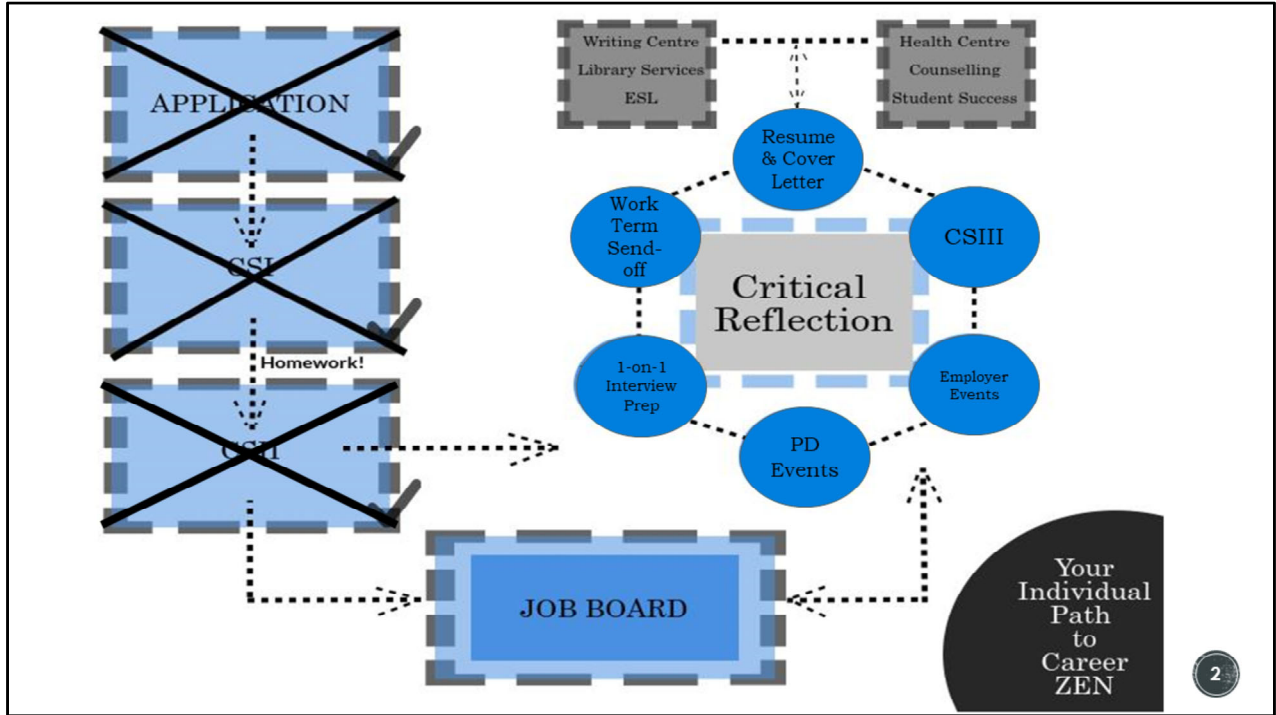


CSIII - The Interview

Marketing Yourself in Person





Today we will talk about:

- Applying for jobs
- Interviewing
- Job offers
- Your first Co-op work term

Application packages

1. Adjust your resume and cover letter for each position you apply for (i.e. tweak and prioritize your content to fit the job posting)
2. Seek advice and support from your Coordinator/Career Bridge staff. **Submit your application at least 3 days in advance of the closing date to receive edits/feedback**
3. Make edits to your documents
4. **Apply to the job through the MyExperience portal**
5. **Check your University email daily** for additional steps required for your job applications.
6. There are no limits on how many jobs you can apply for, so keep applying!

How are you going to fit it all in?

It's takes time and effort to make a competitive application.

Here are some tips to help with that:

- Hang in there! It will become easier and happen quicker over time
- Don't wait to line up your references

How are you going to fit it all in?

Plan your time accordingly:

- Work on your apps early in the semester
 - Over half of the jobs open and close in the first month of the semester
 - Attend Sneak-a-Peek and Resume Tweak
- Schedule an hour each week to check the job board and to work on your applications

How are you going to fit it all in?

Set up a saved search and turn on notifications

- Pros
 - Best searches are by company, area of study, and/or job title
 - You'll receive an email when a posting matches that criteria
 - Use it to focus and filter your view of the job board
- Cons
 - A search limits the opportunities you see. Be careful!
 - Don't rely solely on the email notifications to know what is on the job board
 - We don't recommend these search criteria
 - City or Province – You will miss surrounding and close-by locations
 - Semester – It will stop working once that semester has passed

The Interview!

Telling the story of your resume, cover letter, and a little bit more!



The First Steps

So many questions... and the interview hasn't even started yet



What is an interview?

- Business meeting where you and the employer are contemplating making a mutually beneficial commitment
- Your goals during the interview are to:
 - Tie yourself to the position
 - Demonstrate you are a good fit for the team and company
- You will do this by:
 - Telling stories about yourself, your experiences, and your skills
 - Asking questions

Interviews and offers

- Interviews are often set-up through our office but an employer may contact you directly. **Please communicate that to us so we can help you coordinate and make arrangements**
- We offer:
 - 1-on-1 interview preparation
 - Support and assistance prior to the interview
 - Quiet interview rooms with access to a phone and hard-wired internet
 - Interview follow-up and debrief

What should you do if an employer calls you directly?



You got the call!

- The interview starts the moment an employer contacts you to schedule an interview, including email
- Always be courteous, polite, professional, truthful, and accurate

Important questions to ask

Get as many details as you can:

- Most importantly, the name, number, and email of the person you are talking to
 - Don't assume the Co-op office will have these details

- Find out more about the interview:
 - What type of interview can you expect? (Phone/online/in-person)
 - Will it involve any other components? (Presentation/assessment/tour)
 - Is there anything you should have prepared in advance?

Important questions to ask

- Ask who will be in the interview
 - If possible, get names and position titles
 - Clarify spelling and pronunciation
- Write down the full address of where the interview is taking place
- Ask if there is anything else you should know

If you have any follow-up questions, you can follow-up once before your interview

- Any more and you may appear disorganized and thoughtless

A Few Important Notes

15

Emphasize what you can contribute

Just as you did in your cover letter and resume, focus on what you will bring to the position, team, and company

Unless you are explicitly asked, avoid mentioning your needs and wants or how this position will benefit you.

Make a plan for the day of the interview

- Plan to arrive at least 10 minutes early
- Plan for the interview to last 1.5 hours
 - You will be available to accommodate a long interview or any additional requests
- Drive the route and find parking in advance of the interview
 - It will help with the nerves

What to bring into the interview

- Your confidence*
- Blank paper*
- Pen*
- Your resume and cover letter
- The job posting

Carry it all in a folder or padfolio... like your Co-op one!

* These are what you will actually pull out at the beginning of the interview. Leave everything else in the padfolio unless you need it

Know the 3 stages of an interview

1. Short Opening Stage

- The interview begins the moment you step in the company's front door
- When you enter the interview room:
 - Introduce yourself to everyone with a smile and a handshake
 - Ask where they would like you to sit
 - Get settled and organized
 - Make small talk

Know the 3 stages of an interview

2. Exchanging Information Stage

- Wait for the interviewers to initiate this stage
- Follow their lead
- They will ask questions and you will answer
- You will be offered an opportunity to ask questions and you should

Know the 3 stages of an interview

3. Short Closing Stage

- The interviewers will likely tell you their process for selecting the successful candidate and how long it should take
- Thank everyone in the room with a smile and a handshake
- Promptly leave

Preparing to answer their questions...

Confidently predicting what they are going to ask

22

Review your application documents

- Clearly you did something right because they want to interview you!

- Look at the job posting and your cover letter and resume again

- Pay close attention to:
 - The major themes/skills/traits/requirements from the posting
 - What you focused on in your cover letter and resume
 - Is there anything new or different you want to clarify or highlight?
 - Put yourself in their shoes. What would you look for in an employee?

Do additional research on the company

Consider:

- Who are they?
- What are they about?
- Check their website and social media
- Look for mission statements, promotional videos, interesting facts, volunteer projects and associations

Identify what resonates with you, what aligns with your skills and experience, and what provides you with valuable insight

Interview Questions

The 5 types of questions that are most common

25

Technical/Skill-based Questions

Do you have experience with...?

Have you ever operated a...?

Tell me what you know about...

26

Tips for technical/skill-based questions

- Nearly all the technical skills/knowledge/experience will be listed in the posting
 - Be prepared to speak to each one
- In your answers, provide as much evidence, details, and specifics as possible

Tips for technical/skill-based questions

What if you don't have much experience with the technical skill/knowledge/experience?

- Don't start your answer with 'No'
- Note that while you may not have direct experience with that, you do have transferable skills and related experience
- Focus on your ability to learn quickly and that you are excited for the opportunity to do so

Tips for technical/skill-based questions

If they pose a problem for you to solve...

- Focus on demonstrating how you approach and solve problems
- Communicate well by talking aloud as you:
 - Discuss your approach and considerations
 - Break down the problem
 - Take steps to move forward
 - Come to possible solutions
 - Make decisions (Trust your work and be decisive!)
- It isn't always about ending up at the right answer

Behaviour Descriptive Interview (BDI) Questions

Tell me about a time when...

Describe a situation where...

Outline for me how you...

30

Tips for BDI questions

- The best predictor of future behavior is past behaviour
 - The more recent the past behaviour, the greater its predictive power
 - The more long-standing the past behavior, the greater its predictive power
- These questions are useful in identifying a number of personal management skills simultaneously
- There are no wrong or right answers

Mastering BDI answers

Tell a true story about a specific and related experience so they get a sense of:

- Who you are
- How you are likely to handle that particular situation

The success is in the breadth and depth of your story

- Details and specifics are key

Let's use the STAR(R) Technique!

The STAR(R) Technique

S – Situation

T – Task

A – Action

R – Results

R – Reflection

- It is a well-known approach that many employers expect you to use when answering a BDI question
- It will ensure your answers are clear, well organized, and packed with useful details
- Let's break it down with an example:
“Tell me about a time when something didn't go as expected”

S – Situation

Present a recent experience/challenge/situation in which you found yourself

- Remember, the more recent and long-standing, the better
- Set the scene
- Be descriptive

Example: In one of my classes, we were put in groups of four to complete a paper. We got to choose the topic ourselves and had three weeks to complete the research and write the paper.

T – Task

What were you required to do or achieve?

- Demonstrate you understand the problem

Example: At the beginning of the third week, one of my group members fell quite ill. This was very unfortunate timing as their responsibility was to compile the individual sections from myself and the two other members into one paper and then make the final round of edits.

A – Action

What did you do?

- Break it down!
- What were your considerations
- What steps did you decide to take?
- How did you action each step?

Example: I and the two other members met to discuss how we would proceed. Even though we had busy and competing schedules, we knew we needed a plan to have a chance at success. As my section was done and the other two members of the group had more time available to meet with each other, we decided that they would compile the three sections and I would do a final review of the paper, including the last round of edits. We also agreed that we would update each other via email every day.

R – Results

What was the outcome of your actions?

- What were the results of your actions?
- Where were you successful? Where were you not?
- How did you measure this?

Example: The paper came together nicely. While it was more difficult than I anticipated editing three different styles of writing, I was able to find an approach that fit. I learned that I really enjoy editing, working independently, and it was rewarding to be the last set of eyes on our paper. We received a B+ on the paper and were proud of what we accomplished in a short period of time, especially considering our busy and competing schedules.

R – Reflection

What did you learn and what would you do next time?

- This is the most important part of your answer!
- Demonstrate you see the big picture
- Show you can constructively and critically assess yourself
- Are you adaptive to change? If so, how?

Example: I learned that no matter how prepared you are or how much you plan, the unexpected will happen and you need to be ready to roll with it. We were successful because we met quickly, devised a plan, stuck to it, and kept in constant communication. It really showed me how much can be accomplished with well-coordinated teamwork. Next time I encounter a problem like this I expect I'll approach it in a similar fashion.

Let's put it all together

In one of my classes, we were put in groups of four to complete a paper. We got to choose the topic ourselves and had three weeks to complete the research and write the paper.

At the beginning of the third week, one of my group members fell quite ill. This was very unfortunate timing as their responsibility was to compile the individual sections from myself and the two other members into one paper and then make the final round of edits.

I and the two other members met to discuss how we would proceed. Even though we had busy and competing schedules, we knew we needed a plan to have a chance at success. As my section was done and the other two members of the group had more time available to meet with each other, we decided that they would compile the three sections and I would do a final review of the paper, including the last round of edits. We also agreed that we would update each other via email every day.

The paper came together nicely. While it was more difficult than I anticipated editing three different styles of writing, I was able to find an approach that fit. I learned that I really enjoy editing and it was rewarding to be the last set of eyes on our paper. We received a B+ on the paper and were proud of what we accomplished in a short period of time, especially considering our busy and competing schedules.

I learned that no matter how prepared you are or how much you plan, the unexpected will happen and you need to be ready to roll with it. We were successful because we met quickly, devised a plan, stuck to it, and kept in constant communication. It really showed me how much can be accomplished with well-coordinated teamwork. Next time I encounter a problem like this I expect I'll approach it in a similar fashion.

Now it's your turn!

Scenario: Tell me about a time when you were tasked with getting a complex concept across to someone

S – Situation: A recent situation in which you found yourself

T – Task: What were you required to do or achieve?

A – Action: What did you do? What steps did you take?

R – Results: What was the outcome of your actions?

R – Reflection: What did you learn and what would you do next time?

Categories of BDI questions

Spend most of your time preparing for BDI questions. They will be the bulk of your interview

6 Main Categories of BDI Questions

- Communication* (verbal, written, technical)
- Active listening* (Hearing an answer, non-verbal cues, demonstrating comprehension)
- Extroversion (Interpersonal skills, willingness to engage and ask questions, ability to speak up)
- Leadership (Ethics, professionalism, responsibility, reliability)
- Ability to deal with conflict (Empathy, communicating concerns, accepting criticism)
- Organization (Discipline, independence, time management, and prioritization)

*During an interview, these skills are being observed and evaluated at all times.

41

Ensure what you are saying about communication and active listening are being echoed by your actions!

Strengths and Weaknesses

What do you consider your most important abilities?

Tell us about your greatest strength.

What are two of your weaknesses?

42

Rules to strength and weakness questions

- Only provide the number of examples you are asked for
- Ensure your strengths and weaknesses are related to the position
- Have 2-3 examples prepared for each

Strengths

- Determine your strengths in relation to the position
- Choose ones that are unique to you and that you are proud of
- Be confident and decisive
- Provide as much evidence and as many details as you can
- Don't come across as aggressive, too competitive, or egotistical

What would you identify as one of your strengths?

Weaknesses

- Do not choose a critical flaw or a weakness you don't have a solution for
- Try one or both of these approaches:
 - Choose something that isn't a natural strength, but that you have a solution for or are taking active steps to improve
 - Ensure you describe those active steps
 - Choose something that most applicants will have

Using the first approach, what would you identify as one of your weaknesses?

45

Example for the first approach: "While I struggle to maintain a to-do list in my head, I effectively use a notebook to track the items I am assigned. I also use my Gmail Calendar to view and manage approaching deadlines"

Example for the second approach: "I have never completed that procedure outside of a lab setting in university. But I am a quick learner, will work hard, and am excited for the opportunity"

Answering Questions About Your Personal History

46

Try to anticipate what they will ask you

- Are there any negative aspects in your work or personal history?
 - How can you present them positively and constructively?
 - For example: Did you make a mistake at work? Be prepared to admit it. Then quickly move on to what you learned from it and what would you do different next time

Try to anticipate what they will ask you

- Interviewers cannot ask you about your age, gender identification, family status, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, and physical and mental disabilities

- How would you deal with being asked one of these questions?

- Examples
 - “I’m sorry, I’m not comfortable answering that question”
 - “Can you tell me how that question relates to the position?”

Try to anticipate what they will ask you

- In certain circumstances, it may be to your advantage to bring up a physical or mental disability or a medical condition
 - You don't need to name it or be specific
 - Focus on sharing reasonable accommodations the employer could make to ensure your success
 - Speak to a Co-op Coordinator for help and resources

49

For example, if you made a mistake that they are aware of, be prepared to admit it, then quickly move on to explaining what you have learned from that experience and the steps you have taken to prevent it from happening again.

Tell Me About Yourself

Why should we hire you?
Take us through your resume...

50

Tell me about yourself

- The reason you are planning this question now is because it should be a summary of all of your interview preparation thus far
- You will usually be asked this kind of question early in the interview
- The interviewer's goal is to learn what is unique about you and to gauge your interest in the position and company
- Use it as an opportunity to elude to what you want to talk about during the interview

Remember your CSI elevator speech?

This answer should be an extended elevator speech (2-3 minutes). As you build your answer, think back to CSI:

- Who is your audience?
- What is your purpose for the speech?
- What is your unique selling position (USP)?

Emphasize the appropriate and related aspects of your background, skills, knowledge, and experience. Demonstrate you have given careful thought to why you want this position

52

A good way to start is by simply stating “I really want to work here because...” or “I really want this position because...”

Building Your Stories

"Plans are worthless. Planning is everything"

- Dwight D. Eisenhower

53

Put all the pieces together

To be successful in an interview you need to be ready with:

- STAR(R) Stories
- Strengths and weaknesses
- Technical/skill-based details
- A plan for communicating your problem-solving style
- Constructive answers for negative aspects of your personal/work history
- An extended elevator speech

That might seem like a lot. But a good story can go a long way

Importance of Building Good Stories

Good story building is an essential skill

- You will realize and appreciate the related value of your experiences
 - Key details, specifics of a situation, moments of learning and growth etc.
- Only with this insight and exploration can you choose the best and most related stories
- A good story will be useful for more than one interview question
 - Quality over quantity

Importance of Building Good Stories

Do not try to memorize your story or build it perfectly

- There is no one story or no one way to tell it
- Focus on learning and understanding the opportunity and value of your story
- That way, when you are asked a question you will be able to:
 - Quickly recall the information
 - Effectively communicate the best and most related parts
 - Avoid a situation where you are compiling and constructing stories and answers during the interview

Building a Good Story

Step #1 – Pick a technical project, challenging moment, or specific situation

- Think of something that is directly related to the position
- You may choose examples from work, school, volunteering, extra-curricular activities, and even personal projects!

Building a Good Story

Step #2 – Write out this story in its entirety using full sentences

- Writing by hand establishes connections between the details of the story and your memory
- Following the STAR(R) Technique will ensure the story flows, is comprehensive, is in chronological order, and has lots of detail.
- Don't shy away from specifics, nuance, or the complexity of the situation

58

Additional points worth incorporating into the story might include:

- A description of the task/project
- Who you worked with (was it a team? How many people? What was your role?)
- Which pieces you did independently, and how you collaborated when required
- The problems or challenges you encountered (how you broke them down and handled them)
- How you prioritized and managed your tasks
- The outcome
- What you learned from this experience

Building a Good Story

Step #3 – Read and edit

- Make sure that you have enough detail. Again, focus on including specifics, nuance, or the complexity of the situation

Let's talk about not going down the rabbit hole

Don't go down the rabbit hole

- Keep your stories focused on you
- Have the other participants in your story be 'blank faces'
- Include specifics and details related to the job
- Don't say anything bad or critical of others

Building a Good Story

Step #4 – Practice

- Read your story aloud to yourself or a trusted friend
- Ensure it makes sense and that it fits with your speaking style
 - Many people write differently than they speak

Step #5 – Repeat

- Prepare enough stories that address the key points in posting and cover what you want to share with the employer
- Ensure you have covered the 6 BDI themes

61

Additional points worth discussing might include:

- A description of the task/project
- Who you worked with (was it a team? How many people? What was your role?)
- Which pieces you did independently, and how you collaborated when required
- The problems or challenges you encountered (how you broke them down and handled them)
- How you prioritized and managed your tasks
- The outcome
- What you learned from this experience

More Interview Questions

2 Other Questions to be Ready For

62

Random/Oddball Questions

- What animal would you be and why?
- If you could have dinner with three people (living, non-living, or dead), who would they be and why?

63

Random/Oddball Questions

- Expect the unexpected!
- There is no right or wrong answer
- Roll with it as best you can, process the question aloud and commit to your answer once you have made it
- They are likely looking to see how you handle the unexpected, how creative you are, or want insight into your thought process

Your Questions

Do you have any questions for us?

65

Your Questions

Type #1: Questions to gather information about the position or company

- Example: "How many people are on the team here?"
- You may save these questions for the end or, if you're comfortable, ask your question at the end of a related answer
- Do not ask questions about salary or benefits until an offer of employment has been made

66

Other examples:

- What training will be required?
- What is the first project I'm likely to work on?
- What does a typical day entail?

For example, if the interviewer asks you to describe your experience with teamwork, you may, at the end of your answer to this question, ask, "I'm curious, how many people are on the team here?"

Your Questions

Type #2: “Do you have any questions for us?”

- Ask a specific question that will initiate a conversation amongst the interviewers and leave a lasting impression

- Here are some topics to explore:
 - Team-based goals (more specific than the company mission statement)
 - Future projects
 - Why they like working for this company
 - What they like about their job
 - Training and professional development opportunities

67

Other examples:

- What training will be required?
- What is the first project I’m likely to work on?
- What does a typical day entail?

For example, if the interviewer asks you to describe your experience with teamwork, you may, at the end of your answer to this question, ask, “I’m curious, how many people are on the team here?”

Final Tips

68

Some Final Tips

- Practice! Practice! Practice!
 - In the mirror or get a friend to help
 - Record yourself and watch the video

- With each answer, ensure you:
 - Are honest and accurate
 - Go beyond a “yes” or “no” answer
 - Include the details and specifics of your skills, knowledge, experience, and achievements

Some Final Tips

- If you don't understand a question, ask for clarification
- If you don't know the answer to a question, say so
- You don't need to rush into your answers. Take a few seconds.
 - Taking a sip of water works well
- If you get the sense the interview is not going well, don't let it show

Some Final Tips

- Agree with any requests to fill out application forms or provide additional details about your references
- Cancelling and rescheduling interviews
 - Only in an emergency!
- Should an employer contact you directly
 - Let us know so we can help

Appendix A: Interview Prep Worksheet

Your main resource for each and every interview

72

Appendix B: Resources for Sample Questions

Find related questions and practice, practice, practice!

73

Sample Answers for BDI Questions – https://www.job-hunt.org/job_interviews/smart-behavioral-interview-answers.shtml

125 Common Interview Questions, including 30 with examples and tips – <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/top-interview-questions-and-answers>

30 Behavioural Interview Questions You Should Be Ready to Answer – <https://www.themuse.com/advice/30-behavioral-interview-questions-you-should-be-ready-to-answer>

Interviewing – The Indeed Career Guide. It includes tips, articles, and more – <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing?from=careeradvice-US>

Appendix C: Tips for Telephone and E-Interviews

It's a different style

74

Appendix D: Post-Interview Reflection

Give yourself some time, then debrief

75

What to wear

That outfit was so last year!



Not successful? Try, try again!

- Be optimistic
- Work to improve your competitive edge
 - Meet with a coordinator
 - Work on the questions that really stumped you
 - Keep working on your stories
 - Do more research into the company next time
 - Gain more experience

Receiving and Accepting Job Offers

- **Notify the Co-op Office if you directly receive a job offer**
 - Thank them, let them know you are excited for the opportunity and ask if it is okay that you speak with the Co-op Office first. If it is, assure them you will get back to them in 24-48 hours and then contact the Co-op Office immediately.
 - If you accept a job offer verbally or through email, we will expect you to honour it
 - We want you to make the best decision for you, with ALL of the available information. If you've had multiple interviews, there may be another job offer waiting for you.

A Look Into Your First Work Term

- Jump in with both feet and enjoy the ride!
 - Consider if you are available for an extension

- Monthly reports – A touch-point with your Coordinator
 - Reflective journal/blog/vlog
 - Other options include: Interviewing a Staff Member, Updating your resume and cover letter, answering interview questions etc.

- Site Visit – A meeting at your workplace with your supervisor

Don't worry, we will book you in for a Work Term Send-off before you go



**Need help? We've got
you covered.**

Simply e-mail artsci.coop@uleth.ca for assistance.



Working Session

Preparing your stories