



Transfer  
Research  
Society

# Research Interviews

*Saturday | Aug. 7th | 6pm*

# Overview

- Topics to expect
- What to do before an interview
  - How to prepare, reading their research, knowing your resume, etc.
- During the interview
  - General mannerisms
  - Coming up with questions to ask
- Following up after the interview
- Q&A

# Topics to expect

# What to expect

- Research interviews can come in many different flavors, some PIs will assign reading to you, others want to sit down and talk with you
  - There's also somewhat of a trend, where if something is student run the interview process is a lot more formal and structured
  - From our personal experiences, many interviews from PI's or people who have graduated and are doing research are much more relaxed and chill and it's not uncommon to have a very informal interview
- They are generally lenient if you don't know specific lab techniques, but they do want to see that you have passion for the subject and are willing to work hard
- Research interviews are different from normal job interviews, and in most interviews the PI will give a run-down of what is happening in the lab
  - If they are recruiting for a specific project, they will likely spend a portion of the interview detailing that project and what job duties they would want you to do
- Interviews go both ways!
  - At the end, many interviewers are really looking forward to hearing any questions you might have for the lab

# Before the interview

# How to prepare

- Dress appropriately
  - Make sure your attire is calibrated to the field, for example, if everyone in your lab is wearing casual attire then don't wear a suit and tie to the interview
  - However, always air on the side of more professional
- They will usually look at your resume and ask about your experiences/skillset, possibly some standard interview questions
  - If you have prior research experience, make sure you're ready to talk about that, so if it's a wet lab position be ready to talk about your work in prior lab classes
  - Make sure you can tie your skills directly to the lab, ie, if you know how to program with R and they are looking for someone to do statistical analysis, be sure to tie it in to how your skill can benefit their project
- Read the lab's research!
  - This can be situational dependent, but broadly speaking, read the PI's general research information and if you know what project you'd like to work for then read more specific papers on that topic
  - When reading, make sure to highlight some questions you can ask about during the interview—this helps show your eagerness to learn!

# How to prepare (cont.)

- How to show you are eager to learn?
  - Print out a few of their research papers, highlight it, make notes, ask specific questions about their research (even if it's a clarifying question—it shows that you're engaged and want to learn about their work specifically)
- Know what your future plans are (even if its not 100% certain), know how this experience will help your future plans
  - A common interview question they will ask is what your plans are for the future. Take some time to think about why being accepted to their lab will help you in that endeavor, you're going after research for a reason.
- Ask them about their career! Everyone loves to tell their story so ask the PI what their background is and how they got into research.
- Availability
  - They will ask how available you will be—average commitment is usually 10-12 hours a week for a volunteer position
  - Talk about the hours you are willing to work in spring break, summer break, etc
- Practice with your peers!

# During the Interview

# During the Interview

- What to do during an interview?
  - Be polite and attentive, professors are assessing you to see if you would fit in with their research culture, make sure you are respectful
    - Treat it like a conversation, one point of an interview is to put a face behind a resume
  - Make sure you understand the commitment they want from you, start date, length of position, expectations for summer
  - If you want anything out of the research lab, communicate it
    - Mentorship, research experience, opportunities to present, etc.
- Active listening
  - One of the most important skills of any interview
  - During a research interview, you will be presented with a lot of information about the study and lab
  - Take mental notes as they tell you about their study, don't be afraid to take actual notes as well
  - Try to come up with follow up questions—whether related to the actual work or the lab
  - Ask clarifying questions
    - You want to let them know that you are actually listening to them
  - Ask if there are any additional steps you can/should take to prepare, etc.—this demonstrates enthusiasm

# After the Interview

# After The Interview

- PI's may let you know whether you got the position or not during the interview
- Send a follow up email the day after
  - Thank them for having you and mention your interest, how you think you would be a good fit
- Send another follow up email ~2 weeks later if no update, ask about your status
  - But keep in mind when you have your interview, if it is near finals season, it could be that your PI is busy
  - General format, should be short and sweet:
    - Hope you're having a great week so far! I'm sending this email as a follow up to our interview on (insert date). I was wondering if there was any updates regarding the position at (insert lab)? I look forward to hearing your response!

**Q&A**

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