizations. Review www.citadel.edu/career_services/Students/NACE/StudentGuide_3rdParty.pdf for details.
6. **Thoroughly research the company/organization prior to your interview.** This includes:
 - **Review Organization Website.** Learn about the company, its products, its employees, its clients; all that you can learn through a thorough review of the website.
 - **Materials at the Career Center.** Some companies, particularly those who hold On-Campus Interviews or attend the Career Fairs, will leave brochures and other materials. You are invited to review the company files.
 - **Mergent Online.** Through The Citadel Library, use to obtain detailed financial and other company data.
 - **Visit www.jobvault.com/index.html,** a good source of career-related materials (no subscription necessary).
 - **Visit www.hoovers.com,** a well-organized summary of firm information.
 - **Create a list of questions** as you research the company. If you do not find the answers through your research, be sure to ask at an appropriate time during the interview.
7. **Review** the following list of **Practice Interview Questions** (link beside this document on the web page). Prepare your answers by writing them down and then verbally saying them. Practice with a friend. If you are comfortable answering these questions, you will be prepared for answering other questions interviewers may have. Avoid discussing salary during the initial interview, unless the interviewer initiates the topic.
Those going into Education may wish to review the following list of **Teacher Candidate Practice Questions** (www.citadel.edu/career_services/Interviewing/PracticeQuestions_Teach.pdf).
8. **Prepare Questions for the Employer** (www.citadel.edu/career_services/Interviewing/PracticeInterviewQuestions.pdf) to be asked when appropriate at the interview. Have several to ask in the event that the recruiter answers them during the interview. Questions may also be derived in follow-up to the discussion held during the interview. Candidates are usually given an opportunity to ask questions at the end. Some interviewers will indicate that your questions may be entertained during the interview, but still be prepared to ask some at the end. This is your last chance to make a lasting impression.
9. **Review** the **Work Values** (www.citadel.edu/career_services/WorkValuesWorksheet.pdf) worksheet to have a better understanding of yourself and what you seek in a job. Keep in mind that you may need to make some compromises in order to have what is most important to you.

10. For a copy of the excellent interview preparation handbook, '**Knock 'em Dead**', visit: <https://www.knockemdead.com/>. (A copy is available for review at the Career Center).
11. **Review the *On-Campus Interviewing Guide for Students*** (available late August) for information on how to use **The Gate** to participate in On-Campus Interviews, as well as how to best prepare for them. The following areas are covered:
- When On-Campus Interviews Are Held.
 - Expectations of Participating Students.
 - What to Do After the On-Campus Interview.
 - How to Schedule an On-Campus Interview.
 - How to Prepare for an On-Campus Interview.
 - Re: An Official & an Unofficial Transcript/ How to Obtain Either.
- Please Note:** To uphold the reputation of The Citadel, "no shows" to any scheduled On-Campus Interview cannot be tolerated. Notify staff immediately of any emergencies that will prevent your participation as scheduled. On campus interviewing may be denied to anyone who fails to appear on time. Cancellations are highly discouraged, especially if not arranged more than a day prior to the scheduled interview date or if not deemed an emergency. This also damages personal and Citadel reputation.
12. **Dress appropriately for the interview.** Appropriate dress for on-campus interviews: cadet blazer for upperclass Cadets, duty for underclass Cadets, and business attire for CGC students. Cadets may wear blazer or dark suit for off-campus interviews. (Remember to wear proper uniform leaving campus and when you return). Additional information on appropriate dress may be found at www.symsdress.com/.
13. **Bring at least 2 copies of your resume on resume quality paper** to each scheduled interview. (Bring more if you know you will be meeting with several representatives). Avoid using dark paper colors like blues, grays & mauves, as they do not photocopy or fax well. Use a laser printer for best results.
14. **Sell yourself to the recruiter(s) and the organization.** Your resume helped you get in the door, now you need to convince the recruiter(s) that you are the best candidate for the job. Effectively communicate who you are, what your goals are, what you can do for the company, and why you should be the one hired amongst all of the other candidates.
- Prepare by** taking the following steps.
- a. Make a list of your strengths, weaknesses, interests, special talents, and short / long-term career goals. Then, organize your thoughts into paragraph format, being clear and concise. Place emphasis on your strengths and do not dwell on what you do not possess.
 - b. Consider what exactly you want to do and why. Employers want to know if you are being realistic about your goals, if you have given serious thought about your future, and if you know what motivates you.
 - c. Consider where you would like to work. This question has hidden meanings. It may be asked to determine the size of company you wish to work for, to find out what specific employer you wish to work for, or to learn of your geographic preferences. Be prepared to provide an honest and clear response covering all the bases in a favorable light.
 - d. Practice verbally sharing this information.
 - e. Fine-tune your "presentation" for sharing in an interview setting.

During The Interview:

1. **Show enthusiasm and create a positive first impression!** Greet the recruiter(s) with a smile and with confidence. Demonstrate your enthusiasm with your tone of voice during the interview and your body language. Be excited about the interview, the position, and what you have to offer the company.
2. **Adjust your posture for the interview** so that you have a slight forward lean (vs. sitting far back in the chair and thus appearing too relaxed) and face the recruiter(s) when possible.
3. **Listen and gather information.** Interviews are a two-way street. The employer wants to learn about you, just as much as you want to learn about the job and the company. Listen carefully to the information shared with you about the position, the work environment, and the company itself to help you determine if the opportunity is a good fit for you. Jot quick notes, if it is appropriate, to help you with recalling details later. Your attention needs to be focused on the individual(s) who is interviewing you and not your business binder.
4. **Find out the next steps of the process.** The recruiter will likely tell you what the next steps are before you leave, but be sure to ask if they are unclear.
5. **Know whom to contact and how** if you have questions in follow-up to the interview and the overall selection process. Also be sure to know the names of all those you interviewed with and their contact information; you will need this for sending thank you letters. Ask for a business card(s) at the end of the interview if you have not already been given one.