UNDERSTANDING INTERVIEWS

While the resume may land you the interview, it’s the interview that lands you the job. When an organization offers you an interview, they believe you have the qualifications to perform the role – but so do other candidates. It’s in the interview that they decide whether you are the best person for that role.

PREPARE

Research the organization. You need to know them in order to present yourself as the best fit for the position. Craft 3-5 questions you will ask them that demonstrate your knowledge of their organization. Use resources such as:

- Their website
- Any literature you’ve been given
- LinkedIn
- Vault.com
- Glassdoor
- Google
- Industry resources
- Professional organizations and industry publications

PLAN

Every interaction with anyone at the organization is part of the interview. Your interview could consist of a variety of formats and types of questions. Do your best to anticipate which will apply to you and plan accordingly.

Formats: Questions:
- Panel  ► Traditional
- Group  ► Behavioral
- Meal  ► Technical
- Tour  ► Case

PERFORM

Behavioral interviewing is a widely used style of job interviewing where you are asked to provide an example of a time you were in a particular situation or encountered a specific challenge. The most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in a similar situation. To effectively answer behavioral questions, use the STAR technique.

S—Describe the Situation or event, not a generalized description.
T—Describe the Task presented—what are you trying to solve or work towards?
A—Describe the Action you took, not the group as a whole.
R—Describe the Result of the action—if negative, what did you learn from the experience?

Practice makes perfect. While an interview is a time to talk about yourself, it is not a natural skill that you can perfect without practicing. Utilize InterviewStream, an online interview practice tool available through Career Services, to maximize your impact in your interview.

- Go careers.vcu.edu and log into HireVCURams on the right hand side.
Once you have authenticated your account, go to “I want to...” menu in HireVCURams and click on the InterviewStream logo on the left hand side.

Go to Conduct an Interview on the Dashboard and select Created for Me.

Please choose one of the question sets, such as Pre-health interview, General interview, or Graduate school interview.

Complete the session’s questions and fill out the self-evaluation.

## SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Traditional
- Tell me about yourself.
- Why are you interested in this organization and this position?
- What are your strengths? Weaknesses?
- Why should we select you?
- Do you have any questions for me?

### Behavioral Interviewing
- Give me an example of a time when you had to deal with a difficult co-worker or fellow student on a project? How did you handle the situation? What were the outcomes?
- Tell me about a time when you had to persuade someone to see your point of view. What tactics did you use? What were the outcomes? What did you learn?
- Tell me about a time when you had a list of things to do and your supervisor came to you and said “I need this project by 5 o’clock.” How did you handle the situation?
- Tell me about a time you were involved in a project or in a group.
- Tell me about how you keep yourself organized to meet deadlines or goals?
- Give me an example of a time when you failed to meet a goal? What did you fail to do? What were the consequences? What was the outcome?
- Give me an example of a time when you used creativity to complete a project, work with someone else, or develop a new idea.
- Describe a time when you were a team leader. Who did the team consist of, and what did you do to help the team be successful?
- Provide me with an example of a time when you had to motivate others. What were the outcomes?

### Technical
Research your field, take note of what technical specifications are required by the job, and be prepared to speak to your experience with and knowledge of those areas.

### Case
The Coca Cola Company (NYSE: KO) is a multinational beverage corporation and manufacturer, retailer and marketer of nonalcoholic beverage headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia. The company is best known for its flagship product Coca-Cola beverage, and it currently offers more than 500 brands in over 200 countries or territories and serves over 1.7 billion servings each day.

You are meeting with the head of new product development for Coca Cola Company to discuss a new product delivery platform Coca Cola has developed. Coca Cola does not generally make its delivery platforms – it is usually delivered through fountains or vending machines. But Coca Cola has recently been looking into developing a new vending machine. It’s at the first level of screening. It was born out of an idea the engineers at Coca Cola came up with and this executive needs to know whether to use the vending machine or kill the idea.

This vending machine can change prices as the temperature changes. If it’s hotter outside, the price to the consumer will be higher. If it’s cooler, the price goes down accordingly. Assume there is no extra cost to making these new vending machines and that they can be easily implemented. How would you evaluate this idea and what is your recommendation?