

# Interviewing



CCIS



# Purpose of an interview

- Interviews are the **worst** way to determine skills and abilities (e.g., competence).
- So why are interviews so popular?



# Purpose of an Interview

- To give the **interviewer** a chance to determine whether **you** will be a good fit
- To give **you** a chance to determine whether the **company** will be a good fit
- “Fit” is the best measure of whether an employee will have a long-term and successful career with a company.
- Long career = good investment!



# Types of Interviewing

- The Basic Q&A
- The Phone/Video Screen
- "The Casual Conversation"
- The Group interview
- The Stress Test
- The Obstacle Course/Endurance Run
- Performance interviews



# Types of Interview Questions

- Typical "getting to know you" questions
- Behavioral questions
- Brainteasers



# "Getting to know you" questions

- "Tell me about yourself."
- "What are your strengths and weaknesses?"
- "What are your future career plans?"
- "Why did you choose to apply to this job?"
- "What's your GPA? Explain it."



# Behavioral Questions

- "Tell me about a time when you solved an unexpected problem."
- "Describe an example of how you once led a successful team."
  - Marked by a request for a specific story or example
  - OK to talk a long time during answer!
  - Story should describe scenario, explain the scale of the problem, and reveal outcomes
  - Your past behavior may determine your future behavior



# Brain teasers

- "How do you move Mt. Fuji?"
- "How many golfballs does it take to fill a 747?"
  - Rare. Usually only with big, hard-to-get-into companies (Microsoft, Google)
  - It's not what you answer, it's how you think!



# Before the interview

- Research
  - Website, employee blogs and newsgroups, industry papers
  - If a public company, check financials
  - Check reviews of prior students in Co-op Office
- Ask questions when they call you for the interview
- Know where you're going
- Practice: The First Formal Interview



# Before the Interview

- Prepare your outfit:
  - Men: business suit, or jacket and tie
  - Women: business suit, or professional-looking dress
- Accessories?
- Neatness
- Should you wear that nose-ring?



# During the interview

- Handshake, smile
- Posture, body language, eye contact
- Carry a portfolio
- Get a business card
- Ask how long it will be before you hear from them, and what's the best method of followup



# After the interview

- Thank you letter
- Follow up
- If you get the position, let your co-op coordinator know ASAP



# What's the interviewing looking for?

- Confidence (but not arrogance)
- Communication skills (yes, even for programmers)
- Reasoning and problem-solving ability
- An honest assessment of your skills
  - Not self-deprecating
  - Not overconfident, either
- Enthusiasm



# What should you be looking for?

- The environment
  - Co-worker interactions and attitudes
  - Can you "fit in" here?
- Support
  - What kind of training (or self-teaching time) will you receive?
  - Who would your supervisor be, and what is her style?
- The Present and Future
  - What will you gain from this job?
  - What opportunities will exist for you beyond this job?



# Do you have any questions? YES.

- DO ask questions which reveal your interest in the environment, the job itself, and your potential future with the company
- DO have one or two questions written down in advance
- DON'T ask questions which make you look greedy
- DON'T ask about basic info you should have found in research before the interview



# Scenario

You have just gotten an interview for your "dream" co-op job! It's exactly what you're interested in, with a great company that's gotten good evaluations from previous students who've co-opped there, and the pay is excellent. Because of your excellent resume and GPA, you get an interview.

Imagine that you have just arrived at the office of Greatcompany.com, where you will be interviewing with a Human Resources representative.

Questions?

