INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES FOR COMPUTER SCIENCE MAJORS

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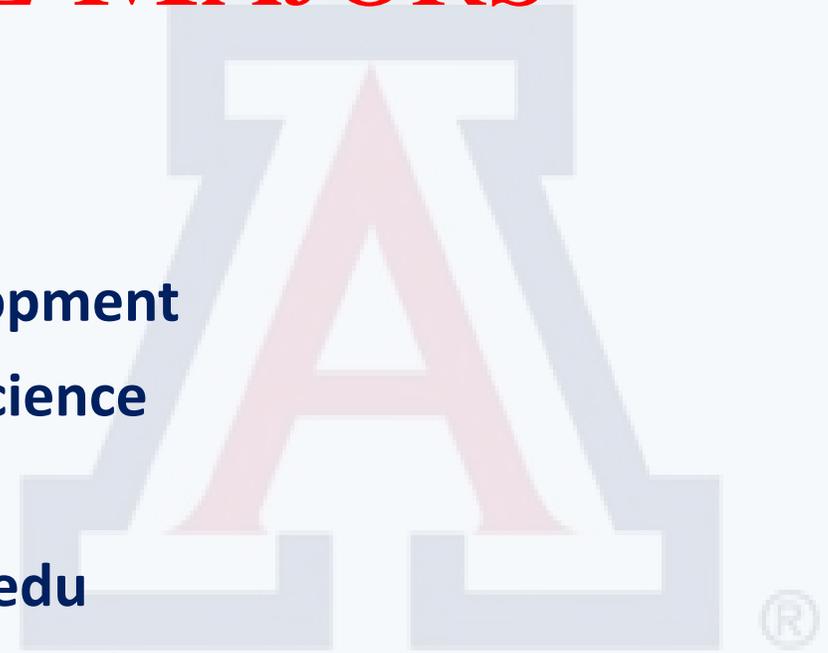
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Why a Special Presentation for Computer Science Majors?

- You are special in many ways:

  a. Technical skills you possess

  b. Quantitative abilities you've gained as a CS major

  c. Knowledge of computer languages and writing code

- Because of your special knowledge and skill set, you must be prepared to handle multiple types of questions in an interview i.e., standard questions, behavioral questions and technical questions

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The Three Keys to Interviewing Well

- Preparation

- Preparation

- Preparation

* NEVER go into an interview without having thoroughly prepared

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Know Yourself

Take time to think about you:

- ➢ Strengths, weaknesses
- ➢ Career goals
- ➢ Academic preparation
- ➢ Computer/programming/coding skills
- ➢ Problem solving skills
- ➢ Experiences you've had/problems you've solved

*Match YOU to what the employer needs

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Know the Employer

Research the organization and its culture by reviewing what you can find on-line

- ➢ Company web site

- ➢ Company's social media sites (i.e., Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.)

- ➢ Glassdoor.com

- ➢ Lexis/Nexis

- ➢ Wikipedia and other related sources

Would working here give you those things you want in your first job?

* Use this research to generate questions to ask the interviewer when it is your turn

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Know the FIT between your skills, knowledge and interests and the employer's needs

- Are you interested in doing what the position requires?

- Are the work environment and corporate culture

  things you would enjoy and do well in?

- Is the location of the position one in which

  you can be happy?

- Is the salary sufficient to support yourself

  and others if necessary?

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Preparing for the Interview

For standard interview questions, know the "whys"

➢ Why should I hire you?

➢ Why did you pick the University of Arizona?

➢ Why did you major in Computer Science?

For behavioral interview questions, have your stories (STAR)

➢ "Tell me about the most difficult problem you solved when writing software code"

➢ "Tell me about the most important contribution you made to your team when completing a project"

➢ "Tell me about the project you enjoyed the most, and what made it enjoyable"

For Technical Questions

➢ Know what you learned when working on all projects and how you completed the assignment. You will get asked technical questions and may be asked to write code as part of the interview process.

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Qualities Interviewers Evaluate

Your ability to communicate effectively

Your ability to solve problems

Your maturity

Your preparedness for the interview (aaahh, uummm, yaknow)

Your knowledge and ability to understand a problem, and work towards solving it (How would you….)

Your level of responsibility
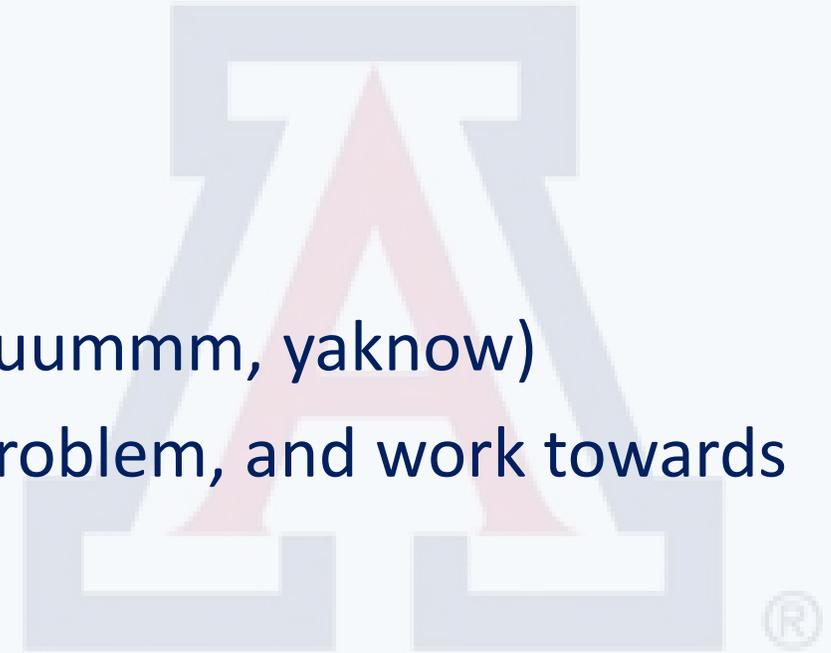
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Make the Best First Impression

- Five second rule
- Professional appearance
- Firm handshake
- Follow employer lead
- Show enthusiasm and smile
- Be on time, 10 minutes early is good
- Be positive...and honest
- Good eye contact
- Posture: lean slightly forward, feet on the floor, and gesture in the direction of the interviewer
- Listen actively

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Dress for Success

Men's Attire

➢ business suit

➢ Silk tie

➢ Leather shoes (lace up is preferable)

➢ Avoid after shave lotion (Yes, please shave!), and cologne

Women's Attire

➢ Business suit

➢ Conservative hair style

➢ Minimal jewelry

➢ Avoid perfumes and any other fragrances

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Types of Interviews

❑ **Screening**

   Brief interview, 20 minutes or less

   Example: phone, job fair, on-campus

❑ **Phone Interview**

   Schedule it at a time convenient to you and have it in quiet place

   Have all your notes with you and in front of you

   Wear pants!

❑ **Site Interview**

   Typically second or third interview

   Frequently an all day event

   Interviews may appear less structured (non HR people)

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Technical Interviews

- You should anticipate that you will engage in a technical interview if your initial interviews are successful.

- Practice! You want to be well prepared for a technical interview.
  - Talk with peers who have completed a technical interview
  - Participate in mock interviews
  - Online resources
    - Google Hangout Technical Interviews Tips: https://m.youtube.com/results?q=google%20technical%20interview&sm=1

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Your Weaknesses?

"What is your greatest weakness?"

"We normally hire individuals with more experience than you have now."

- Address the weakness with other strengths you bring to the position.

- Demonstrate how you have completed tasks/projects with which you had little or no experience in the past.

- Articulate your confidence in your ability to do the job well.

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The Salary Question

"So, what kind of salary are you looking for?"

Do not discuss salary until AFTER they have made you the offer. If you are asked about your salary requirements, say something like:

- "What is the typical hiring range for this position?"

- "I'm more interested in the job responsibilities work environment and corporate culture. If you think I'm the person you want in this position, I'm sure we can reach a mutually agreeable salary."

➢ When all else fails…..have a salary range based on your research…

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Sample Questions YOU Could Ask

- What qualities or characteristics have made people successful in this position/program?

- What is the typical career path for a person starting in this position?

- What plans/projects are being developed?

- **What is the next step in the interview process?**

Get a business card from the interviewer/ask for an email address

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Leave a **Positive** Lasting Impression

- Thank everyone you meet for their time and the opportunity to interview for this position.

- Have a firm handshake.

- SMILE

- Reiterate your enthusiasm

- Let them know you want this job…if you do.

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But I'm the Most Qualified!

- Don't assume that the most "qualified" candidate will get the job.

- Looking "good" on paper is not enough. Job offers go to the "best" interviewee…and those that have and display their "passion" for the field and the job.

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Some helpful websites

Standard Interview Questions

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSylCmes5dw

- http://www.forbes.com/sites/jacquelynsmith/2013/01/11/how-to-ace-the-50-most-common-interview-questions/

- http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-careers/2013/03/06/5-interview-questions-you-should-always-prepare-to-answer

- http://www.glassdoor.com/blog/7-research-job-interview/

Phone Interviews

- http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-careers/2011/06/14/17-tips-to-ace-your-next-phone-interview
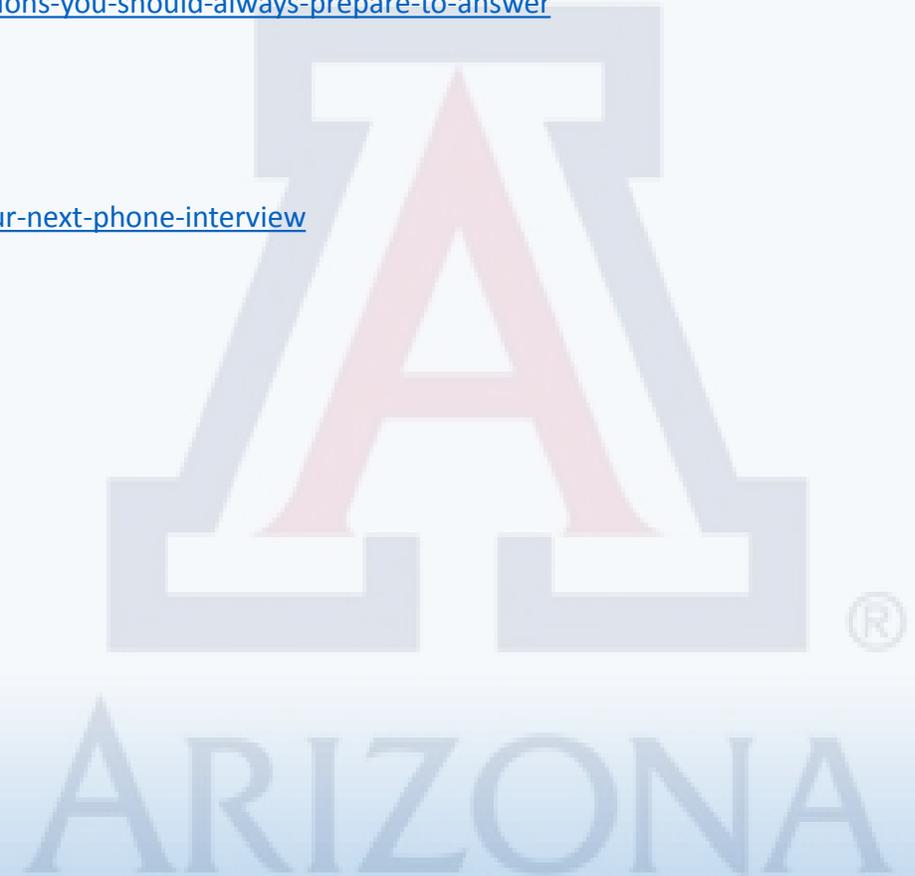
Behavioral Interviews

- http://www.quintcareers.com/sample_behavioral.html

Technical Interview Questions

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oWbUtlUhwa8

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qc1owf2-220

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6hK3V7-ig8k

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0nvXHh7o-w

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TIPS

Have a list of reasons why the company should hire you, and use this list to answer questions…(Rule of 10: 10 reasons why they should hire you…what you know, what you can do, who you are)

Keep answers to standard and behavioral questions to no more than 2 minutes in length. Longer answers tend to lose listeners. Answers must be focused, answer the question asked, and demonstrate your skills, knowledge and experience.

Never Say anything negative about yourself, anyone else, an employer, a company or your education.

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