



Interviewing Tips



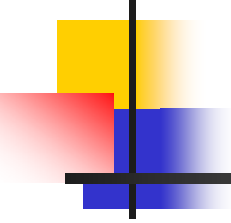
This talk..

- Premise: you have applied and currently waiting to schedule interviews
- Important issues (not part of the slides).
 - Preparing your package
 - Your web page
 - Your talk (some bullets in these slides)
 - Does the department have an up to date page with recent phd's searching for a job?
 - Touch base with your contacts during conferences informing them that you are graduating etc..
- Assuming you have done all of the above...



Roadmap

- Scheduling
- Before the interview
- How does it look like
- Your talk
- Meeting specifics
- Lunch/Dinner
- After you go away
- Things to keep in mind...



You are invited for an Interview!!!!

- Congratulations!
- Now what???
- Well...above all relax :)



Scheduling

- Interviewing is a tiring process.
- Try to schedule 2 and at most 3 interviews per week.
- Know your targets and priorities
 - Nice to have talk dry run in an interview before you go for an interview to your desired institution.
 - Go to a place that you are really interested after you have had time to revise your talk (if required).



Before the Interview

- Usually you receive a schedule a couple of days before (if you do not, that is a bad sign..).
- It lists your schedule for the day (or one and a half day).
- Usually runs from 8 to 5 or 6 with breakfast, lunch and dinner.. And of course your talk usually around 10am or 11am.
- In between you have half an hour meeting with faculty members and commonly 10min breaks.
- Some meetings (e.g., chair, dean) might be an hour long.
- So you have a rather busy day...



How should I dress?

- Usually people show up in interviews very formally dressed.



Your talk

- As you can imagine this is very important.
- Know your audience and make your presentation appealing to the mix of people present:
 - People in your community, outside your community, students.
- Practice, practice, practice!
- Very broad outline:
 - General intro ~ 15-20 min
 - Technical problem(s) in depth
 - Demo (if applicable)
 - Wrap up and future work.
 - If you have done work in various areas, make sure to point it out on a slide or so.
- Leave time for questions.
- Be polite!!!!
- Always nice to have back up slides.
- Try to anticipate questions.
- Make sure to revise your talk, if needed, after an interview!!!



Meeting Specifics

- One on one meeting:
 - Background research.
 - Have ready the 1-5-10 min overview of your work.
 - Keep the conversation alive and active!
 - Sample questions:
 - Students, funding (grants - sources, support for grant applications), labs, lab space, IT support and funding model, courses.
 - Industry relationships
 - Research work
 - Try to point connections to your work (if you see any -- be careful not to over do it)
 - Questions for yourself:
 - Do you see a potential collaborator?
 - Be polite and respectful.



Meeting specifics

- Chair/Dean
 - Nature of conversation probably a bit different.
 - Questions to ask:
 - Funding in the department, vision for the department (growth, special programs, synergies with other departments, industry relationships), tenure process (if it comes up :-)), support and IT support, management, mentorship, space allocation for students in the department
 - My view:
 - Does not make sense to ask questions about salary at this point
 - Does not make sense to ask about startup packages at this point
 - No point to get into tenure questions at this point
 - All in good time ;)
 - ...



Meeting specifics

- Meeting with students
 - Find out about their work
 - Get a sense if they are happy.
 - Try to obtain as much information as you can from them, they can be very informative :)
 - Be ready to answer questions (both from students and faculty) like
 - Your advising style (better start thinking about this :-))
 - New grad courses you will introduce
 - Undergrad courses you like to teach or you can teach
 - Plans for your team
 - Near, medium and long term research goals (e.g., how are you planning to change the world)
 - Space needs, fund needs (maybe)
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Lunch/Dinner

- Be formal and go with the flow of the conversation
- Think of some stories to say and drive the conversation if required
- You might meet some people you haven't met during the day -- chat to find out about them, but remember other people are also present
- Dinner might be a good venue to find out information about the area, schools, houses etc.
- Relax, but keep in mind that the interview is not over!
- Use common sense..



After the interview

- Thank your host and also a good idea to send a thank you email.



Things to keep in mind...

- Probably one of the few times that you will meet so many people at a professional level is so little time!
- Keep in mind that, even though you might not end up at that institution, these will be people you will keep in touch in conferences etc.
- So it is imperative you leave a very good impression about yourself.
- If you get an offer, you could go for a second visit if you wish.
 - Ask for deadlines if any and respect them!
 - Usually if a place really wants you it will provide ample time to decide.
 - If a place is rushing you greatly, not a good sign.



Aftermath..

- Great way to form an impression about places:
 - In my experience my perception of various places changed after visiting them and spending a day with the people there.
 - Have your eyes and ears open.
- Things to ask yourself:
 - Are the people very friendly?
 - Do they appear happy?
 - Do people work with each other?
 - Is it a friendly environment?
 - Do you see yourself working there?



Above all..

- Relax and try to be yourself.
- In my opinion, there are three qualities you should have in order to have a successful interview season.
 - CONFIDENCE
 - CONFIDENCE
 - CONFIDENCE
 - To your work and yourself primarily.