The interviewing process can be intimidating if you don’t know what to expect. By being well-informed, you can feel confident as you plan for an upcoming interview.

**PREPARE IN ADVANCE**
During an interview, there is not much time for you to convince a potential employer that you would be the right person to hire. So before a scheduled interview, do the following:

- Decide which character traits and what personal information would help the interviewer see you as a future employee at his/her company.
- Think of examples that illustrate your strengths.
- Prepare answers to common interview questions. (Refer to the “Interview Questions” handout from ACAC.)
- Practice answering interview questions. Interviewing is like anything else you want to do well—practice makes perfect. (Consider scheduling a mock interview at ACAC or with someone who may be in a similar hiring position.)
- Research the company. The information you gather may be useful during the interview and help you decide if you would like to work there.
- Plan your outfit. (Refer to the “Professional Dress Guidelines” handout from ACAC.)
- Bring a padfolio and pen for use during the interview.

**CONSIDER YOUR BODY LANGUAGE**
Using effective non-verbal communication techniques, including appropriate interview body language is essential to your success.

- Gestures – Be conscious of where your hands are located and what they are doing while you answer questions. If you use grand gestures, consider crossing your hands and placing them on either your lap or the table in front of you. Don’t shake your foot, drum your fingers, or scratch. It is distracting and shows how uncomfortable you are. NOTE: It is okay to utilize some hand gestures, but you don’t want to be waving in airplanes.
- Facial expressions – Smile when you are answering. Be aware of what your facial expression may look like to others.
- Posture – Crossing your arms in front of you implies that you are closed off to the interviewers. Slouching is a tell-tale sign of disinterest, unpreparedness, or lack of confidence. While practicing your answers, take a look in the mirror to see if you are communicating confidence, openness, and interest for the position.
- Lean – Leaning slightly forward in your chair projects interest and engagement in the interaction of the interview. Align your body’s position to that of the interviewer’s to show respect and agreement.
- Voice intonation – Placing emphasis and varying your vocal tone can show interest and excitement for the position. Generally, it is advisable not to show too strong or too much emotion; however, being monotone does not help communicate your passion for the industry.
- Eye contact – Don’t stare back blankly at an employer. If you have more than one person interviewing you, make sure you briefly address all people with your gaze and return your attention to the person who asked you the question.

It’s not just what you say; it’s also how you say it.
ARRIVE EARLY
Upon arrival to the company’s site, do the following:
• Check your appearance in a mirror.
• Arrive to the interview area 10 minutes before the scheduled interview.
• After notifying the receptionist of your arrival, relax and look over the notes you have prepared.
Note: Allow ample time for unforeseen delays if you are unfamiliar with the city and are not sure if nearby parking lots will have vacancies. If you do arrive ahead of schedule, you can use the extra time to enjoy a walk.

MEETING THE INTERVIEWER
The recruiter begins to evaluate you the minute you are identified.
• Smile and introduce yourself
• Give a firm handshake to the interviewer (Feel free to extend your hand first)
• Maintain eye contact with the interviewer

TYPICAL FORMAT
Most interviews for entry-level positions are 30 minutes in length, and many have the following structure:
• Small talk (5 minutes)
• Discussion of your qualifications (15 minutes)
• Opportunity for you to ask questions (5 minutes)
• Conclusion (5 minutes)

SMALL TALK
Frequently, a recruiter will begin the interview with some small talk. Topics may range from the weather to sports but will rarely focus on anything that brings out your skills. The interviewer may be judging how well you communicate on an informal basis or simply trying to “break the ice” to make you feel comfortable. Either way, you must do more than smile and nod.

DISCUSSION OF YOUR QUALIFICATIONS
Before the potential employer begins asking you questions, he or she may give a brief overview of the company and the position. If something is not clear, feel free to ask for further clarification. As the discussion turns to your qualifications, relax and remember the following:
• Be yourself
• Be focused
• Be honest
• Be concise (allow 1–3 minutes per answer)
• Be prepared to comment on aspects of your background that could be viewed as negative such as a low GPA, lack of extracurricular activities, or non-related work experience

OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO ASK QUESTIONS
When the potential employer asks if you have any questions, it is important for you to have some prepared (For suggestions, refer to the “Interview Questions” handout from ACAC). By asking well-thought out questions, it shows that you have done your homework and you are serious about the company. In addition, this is an opportunity for you to determine whether or not you want to work for this company.

CONCLUSION
During the final minutes of the interview, the recruiter makes his or her closing remarks. It is important to remain enthusiastic and courteous because the interviewer is assessing his or her overall impression of you.
• Ask about the timeline of the position (if not already stated) and any further clarifying questions
• Express your interest in the position
• Thank the interviewer(s) with a smile and a handshake

AFTER THE INTERVIEW
• Ask the receptionist for the name and contact information of the interviewer(s) if you don’t already have information.
• Send a thank-you note within 24 hours. A thank-you letter is a brief note that conveys your appreciation to the interviewers for their time, reaffirms your interest in the company, and offers to provide additional information if necessary. Do not forget to write a note of gratitude to the administrative assistant if he or she assisted you beyond what is normally required.
• Write down the main questions and the answers given. Note any follow-up action you should take and put it on your calendar. Review your presentation and evaluate what you could do better next time.

Mock interviews can be scheduled by calling ACAC at 608.342.1183.