

# Interviewing for Residence Life Positions



## The Purpose of the Interview:

*For the Candidate:* Gather information about the position and the organization ◦ Evaluate the position, co-workers, and the work environment ◦ Determine if the position is a good fit and whether the candidate wants to work for the organization ◦ Communicate qualifications and related experiences to the employer

*For the Interviewer:* Attract the best candidates ◦ Gather information about the candidate ◦ Assess the candidate's qualifications for the position ◦ Determine if the candidate is the best fit for the job

## To interview well, you have to...

### **Know Yourself**

- What are my skills and abilities? Strengths and weaknesses?
- How do my skills and experiences relate to the position?
- What points do I want to get across during the interview?
- How does this position relate to my overall goals?
- What characteristics do I possess that make me a great candidate?

### **Do the Research and Preparation**

- Review the job description and highlight the important qualifications to discuss in the interview.
- Learn more about the Office of Residence Life (<http://web.wm.edu/reslife> ).
- Talk about what it's like being a Residence Life staff member with a current staff member- ask questions about the benefits and challenges of the position and how your skills might apply to the job.
- Develop a list of appropriate questions that reflect your research to ask at the end of the interview.
- The interviewer will expect you to articulate your goals and accomplishments. He or she is assessing you according to certain valued traits, like self-confidence, initiative, and leadership.

### **Practice**

- Review the list of common interview questions on the back of this sheet.
- Practice answering the interview questions out loud with a friend or roommate.
- Schedule a mock interview with a Career Counselor by calling 221-3231 to gain experience and get feedback.
- Be aware of your body language when practicing: good eye contact, posture, and facial expressions are all important.
- Remember to smile and **be yourself!**
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### **Pre-Interview Checklist**

- Confirm the date, time, and place of your interview.
- Dress appropriately. While a suit may not be necessary, you should still dress professionally. It's hard to be over-dressed, but easy to be under-dressed.
- Be punctual. Plan to arrive at least 10 minutes early.

### **Interviewing Tips**

Begin with a firm handshake.  
Listen carefully to questions.  
Express sincere interest in the position.  
Avoid one-word answers.

Make eye contact throughout the interview.  
Ask clarifying questions if needed.  
Be confident and positive.  
Relax and be yourself!

## Common Interview Questions- Practice, Practice, Practice!

In order to show that you are an exceptional candidate, you must be prepared to answer a variety of questions. You can expect questions regarding your qualifications, experiences, personality, and understanding of the position and Residence Life as an organization. You may also be asked **behavioral questions**, which are designed to make you describe how you would react or respond to a given scenario.

**General Questions:** The following questions are commonly asked in many types of interviews, including those for Residence Life positions.

- ❖ Tell me about yourself.
- ❖ What do you consider to be your greatest strengths?
- ❖ Describe a few of your weaknesses and what you are doing to improve upon them.
- ❖ Describe your extracurricular involvement. Why did you choose to get involved?
- ❖ What is your leadership style?
- ❖ How do you manage your time?

**Behavioral Questions:** Employers design behavioral interviewing questions by identifying the skills required in a job and developing a set of questions designed to elicit examples from candidates of how they've reacted or managed particular situations. Your response and the example you include to outline your behavior helps the employer identify whether you have the skills needed to do the job.

- ❖ Tell me about a time you were able to successfully communicate with someone whose personality differed greatly from your own.
- ❖ What do you do in jobs or extracurricular activities to build community with others?
- ❖ Give me an example of when you've worked as a member of a team. What was the outcome? What challenges did you face?
- ❖ Tell me about a specific occasion where you conformed to a policy, even though you opposed it.
- ❖ Describe a situation in which you had to make a quick decision.

**Residence Life Sample Questions:** You can expect that your Resident Assistant interview will include questions specific to the position and the office.

- ❖ How do you think working with Residence Life can help you achieve some of your future goals?
- ❖ Why did you decide to seek a position with Residence Life at William and Mary?
- ❖ What would you change or do differently to improve the residential experience of William and Mary students?
- ❖ What has been your previous experience with Residence Life at the College?
- ❖ What do you think the role of an RA, HR, etc. should be in the lives of his or her residents?
- ❖ What challenges would you anticipate facing as a new RA?

**The STAR Technique:** use the STAR technique to fully and adequately answer interview questions

**S**ituation or **T**ask: Choose a situation or scenario with some depth or complexity and describe it in detail to illustrate your answer to the question.

**A**ction: Discuss in specific detail how you handled the situation and what you did.

**R**esults: Discuss the results and outcomes or your work, behavior, and efforts.

**Ask the Interviewer...** Asking questions at the end of the interview shows the employer that you have done your research and thoroughly prepared yourself. **These questions will also help you determine whether you want to work for Residence Life.**

- What is the structure of the Residence Life organization? Who will be my direct supervisor?
- How will I be evaluated? Who will evaluate my work?
- What will my training involve? What resources are open to me after training ends?
- Are previous Resident Assistants or Head Residents available to me as resources?
- Are there any recent or anticipated changes within Residence Life that would affect my role?

**Still nervous? Call the Career Center to schedule an appointment (221-3231). Check out our website, [www.wm.edu/career](http://www.wm.edu/career) for more helpful interviewing tips and information!**