

# INTERVIEWING: RAISING THE BAR

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## Top Skills/Qualities Employers Seek in Job Candidates

Adapted from National Association of Colleges and Employers "Job Outlook 2012" Survey

Communication skills	Academic competency (research, GPA)
Strong work ethic	Organization/project management
Teamwork/interpersonal skills	Detail-Oriented
Initiative	Problem solving/sustainability
Analytical/critical reasoning	Leadership
Global perspective/cultural competency	Persuasion/promotion
Computer/technical/scientific skills	Self-Confidence
Flexibility/adaptability	Creativity/innovation

List your top employable characteristic: \_\_\_\_\_

## Behavioral Interviewing: "Past behaviors predict future behaviors"

Give me an example of a time when you:

Communicated to a large audience	Took a risk and failed
Solved a difficult problem	Demonstrated leadership skills
Persuaded a group to do something they opposed	Served as a member of a team
Overcame a difficult obstacle	Planned an event or program

## Raising the BAR

Use the BAR technique to describe powerful, relevant, and detailed behaviors demonstrating top characteristics. In outline form, list background, action, and results describing your top characteristic to the interviewer.

### Background

What was the specific job or activity you (and/or group) were to accomplish or what problem were you solving?  
Who was involved? Where and when did this occur?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Action

What steps did you (and/or team) take to complete the job or solve the problem?  
How did you (and/or others) go about completing the steps?  
How did you involve or manage others during the process?  
Why did you take these particular steps? Did you consider alternatives and what were they?

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### Results/outcomes

Did you accomplish the job the way it was originally defined? Were deliverables used? Was the result an improvement?  
Did you improve or maintain good interpersonal relationships as a result of your actions?  
What were the benefits of your actions for the organization or for other individuals? Did it have effect/impact?  
What lessons did you learn? What core skills did you acquire?  
What did you learn about yourself? How did you grow from this experience? What might you do differently?

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## Anticipating Questions

### About You

- Probing application materials
- Open ended (“tell me about yourself”)
- Describe your academic preparation.

### Role Playing/Scenario Questions

- How would you pitch a product/service to a client who knew nothing about our organization?
- If you strongly disagreed with a co-worker or classmate about a project you were working on, how would you handle the situation?

### Behavioral Interviewing Questions

- Give me an example of a time when you:
  - Faced an ethical dilemma.
  - Made a mistake.
  - Overcame a challenge.
  - Took initiative.
  - Took a risk and failed.

### Discipline/Department/School Specific Questions

- Why have you chosen to pursue this degree at our college/university?
- What do you read to stay current in this field?
- What are some of the challenges currently faced by professionals in our field?
- What characteristics do you think are important for success in this program?

## Ways to Prepare and Practice for Interviews

- Discuss interviewing tips with a UCS counselor
- Sign up for a mock interview with a UCS counselor
- Attend UCS Interviewing workshop
- Use UCS InterviewStream interview tool to practice and watch your answers online
- Participate in UCS Mock Interview Day with employers
- Write out anticipated tough interview questions with answers
- Critique verbal answers and non-verbal behaviors with a friend

## After the Interview

- Evaluate your performance and look for ways to improve by asking yourself:
  - Did you cover points you intended to cover?
  - What questions were particularly difficult to answer?
  - How did the interviewer’s personality affect your performance and why?
  - Did you ask the interviewer high quality questions based on in-depth research?
- Send thank you letter immediately (email is acceptable).
- Follow up by phone or email when the recruiter does not respond by stated date, if appropriate.

Remember to weave the research you have done on discipline, department, school into your presentation to create more quality content and to give yourself credit for your investigative work!

Also remember that the questions you ask along with prefacing statements made before asking questions (i.e. rationale for why you are asking something) also are good interview content!