

PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS

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TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The University of Waterloo acknowledges that much of our work takes place on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples. Our main campus is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River. Our active work toward reconciliation takes place across our campuses through research, learning, teaching, and community building, and is coordinated within our Office of Indigenous Relations.

You can learn about the land you're on right now by visiting native-land.ca

About the art: artist Alanah Astehtsi Otsistohkwa Jewell for University of Waterloo:

<https://uwaterloo.ca/news/decolonization-design>



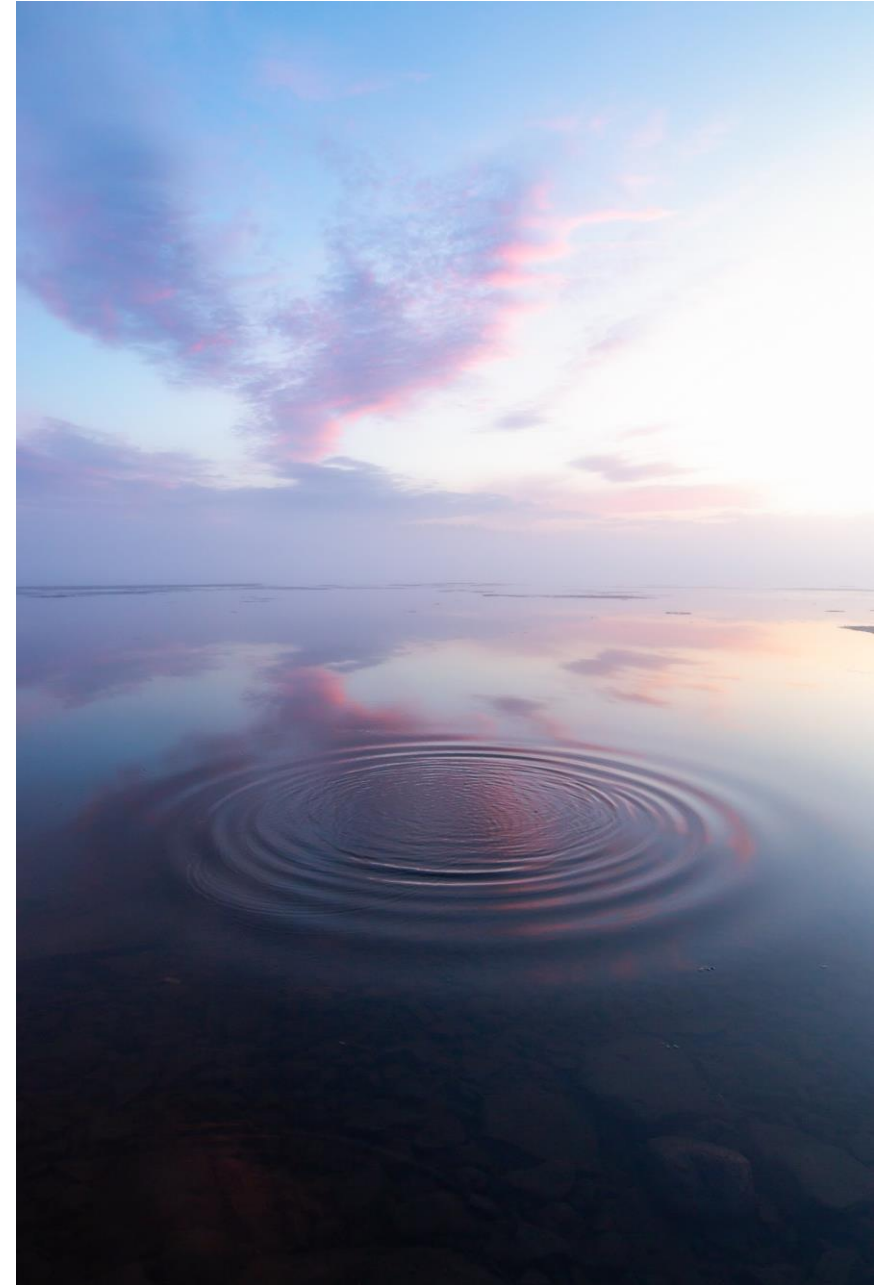
LET'S MAKE THIS A SAFE(R) SPACE

We are entering this space with the intention of creating as safe a space as possible for you.

Safe space means something different for everyone, but let's keep 3 things in mind:

Choice
Respect
Care

Image: Sami Takarautio c/o Unsplash



How might we **co-create** this safer space?

- Participate in a way that feels most comfortable for you!
- Please use the chat during presentation time. Ask questions whenever! At the end of the workshop, you can go mic on or mic off during Q&A
- Feel free to send me a direct message if you have a question or comment you would like to share privately
- If you are having tech issues, please let me know!
- Take what works for you and leave what doesn't!

LET'S HEAR FROM YOU!

What do you hope to get out of today's workshop?

LEARNING GOALS

- 1 Identify the steps to prepare effectively for an interview
- 2 Describe the factors that contribute to a positive first impression
- 3 Apply effective strategies for answering interview questions in both an in-person and a virtual setting

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

What do you think students could do to get ready for the interview?

INTERVIEW PREPARATION

- Review resume
- Review job description
- Research employer (Mission, challenges, motivators, culture and strategic plan)
- Practice interview questions
- Prepare questions to ask the interviewer
- References
- Copy of your resume
- Know yourself and what you bring to the position

KNOW THE ROLE – WHAT IS THE EMPLOYER LOOKING FOR?

- Experience
- Education
- Knowledge
- Technical Skills
- Transferable Skills
- Personal Attributes



KNOW THE INTERVIEW DETAILS

If information is not provided, its acceptable to ask about the format of the interview

- How many people will interview you? Who are they?
- How long will the interview be? Is it supposed to be 20 minutes?
- What components will it include?
 - Technical?
 - Application?

Knowing this information can help relieve anxiety and reduce surprises!



VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS

VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS: FIRST GREETING



- **Test your Tech:** test run the software with a friend to ensure a smooth experience
- **Be early:** set up your computer, close extra tabs, turn off notifications and open the program
- **Start with a strong introduction:** say hello, smile and look into your camera
 - “Thank you for taking the time to with me today.”
 - “I’ve been looking forward to our conversation”
- **Be prepared for small talk:** remain positive, find a common interest, avoid oversharing or controversial topics

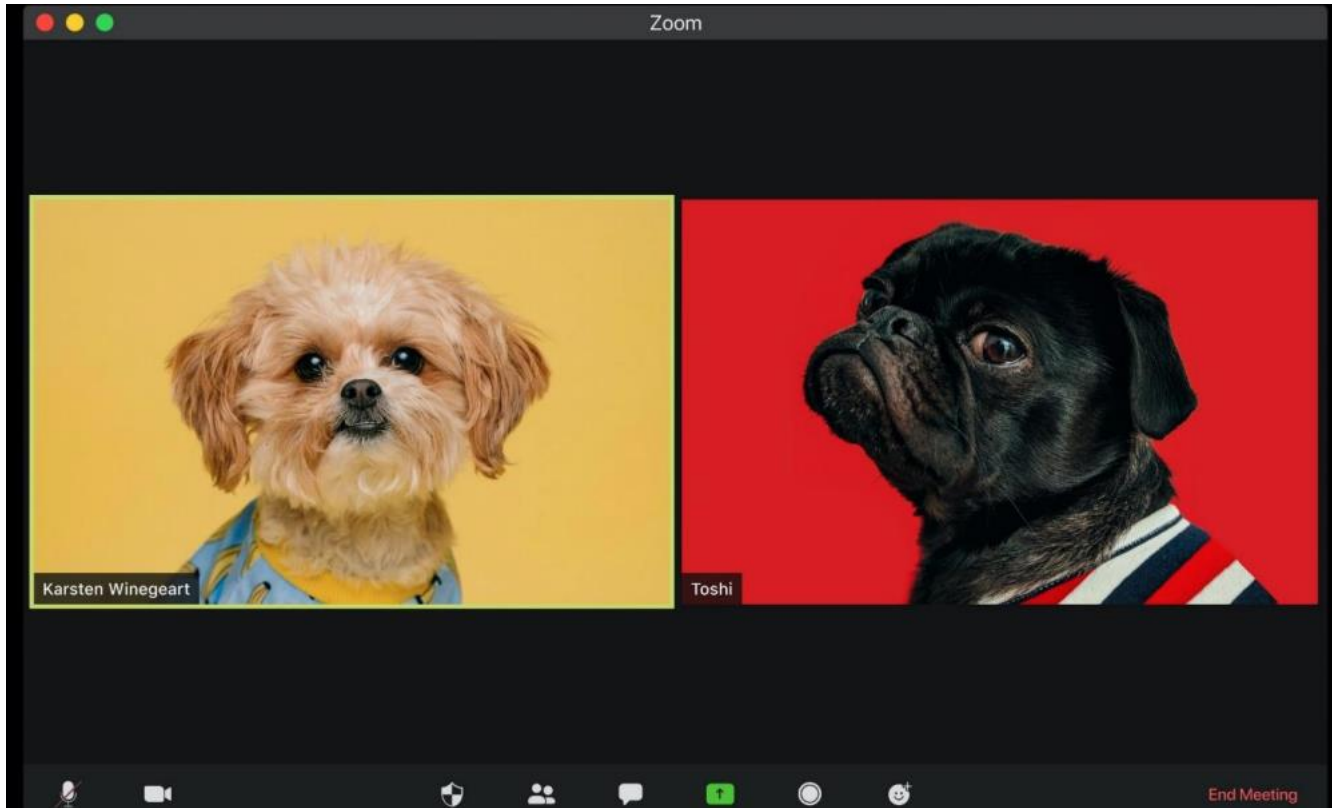
VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS: APPEARANCE

1. **Sound:** find a quiet space and a room with some sound insulation
2. **Background:** have a clean, simple and professional background
3. **Camera Angle:** ensure your camera is at eye-level
4. **Lighting:** use natural light or a lamp. Ensure you are not backlit!
5. **Dress:** dress appropriately and professionally from head to toe



[The Verge](#)

VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS: BODY LANGUAGE



1. **Posture:** positive body language
2. **Eye contact:** look into the camera
3. **Facial Expressions:** smile when appropriate
4. **Voice:** be mindful of if you need to slow down
5. **Practice your answers out loud!**

**WHAT MAKES YOU... YOU?
BE YOURSELF!**

THE QUESTIONS

THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF QUESTIONS

Classic

Behavioural

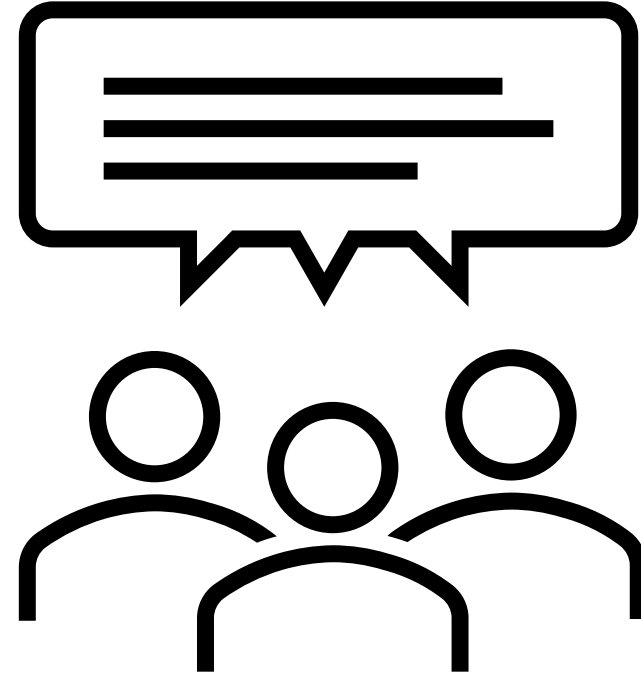
Situational

Skill Testing/Problem
Solving

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

- Why did you apply?
- Why should we hire you?
- Organizational knowledge
- Short/long-term career goals
- Strengths/weaknesses
- Tell me about yourself



OUTLINE FOR “TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF”

- When/how did you become interested in this field?
- What have you done since then to grow your knowledge, skills and/or experience?
- Can you tie this into the job/role?
- Give yourself about 2 minutes (give or take) for this answer



Photo by Beci Harmony on Unsplash

BEHAVIOURAL QUESTIONS

BEHAVIOUR-BASED QUESTIONS

Past behaviour is a good indicator of future behaviour.

Typical behavioural questions begin with:

- Tell me about a time when...
- Describe a situation in which...
- Recall an instance when...
- Give me an example of...

STAR APPROACH



Situation	Background and context
Task	What you needed to do
Action	What you did and how you did it
Result	The outcome of your actions

Q: TELL ME ABOUT A TIME YOU COMMUNICATED SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE TO A NON-SCIENTIFIC AUDIENCE

Situation	“Let’s Talk Science” Volunteer
Task	Create workshop on the climate crisis for 8 th graders
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Researched the 8th grade science curriculum• Consulted with professors and TAs on strategies to simplify information• Delivered the workshop to 20 students and kept them engaged by inserting analogies, videos and activities into the workshop
Result	Students expressed their newfound interest in taking action to fight climate change, and I was invited to deliver another workshop

SITUATIONAL QUESTIONS

SITUATIONAL/HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS

- Actual (hypothetical) situation from job
- Can be very general but also can be very specific
- Typical questions begin with:
 - What would you do if...
 - Describe how you would...
 - What approach would you take...
 - Say you were faced with...

SITUATIONAL/HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS

What would you do if you were almost finished working on a project that had a tight deadline but upon review you realized you'd made a mistake at the beginning that would require you to start over?

How would you resolve conflict with a co-worker?

SKILL TESTING AND PROBLEM-SOLVING QUESTIONS

SKILL TESTING/PROBLEM SOLVING QUESTIONS

Skill testing

- Technical questions
- Hands-on

Problem Solving

- Written or spoken
- Demonstrate structured thinking
- Show your process (the right answer may not matter)

TRICKY SITUATIONS

WHAT DO I DO ABOUT...?



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- Feeling nervous or anxious
- Silence
- Stumped
- Any others you can think of?

WRAPPING UP AN INTERVIEW

How do you best answer the following:

- Is there anything else that you'd like to add?
- Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about yourself?
- Do you have any questions for us?

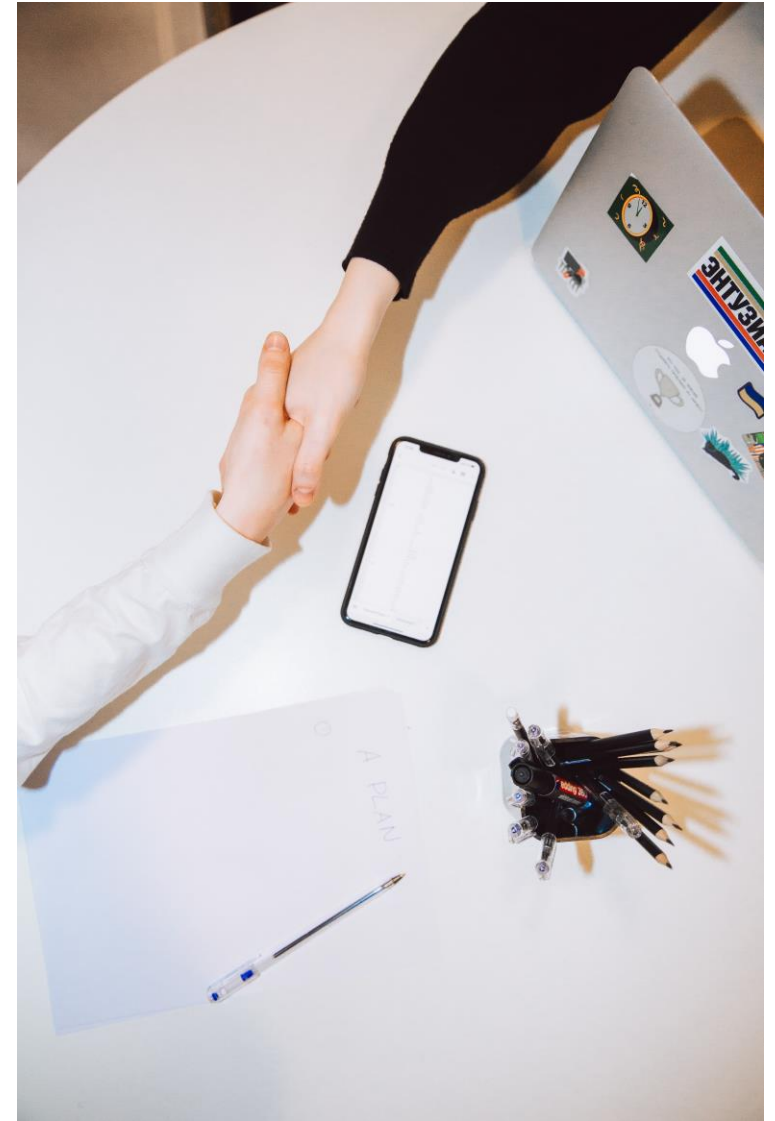


QUESTIONS TO ASK AT THE END OF AN INTERVIEW

- What do you expect a co-op student to have accomplished in the first month?
- What aspects of the role do you believe to be the most rewarding or the most challenging?
- What are the key priorities for someone in this role?
- Can you give me an example of the types of projects the previous co-op student was involved in?
- What type of training would there be for the successful candidate?
- In what ways can I prepare for this job, if I am the successful candidate?
- For jobs on WaterlooWorks Co-op job board only, you can ask about salary

PRO TIPS

1. Based on your analysis of the role, the organization, and your own experiences, go into the interview with 5 things you want them to know about you
2. Treat the interview like a conversation, not like an exam
3. Demonstrate your enthusiasm for the role/organization
4. Make sure you have a list of questions to ask
5. Send a thank you/follow up email



CCA SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES

Resources: CCA Appointments and Workshops/Events



Job Search Tactics
Résumé
Cover Letter
Interview Prep
Career Exploration



Individual Appointments
Drop-ins
Workshops
Online Resources

uwaterloo.ca/career-action

QUESTIONS?