

# INTERVIEW WORKBOOK FOR STAFF



UNIVERSITY  
OF MANITOBA

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# INTRODUCTION

## Using this guide

This guide for U of M staff is designed to be used digitally, with multiple links to resources and websites throughout. At the same time, it can be extremely helpful for you to write down the information you uncover about yourself and the jobs that attract your interest as you go. We encourage you to write on or print pages of this guide. Print those pages and use it as you work your way through the exercises in this book.

The skills throughout this book are applicable to all types of job searchers. You have been gaining skills and building your network throughout your time working before you came to the university and while working here. Searching for work will require you to reflect on your experiences, use your industry specific knowledge, and rely on people you met.

Learning to speak a language, play a musical instrument or play a sport takes time and practice. You need to develop the necessary skills to be successful. The very same concept applies to the job search process – it is a learned skill! This guide will help you recognize and develop the skills necessary to effectively look for work.

## Acknowledgements

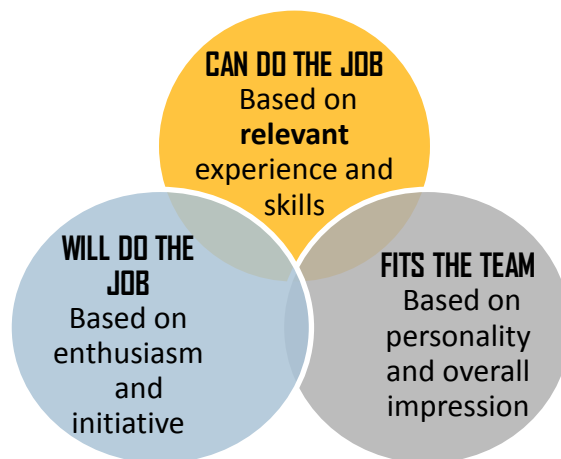
This workbook was developed by staff in Career Services and Learning and Organizational Development, University of Manitoba. Of particular mention are: Maria Dielmann, Allison Poppel, Gail Langlais, Mark O'Riley and Darlene Smith along with her team of consultants.

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## YOUR INTERVIEW

Congratulations! You have impressed an employer with your resumé and cover letter and they want to bring you in for an interview. The interview is an opportunity for both the interviewer and the interviewee to gather information.

**Employers want a person who:**



Similarly, you have the chance to evaluate the position and the faculty/unit/department, and determine if they will fit into your career plans. It is an opportunity for both parties to familiarize themselves with each other and better understand if the position would be a good fit. The interviewer is promoting the faculty/unit/department to you, and you are marketing your skills, knowledge, and attributes to them.

Research and preparation are the keys to being successful in an interview. Use the tips in this workbook to fully prepare and practice for your interview.

## STEP 1: RESEARCH

### Know the Job and the Required Skills

The first step in preparing for an interview is to research the job. To convince the interviewer you have the necessary experience and skills, you must first know what those requirements and duties are. Sometimes there might only be a few days of notice for your interview, meaning you will need to prioritize your preparation. Understanding the occupation will help you effectively prepare for interviews in general, so begin building your knowledge base early, if you can. You can do your homework even before getting the interview by researching the profession as you prepare your resumé. If you are reading this with limited time to research, focus on strategies that make sense for your timeline.

**There are several ways to find out about an occupation:**

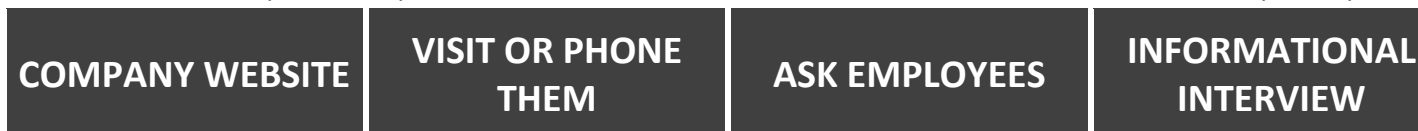
FIND THE JOB DESCRIPTION	INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS	PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS	READ ARTICLES
Request a copy of the job description from the employer when you are offered an interview.	<b>Interview an employee</b> in the field to gain valuable information.	If you belong to a professional association, access its resources, such as newsletters and seminars to learn about the industry.	Read articles about the profession to better understand the industry.

## Know the Organization

The more you know about a faculty/unit/department, the better prepared you will be to discuss how you can meet its needs. Some of the characteristics that you should know about a faculty/unit/department are:



Most faculties/units/departments publish information about themselves, which can be accessed in a variety of ways:



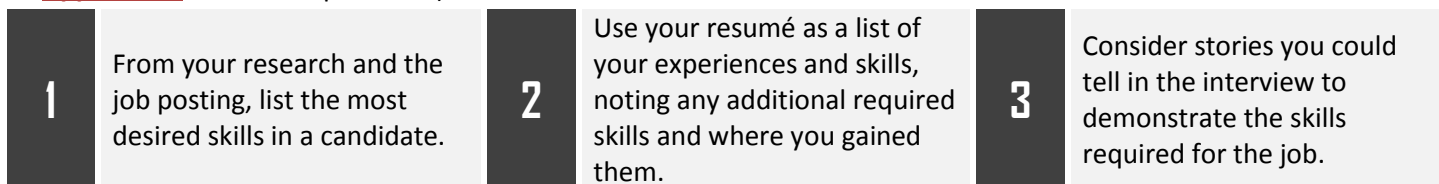
## STEP 2: MATCH YOUR SKILLS TO THE NEEDS OF THE POSITION

The second step in preparing for an interview is to thoroughly assess your skills in relation to the job you are interviewing for. You identified and demonstrated your skills that match the job requirements when you **wrote your resumé**; use the same techniques when preparing for the interview.

### TIP:

**Start by studying your resumé:** it secured you the interview after all. Consider which skills, experiences, and attributes you will want to expand upon in your interview.

Here is a brief overview of the process of reflecting on your skills as they apply to the position you are interviewing for (see [Appendix A](#) for a full explanation):



If you have not used our resumé resources or would like a refresher, use [Appendix A: Deconstructing a Posting Worksheet](#)

## Skills Employers Value

Individuals or groups hiring are going to be interested in a wide variety of specific skills which differ by workplace, but there are many skills that are typically valued. The Conference Board of Canada has identified some of these skills. Check out [Employability Skills 2000+](#).

### TIP:

**Think broadly: skills are developed everywhere.** For example: researching and writing reports develops your written communication skills. Projects or committee work enhance your teamwork and leadership skills. Do not overlook any abilities you have. For a skills assessment, use [Appendix B](#)

When doing self-reflection, identifying your experiences and skills is important, but it is not all that you need to know.

### Consider the Answers to these Questions:

- How have I demonstrated the skills required in this position?
- Apart from my skills and experience, what can I bring to this job?
- What are my short-term and long-term goals?
- What can I offer this particular department, faculty or unit?
- What are my strong points and weak points?

### TIP:

Make a list of your key strengths that you want the interviewer to know. These points should relate to the skills you know the employer will want from you. Be sure to incorporate these in your answers.

## STEP 3: ANTICIPATE AND PRACTICE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

You can never predict every question that you will encounter. What you can do is use the job posting and your research to anticipate what skills or competencies interests the hiring party and develop possible questions from there.

### TYPES OF QUESTIONS

Being aware of the three question types can help you to focus your answers to the skills the interviewer is looking for.

Three types of interview questions are:

TRADITIONAL  
QUESTIONS

BEHAVIOUR DESCRIPTIVE  
QUESTIONS

HYPOTHETICAL  
QUESTIONS

## 1. Traditional Questions

You will be questioned about skills related to the position or asked general questions where you will need to tie in examples of specific skills you know the Faculty or unit needs.

### EXAMPLE

#### “WHAT SKILLS DO YOU HAVE THAT RELATE TO THIS POSITION?”

“I have very good communication and interpersonal skills that I have refined through several years of working with the public in Donor Relations. For example, I communicated with stakeholders in both English and French, listening to their needs, providing them appropriate information, and ensuring that they have the best experience possible. Using these skills, I will be able to communicate effectively with your clientele and my colleagues in this position.”

Appendix C provides you with a list of commonly asked interview questions.

### Tell me about yourself

This is one of the most common interview questions. Sometimes it is worded differently, such as *“what interests you in this position?”* or *“what do you bring to the table that would make you a suitable candidate?”*

An acronym to remember how to answer this question is E.S.P.

<b>E</b> EDUCATION	Discuss your education and training. Explain why your education will help you excel in the position.
<b>S</b> SKILLS and <b>E</b> EXPERIENCE	Share the number of years of experience and 3 skills that you have which are central to the job and meet their needs. Be sure to demonstrate how you gained them with specific examples.
<b>P</b> PERSONAL	Share something personal about yourself: an interest, an activity, a hobby. If possible, share something related to the positions or company culture. Make sure what you share is work appropriate!

### Remember: E.S.P. – Power of 3’s, Education, Skills, Experience

Example: “Tell me about yourself”

“I have a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology, and have recently completed the course in Volunteer Management through the Volunteer Centre of Winnipeg. These have given me a strong background in many of the principles of human behaviour and the recruitment, training, and supervision of volunteers.

I have counselling and coaching experience (1) gained through my volunteer work at the Youville Clinic. My previous role with the Office of Accessibility has provided me the opportunity to further develop my communication skills (2) where I supervise and train staff, serve students, and work in a team environment. I had the opportunity to plan events as a volunteer in non-profit organizations and have gained some valuable planning and organizational skills (3). These skills would be beneficial in the role of volunteer manager at your faculty/unit/department, not only to ensure events would be planned and organized, but also to allow me to act as an effective leader to a team of volunteers.



In my spare time, I play soccer and I am involved in a vocal jazz group, which I really enjoy and further demonstrates my commitment to teamwork.”

**Points to Remember:**

- If your experience is your most recent and strongest asset, you can start your answer with that.
- Do not just list your experiences, but also focus on your attributes
- Focus on your audience. If French is really important in that geographic region or you have worked with a population that is very important to them, make sure you emphasize that.
- Make a connection between your extracurricular activities such as your hobbies, committees and volunteer work on /off campus and who you are. If you are into health and wellness, use that to make connections about how that interest promotes a healthy personal life and has allowed you to maintain a healthy work/life balance.
- Some people like answering this question by using the following formula: 2/3 professional life (related experience, education, volunteer work), 1/3 personal life (hobbies and interests – focusing on how these have helped develop certain attributes which are essential in that particular job).

## 2. Behaviour Descriptive Questions

This type of question asks what you did in a particular situation, typically related to the job description. The logic is that examples of past performance can help to predict future performance. Relate the answer to the position. For example, if you are interviewing for a research position, talk about a research project. A strategy for answering behaviour descriptive questions is to tell the story using the “STAR” method:

**SITUATION:** Explain the situation: set the scene with where and when the story took place.

**TASK:** Describe the task, problem, or challenge you encountered.

**ACTION:** What did you do? What actions did you take? Outline the specific steps you took to address the problem. This is the most important piece of your answer and should take up the most time.

**RESULT:** What was the end result? Did you receive any feedback or learn anything that can be applied to this position? Focus on the positives!

**Remember: STAR – Situation, Task, Action, Result**

Example: “Tell me about a time you worked effectively as a team member”

“Last year I led a significant department project...” **(Situation)**

“The project required we meet with a variety of stakeholders, funders and partners to create an evaluation plan based on our knowledge and what we learned as the project moved forward...” **(Task)**

“To begin with, as a team, we decided on our timeline and goals for the consultations. We then met collectively with stakeholders to assess their needs. Afterwards, we met as a team to determine our next steps. I suggested that each team member share their strengths and preferred role or tasks they wanted to manage for the project. Based on this information, we assigned work and set check in dates and a deadline for each piece of the project...” **Action**

“Having clear expectations regarding responsibilities and timeline helped us to complete the project prior to the deadline. Allowing people to work on sections they were passionate about allowed us to create a much stronger project that stakeholders were pleased with and did implement within their organizations.” **(Result)**

*When preparing for this type of questioning, it is crucial that you review the skills and qualities that the position would require and identify specific examples from your past which demonstrated those traits.*

### TIP:

If you are asked to describe a situation you have never encountered, answer the question hypothetically, explaining what you would do in that situation and what the expected result would be. Follow the STAR approach.

**Appendix D provides you with a list of Behavioural Interview Questions Grouped by Competency.**

### 3. Hypothetical Questions

When asking a hypothetical question, the interviewer describes a situation which you may encounter in the position and asks how you would react. In your answer, include the following:

<b>EXPLAIN HOW YOU WOULD GATHER INFORMATION</b>	<b>DESCRIBE YOUR ACTIONS</b>	<b>DEMONSTRATE THE SKILLS NEEDED IN THE JOB</b>	<b>DISCUSS EXPECTED RESULTS &amp; APPROPRIATE FOLLOW UP</b>
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If you have encountered a similar scenario in the past, be sure to reference this in your answer.

#### EXAMPLE

**“SUPPOSE YOU ARE WORKING YOUR FIRST DAY IN OUR LABORATORY, AND A FIRE BREAKS OUT. WHAT WOULD YOU DO?”**

“Before I start my work in any laboratory, I always locate the emergency equipment, such as eye washes, fire blankets and alarms. I also review the safety protocols. Therefore, in this situation, I would be aware of these. As soon as I notice the fire, I would shut down my experiment and if the fire was significant, I would pull the fire alarm and help to evacuate the lab. In the case of a very small flame, I would ask the staff member at that station what I could do to help, which would vary with the type of substances involved. In either situation, my goal would be to assess the threat and respond accordingly in order to prevent further damage and to protect both life and property.”

#### TIP:

The best answer is always a Behavioural Based answer following the STAR approach, even if the question is a Hypothetical one. It provides the best proof to the interviewer that you have experience handling that particular situation.

### 4. Creating Your Own Practice Questions

Look at the job posting through the lens of the interviewer: what questions might the interviewer ask to determine if you have the skills to do the job? Create a list of practice questions for yourself that ask about the required skills in different ways: behaviour descriptive questions, hypothetical questions, and direct questions about specific skills or experiences. For more inspiration, Google “interview questions” and your field or job title, to see if anyone has posted examples from their own experience online.

If you find a gap in your knowledge that might be important in the interview, take the time to find out more: look up policy, legislation, or a theory that might be asked about in the interview. In a way, you are putting in the preparation to ensure you can clearly demonstrate the value that you can add.

## ANSWERING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Regardless of what type of question you are asked, you will find it easier to respond effectively if you keep in mind some basic ? answering strategies:

USE YOUR RESUMÉ	PAUSE	ASK FOR CLARIFICATION	BE HONEST	EXPAND
Reviewing your resum� before the interview can remind you of the skills you plan to market during your interview. Do not leave anything out: never assume the interviewer has your resum� memorized.	Pausing before answering allows you to quickly plan a thoughtful, concise answer. If you are going off track in your answer or draw a blank, stop to think for a moment before continuing.	If you do not understand a question, ask for clarification. This is perfectly acceptable and normal.	The slightest stretching of the truth may result in you being screened out.	Never answer a question with simply a "yes" or "no." Always expand: it shows enthusiasm.
REPEAT POINTS	BE CONFIDENT	BE POSITIVE	SELL WHAT YOU HAVE	BODY LANGUAGE
Do not be afraid to repeat important points. In fact, it is a great idea to do this.	It is good to be confident. As long as you can back up what you are saying with examples which demonstrate that what you are saying is true and you are not bragging.	Be very positive. Do not complain about anything - from your former place of employment or manager to the weather. Positivity and enthusiasm are best.	Do not apologize for experience that you do not have. Sell what you do have and let the interviewer decide. For example, instead of "I have a little experience...", say "I have experience...."	Sit with an open posture. Avoid crossed arms, staring at your feet, or talking to the interviewer's shoulder.

### TIP:

Feel awkward selling your skills? Third party observations can also be mentioned. For example, "My last manager told me that I was promoted because of how I handled conflicts with clients."

## DIFFICULT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following are common interview questions which people often have difficulty answering and an explanation of how to handle them.

### NEGATIVE QUESTIONS

### ILLEGAL QUESTIONS

### SALARY QUESTIONS

#### Negative Questions

In a negative question, the interviewer asks you to identify a weakness in yourself or to describe a situation in which you performed poorly or made a mistake

**If you are asked a negative question:**

<b>BE HONEST</b>	Be honest. Start and end on a positive note.
<b>BE STRATEGIC</b>	If you are asked to identify a weakness, you do have to identify one. Be sure to choose a weakness that is not central to the job. If you do, this may eliminate you from the competition.
<b>OVERCOME</b>	Always state what you have done or are doing to overcome the weakness or demonstrate how it is not such a bad thing after all.
<b>LEARN FROM IT</b>	Be sure to reflect on what you learned from your mistake and how you would handle the situation differently next time.

#### TIP:

If the question is a Negative Behavioural or Hypothetical question, answer it using the STAR but add an extra "R" at the end of your answer that stands for reflection focusing on what you have learned and what you would do differently.

Check out these examples of how to handle negative questions:

EXAMPLE

**“WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST WEAKNESS?”**

“I like interacting with people, however, I feel a little self-conscious when I speak in front of groups. To develop my confidence and public speaking ability, I have joined Toastmasters International. I have given numerous speeches over the past five months and have already noticed a big improvement.”

EXAMPLE

**“GIVE ME AN EXAMPLE OF A WORK SITUATION IN WHICH YOU WERE NOT PROUD OF YOUR PERFORMANCE.”**

“A number of years ago I was working in a front facing role with students, which I really enjoyed. One day, a student came in and began complaining about the admissions process. He wanted me to give him information I was unable to disclose. I explained that I did not have the authority to do that and suggested he speak with the manager, who was unfortunately not in that day. The student became agitated and verbally abusive, at which point I told him that I could no longer be of assistance to him, and left the desk. In hindsight, I could have taken more responsibility in ensuring the student’s needs were met by taking his name and number, and promising to have the manager phone him, for example. Now, given the same situation, I would take the time to understand the student’s needs so as to avoid an unnecessary confrontation.”

## Illegal Questions

Sometimes interviewers ask questions that violate the Canadian federal or provincial Human Rights legislation relating to employment. For more information, you can:

- 1) Contact the [Manitoba Human Rights Commission](#)
- 2) Contact the [Canadian Human Rights Commission](#)

Often, interviewers may not be aware that they are breaking the law, thinking that they are simply making conversation. You have every right to refuse to answer an illegal question, but be aware that if you do refuse to answer in a confrontational manner, it may have an impact on the interviewer's impression of you.

## Protected Subjects Include:

- Race
- Pregnancy
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- Age
- Family Status
- Marital Status
- Gender
- Ethnic/National Origin
- Disability

Some people feel comfortable answering questions that touch on these topics. Others find it best to work around the question, answering more broadly without specifically referring to the illegal subject.

*Note that some UM positions require the successful candidate to possess knowledge of indigenous traditions and will require declaration of Indigenous ancestry.*

## Salary Questions

Being well researched and flexible goes a long way when stating your salary expectations. If you know the salary range relating to the position that has been posted, you can make a request based on your previous experience and skills. Remember, some positions may offer opportunities (such as training, experience, or potential advancement) that may make it worthwhile to accept less than you normally would when considering the long-term potential of the opportunity. In our unionized environment, **a range will exist** and in some cases due to budget restrictions, salary negotiations may be less flexible. Check out the University of Manitoba compensation classification [here](#) or [University of Manitoba Salary Scales](#) .

### EXAMPLE

**“WHAT KIND OF SALARY ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?”** (on the campus)

“I am aware the current salary range for the position as posted was xx.xx-xx.xx and based on my experience advising students for three years I feel that something in the range of (first 3<sup>rd</sup>) would be fair.”

### EXAMPLE

**WHAT KIND OF SALARY ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?** (off the campus- at the beginning or middle of interview)

“I am interested in finding out more about this position during this interview. Perhaps we can discuss this topic later in the interview or once an offer is made.” OR

“ I heard that you provide fair compensation to your employees and thus I would like to focus more on getting to know more about this position and your company.”

**WHAT KIND OF SALARY ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?** (off the campus – toward the end of the interview?)

“I understand you are a fair employer and my focus is on being the successful candidate.” OR

“I would be happy to discuss the salary once an offer is made and I see the entire package. “ OR

“Based on my research, the salary range for this position is \$\$ - \$\$\$ for someone with my experience level.

### TIP:

**Do Not** engage in negotiations during the interview process, especially if the position has not been offered to you. This is a screening techniques often used by the interviewer to weed out those who would expect too high a salary or sometimes too low a salary. If asked what you think about a certain range or salary or where you see yourself in that range, just respectfully explain that you would like to focus on securing the position and it is very difficult to discuss a salary without the details of the package or full understanding of the responsibilities of the position. In rare situations, you will be pushed to have this discussion, but make sure you are not argumentative and do not negotiate. State your point and listen to theirs but remember not to agree or disagree with their proposal unless they are offering the job and they want to discuss numbers. Even in those types of rare situations, you can ask to review the entire compensation package and take it home to discuss it with your family. Most employers are reasonable enough to give you up 48 hours to do so. Meeting again in person to negotiate is advisable.

## STEP 4: PREPARE QUESTIONS TO ASK AT THE INTERVIEW

Having completed your background research, you are now ready to prepare questions to ask the interviewer. Try to think of questions you cannot answer with a Google search. Intelligent, well thought-out questions will demonstrate your genuine interest in the position. Avoid sounding critical by mentioning negative information you may have discovered – always use your best judgment when choosing your questions. This is one of the most effective ways to compare different companies, units or faculties, so for issues of particular importance to you, you should ask the same questions at each interview.

### Sample Questions you could ask

- What are the most significant factors affecting your Faculty or unit today?
- How has your unit/department/faculty grown or changed in the last couple of years?
- What direction do you see the unit/department/faculty taking?
- What do you like most about working here?
- Have any new services been introduced recently?
- How much travel is normally expected?
- Will I work independently or as part of a team?
- What are the career paths available in this workplace?
- When can I expect to hear from you regarding this position?

## STEP 5: SUCCEED IN THE INTERVIEW

In addition to doing research and practicing your answers to common interview questions, you should be aware of general interview etiquette.

REVIEW YOUR RESUMÉ	BE 10 MINUTES EARLY	GET A GOOD SLEEP	EAT BEFOREHAND
Make sure that you can explain everything on your resum�. Use direct examples from your experience as proof of your skills.	Give yourself an opportunity to collect your thoughts and relax. If you rush in, an employer may doubt your ability to arrive on time for work.	You will think more effectively in the interview if you are rested. Beyond this, yawning will not impress anyone.	If you are worried about your stomach growling, you will not be able to concentrate. Have fresh breath: stay away from strong smelling foods or smoking.
DRESS APPROPRIATELY	LOOK YOUR BEST	COME PREPARED	TURN OFF YOUR PHONE
Dress for the position that you are applying to. If you are unsure, always dress more conservatively. You want the interviewer to notice you for what you say, not what you wear.	Make sure that you are clean, neat, and well groomed. Interviewers do notice your appearance, and first impressions are critical in an interview.	Bring a copy of your resum�, transcript, references, and perhaps work samples. Bring a pen and paper to record important information.	It needs to be off, not on vibrate.

### Dealing with the Nerves

It is completely normal to feel nervous going into an interview, especially early on in your career. Many people say that interviewing becomes easier with practice. If your fear of interviews is affecting your ability to get a job, sometimes **counselling** is another option. Check out the EFAP program to explore this option. Try some deep breathing exercises and some muscle relaxation activities that you can do unnoticed while you are sitting down.



## THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

There are many different types of interviews designed to serve different purposes or situations. Regardless of the type of interview, most will incorporate the following stages: establishing rapport, exchanging information, and closing the interview.

**TIP:**

**Pay attention to the job titles of the interviewers.** This can help you decide how much technical detail to provide in your responses.

### Establish Rapport

As soon as you walk in the door, first impressions are made and the tone of the interview is set. Follow the interviewer's lead - if they are chatty, be chatty; if they are formal, be formal. Some interviewers use casual conversation to get to know you on a more personal level - this may be crucial to a hiring decision!

**Some tips:**

- Smile and make eye contact
- Wait until the interviewer sits or offers you a seat before sitting
- Shake hands
- If the interviewer is making small talk, participate and be positive

### Exchange Information

This is the bulk of the interview. It is your opportunity to let the interviewer know what you have to offer, and your chance to learn more about the faculty/unit/department.

**Some tips:**

- If he or she looks confused, ask if you can clarify anything
- Sit up straight and comfortably
- Ask questions to show interest
- Use body language and facial expressions to demonstrate interest and engagement
- Control your nervous habits. Do not swing your foot, talk with your hands (to an extreme), or fiddle with jewelry, buttons, pens, hair, etc.

### Close the Interview

When the interviewer is done gathering information, you will be asked if you have anything to add, or if you have any questions. This is your opportunity to make sure that you have communicated everything that you wanted to.

**Some tips:**

- Ask the questions that you prepared
- Thank the interviewers for their time and ask for their business card so you can follow up later
- Shake hands
- If it is not known when a decision will be reached, ask if you can phone in a week's time to inquire
- Offer a sample of your work or portfolio, if you have one
- Give the interviewer your reference sheet

## Types of Interviews

There are various styles of evaluating candidates. Typically, at the U of M we have panel or one-on-one interviews, however you might experience any of these interview types. Here is an overview:

<b>PANEL INTERVIEWS</b>	Two or more individuals interview candidates. When answering, make eye contact with the person who asked the question but also look at the others. Ignore note taking by panel members.	<b>TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS</b>	Have your resumé and notes nearby. If you are home, make sure it is quiet and distraction free. Smile: they can tell even on the phone. Speak slowly and convey your enthusiasm verbally since the interviewer cannot see your face.
<b>ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS</b>	Candidates are interviewed by one person. The interviewer will often have a series of prepared questions. It is important to maintain eye contact with the person interviewing you.	<b>SKYPE INTERVIEWS</b>	If given the choice, this is typically superior to a telephone interview because the interviewer can see you. Dress professionally. Be sure to eliminate background distractions (including pets).
<b>IMPROMPTU INTERVIEWS</b>	An informal interview might occur during a job fair or a cold call. The employer asks basic questions to decide if they will formally interview you.	<b>DINNER INTERVIEWS</b>	Do not be the only one to order alcohol, and if you do, stop at one. Decide what to eat quickly, avoid messy foods, and take small bites. The discussion may abruptly change from friendly chat to direct interview questions.
<b>FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEWS</b>	You might be invited to a second interview led by management. Prepare for in-depth questions by further researching the firm. Use information gained at the last interview to your advantage.	<b>GROUP INTERVIEWS</b>	Group interviews test your ability to work in a team. The interviewer want to see your interpersonal skills in action. Remember what is being tested: be the best team player or leader you can be.

## Other Methods of Evaluation

Employers might also evaluate your skills in additional ways:

<b>WRITTEN SEGMENTS</b>	A written exercise allows interviewers to test written communication. You may be asked to write a letter, memo, or review and summarize a document. Read the instructions carefully, manage your time wisely, and be sure to check your work for errors.
<b>ROLE PLAYS</b>	An interviewer may fabricate a situation to see how you may use your skills. You and another person, most likely one of the interviewers, will act out the situation. Show off the skills that the employer would be most interested in.
<b>SKILLS TEST</b>	Some interviewers will administer tests to evaluate the technical skills required for the job. For example, you may be tested on computer programs.

<b>WRITTEN SEGMENTS</b>	A written exercise allows interviewers to test written communication. You may be asked to write a letter, memo, or review and summarize a document. Read the instructions carefully, manage your time wisely, and be sure to check your work for errors.
<b>PORTFOLIOS/ WORK SAMPLES</b>	A portfolio with samples of your work related to the position is expected in artistic fields. An employer relies heavily on a portfolio to evaluate a candidate's work. In other professions, a portfolio is an asset to highlight related projects. Use the portfolio to support your answers and provide "proof" of skills to the interviewer.
<b>PRESENTATIONS</b>	An employer may ask you to prepare a presentation, providing instructions days before your interview. Follow instructions carefully and show off the skills and knowledge required for the position by thoroughly preparing an engaging presentation.

## STEP 6: FOLLOW UP AFTER THE INTERVIEW

### Reflect

After every interview, evaluate your performance to learn from your experiences. Consider the following questions:

- What positive impressions did I make? Negative? Why did I make these impressions?
- Was there anything I wanted to say or ask about but did not?
- What questions would I have answered differently? How would I have changed my answers?
- How do I feel about the interview?

### TIP:

**Write down the questions you were asked and your responses after the interview.** This reflection can help you to prepare for future interviews and improve how you tackle similar questions.

### Thank you Notes or Emails

It is very important to send a thank you note or email following the interview within 24 hours. If you send it any later, you may miss your window of opportunity to impress the hiring team (manager) and thank them for their time. Ensure you request contact information at the end of the interview so that you can send your letter or email. For internal University of Manitoba interviews, you can find this information on the U of M people site. It is a good opportunity to communicate anything that you forgot in the interview, and to reinforce your interest in the position. An example of a thank you letter is included in [Appendix E](#).

## Accepting or Rejecting a Position

Depending on the faculty/unit/department, the hiring decision might be made quickly or it might take a few weeks for all parties to meet and agree upon a candidate. If you are the chosen applicant, congratulations! Now you have a decision to make. Once you receive the call, it is appropriate to ask for 24 hours to think before accepting the offer, if you need it. See [Appendix F: Letter of Decline](#) and [Appendix G: Letter of Acceptance](#) for examples of how to accept and decline a job offer in writing.

## Not Getting the Job

Keep in mind that rejection is a normal part of every job search. For every position, if 100 people apply, 99 will be rejected. This does not mean that you are not a good applicant. It simply means that you were not the best applicant for that particular job at that particular time. This often has to do with how you would have fit with their existing team. A manager who has a complex team has to be very careful whom he adds to his team. Similarly, an easy going team would not do well with a “mover and shaker”, unless the manager wants to push them in that direction. Do not get discouraged. Rejection happens to everyone and you can treat it as a learning opportunity. Consider each new application a new opportunity.

**Six major banks rejected Walt Disney's idea for Disneyland. They said no one would come.**

**A record company rejected the Beatles. They felt that electric guitar music was only a phase.**

### TIP:

**Did not get the job? Ask the interviewer for feedback so that you can improve.** Compliment the faculty/unit/department and make it clear you are still interested in the faculty/unit/department for the future. Try asking, “How can I improve my skills or presentation to be competitive for the next opening?”

Keep practicing and keep preparing. Your interview skills will continue to improve throughout the job search process. Getting an interview is an accomplishment in and of itself, and if you keep at it, the rewards of a great job will follow.

In the next section, you will learn about negotiation skills that you can use both on and off campus.

## STEP 7: SALARY NEGOTIATIONS

When entering into discussions of salary and benefits, it is crucial that you know the value you can bring to the position. Be prepared to justify any salary you suggest: cite your relevant experience, training, and achievements. Prior to negotiations, consider your lowest acceptable salary, keeping in mind factors such as the cost of living. You can also speak with people working in similar positions, including your colleagues who have recently begun work, and ask for a range (do not ask individuals for their specific salary). Here are the 5 steps that can help you during your negotiations.

### Employment Negotiation Skills

Before you consider the process of negotiation, it is crucial to understand parts of a job offer:

#### Usual Components:

Base salary, bonus pay, RRSP/Pension plan, salary increases, health benefits, vacation time, tuition assistance, vacation purchase plans, general leaves, and relocation expenses.

#### Additional Components:

Incentive pay, severance package, commission pay, sign-up bonus, professional organization memberships, golf/gym memberships, stock options, equipment: car, phone, gas card, pager, etc.

There are 5 steps to negotiating to ensure you increase your employer's interest in you as well as your power. Keeping both your interest and those of the position in mind will help you come across as reasonable and trustworthy.

#### 1. Obtain the offer (DO NOT NEGOTIATE AT THIS POINT)

- Show gratitude without showing strong emotion one way or another.
- Whether in person or over the phone, take a brief second to be silent allowing the manager to possibly offer more or show interest in negotiating. The initial offer is not the best offer they have.
- Ensure that you clarify the responsibilities of the position and what is expected of you.
- Clarify the entire package they offer. Negotiation is not just about salary. If they have not sent you a package, make sure you get one. Having it in writing helps.
- Ask for a day or two to review the offer.
- Set up a time to discuss the offer, preferably in person.

#### 2. Analyze and evaluate the offer

- Consider what your financial needs are and how this offer works into that.
- Remember to consider deductions made from your salary such as taxes and benefits.
- Think about what you are giving up and whether what you are getting in return is more important in terms of compensation, benefits, work environment, opportunity for advancement, etc.
- Collect and clarify any missing information by calling the company.

#### 3. Negotiate

- Thank them for the offer at the beginning of your meeting.
- Show your interest in the position (not your desperation).
- Re-emphasize the contributions you will be providing to their organization.
- Point out all the items on the offer that you are in agreement with.
- Address the least important item first that you would like to discuss. This allows you to practice for the "big one", helps you understand their negotiation style and allows you to show flexibility in negotiations.

### **3. Negotiate (con't)**

- Maybe you want 2 more weeks of vacation and they can only offer you one more. Meeting them half way on an issue that is less relevant to you, helps them see you as reasonable. Note that for unionized jobs, vacation and benefits are non-negotiable.
- When you get to negotiate your last and most important point (usually salary), state that you only have one more item to discuss before coming to the decision to sign on the dotted line. By now, you would have researched salary ranges, even within unionized environments. Understand that salary negotiations are acceptable in any environment especially if you can show the level of responsibility and contribution you can offer the organization based on your competencies and accomplishments. In unionized and public sector positions, you can normally only negotiate within the band of the position's classification. In other environments, if the base salary is too low, you can ask them to re-evaluate to a higher level based on your skill level. When you negotiate your salary, ask for the increase only after you state your case of how qualified you are and how much you can contribute based on your previous work. Pay attention to how you ask for more money. If you are paid by the hour, then figure out how much that is per hour and ask for the increase in the hourly wage. Some people break it down per month and ask for that. "Based on my qualifications and experience....I believe starting this position one dollar higher per hour (or \$200 per month more) than offered would be reasonable." The seemingly smaller amount makes it less shocking and easier for the hiring manager (team) to accept. The hiring manager (team) may need some time to discuss it with their business partner(s) or HR department. Be patient and allow them to do that. Some will do that right away, some will need to get back to you. Make sure you get a general idea of when they will get back to you.

### **4. Obtain counter offer**

- Sometimes agreement is not reached but they offer you a counter offer. Ask for a day or two to consider it. You might have to consider relooking at what is important to you and what is not, what other items you can negotiate on to get what you want, etc.

### **5. Obtain agreement and get it in writing**

- After the discussion, you and the hiring manager (team) need to review what you agreed upon.
- Ask for a clean copy with all the corrections prior to signing. Some people will sign the copy with all the corrections but you should obtain a clean final copy.
- Ensure you have a start date set up that works mutually.
- Show appreciation for their time and energy, and your enthusiasm to start.
- If you could not reach an agreement with the hiring manager (team) and you realize you need to walk away, do so professionally ensuring no bridges are burnt in the process.

## Appendix A: Preparing for an Interview: How to Analyze a Job Posting

<p>1<sup>st</sup> <b>PRINT</b></p>	<p>Print off the job posting for the position you are interested in.</p>
<p><b>No posting?</b></p>	<p>If the job posting is very minimal, research the skills required for similar jobs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at related job postings</li> <li>• <b><u>Speak with contacts in the field</u></b></li> <li>• Research professionals on LinkedIn</li> <li>• Use the <b><u>National Occupational Classification (NOC)</u></b> to obtain a generic duties listing</li> </ul>
<p>2<sup>nd</sup> <b>HIGHLIGHT</b></p>	<p>Highlight the <b>required qualifications</b> as well as the <b>skills and abilities</b> (sometimes called <b>competencies</b>). Colour code to stay organized. For example, yellow may indicate skills.</p>
<p><b>What's important?</b></p>	<p>Employers often list the most important qualifications or skills and abilities higher on the job posting. Often the job posting will repeat words that ask for specific competencies several times throughout the job ad (communication skills, teamwork, etc.). These competencies are very important to the unit/faculty or department.</p>
<p>3<sup>rd</sup> <b>YOU</b></p>	<p>Document where and how you have gained the skills asked for in the job posting, writing them out for your reference.</p>
<p><b>Focus your answers.</b></p>	<p>You have now identified the skills the interviewer cares about and how you meet that need. This will allow you to anticipate questions as well as focus your answers towards the knowledge, skills, and attributes that are of interest to the interviewer.</p>

Now that you have a clear understanding of what skills the interviewer is looking for and how you meet that criteria, use the sheet on the following page to organize that information.

## Preparing for an Interview: How to Deconstruct a Job Posting

QUALIFICATIONS

HOW DO YOU MEET THE CRITERIA?

SKILLS, ABILITIES OR DUTIES

HOW DO YOU MEET THE CRITERIA?

Fill out this table and use it as a checklist for what needs to be emphasized in your interview. Consider the questions the interviewer might ask to determine if you have these skills. When formulating your answers, keep these skills in the back of your mind.



## Appendix B: Skills Matching Worksheet

### WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

### I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...

Condense information/produce concise summary notes accurately with correct grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Write letters and reports that are logically structured and contain all relevant information.

Adapt writing style in consideration of different audiences.

### ORAL COMMUNICATION

### I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...

Ask and answer questions, clarify, and summarize what others are communicating.

Provide clear explanations and directions while instructing, educating and providing feedback.

Communicate with others using a variety of communication strategies to negotiate, mediate, resolve difficult issues and sell ideas.

### TEAMWORK

### I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...

Demonstrate respect and care. Is open and supportive of the thoughts, opinions, and contributions of others.

Actively contribute to team projects/tasks; fulfils required roles, participates in discussion to improve effectiveness.

Accept and share responsibility. Learn from constructive criticism and give positive and constructive feedback.

### LEADERSHIP

### I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...

Accept responsibility for decisions and display a positive attitude and perseverance.

Models a strong desire to succeed by demonstrating adaptability to achieve goals.

Take initiative in leading, supporting and motivating others in developing individual skills or tasks to achieve goals.

**PLANNING AND ORGANIZING****I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...**

Effectively apply organizing and planning skills to manage work.

Work effectively to complete deadlines when under pressure.

Proactively plans and manages work; monitors results through to successfully complete plans.

**PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS****I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...**

Make decisions in accordance to accepted practices and guidelines.

Use problem-solving strategies to identify and resolve problems, issues and determine solutions.

Recognize inconsistencies in reasoning. Makes decisions in situations that fall outside established guidelines or where the choice among options is less obvious.

**ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH****I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...**

Gather relevant secondary data and organize information in a logical manner.

Collect primary data and/or assist in carrying out surveys, focus groups, and lab analysis.

Analyze samples/surveys for quantitative/qualitative research.

**NUMERACY: able to carry out arithmetic operations/understand****I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...**

Perform calculations for adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing, and converting between fractions and decimals.

Perform complex calculations and operations that require using advanced multi-step mathematical strategies.

Analyze or compare numerical data to identify trends or compare statistics.

**DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY SKILLS****I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...**

Performs basic computer tasks, such as creating documents, saving files, and sending email.

Design web pages and a wide range of software skills.

Demonstrate in depth knowledge of computer software and information technology systems.

**PRESENTATION SKILLS****I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...**

Present basic information to one or more people using appropriate resources, vocabulary, and non-verbal language.

Prepare and present advanced information with clarity with the ability to respond to questions in a timely manner.

Facilitate interactive presentations of advanced information customized to the interests and needs of the audience.

**PERSONAL MANAGEMENT****I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...**

Demonstrate professionalism in recognizing expectations in work culture to maximize success in the workplace.

Embrace new opportunities, learn continuously, and identify importance in every job/task.

Anticipate the unexpected and respond quickly to sudden changes in circumstances.

**OTHER****I USE THIS SKILL WHEN...**

## Appendix C: Sample Interview Question

Reviewing common interview questions can be an effective part of your preparation. Instead of trying to memorize ‘the best’ answers you can think of, we suggest putting yourself in the position of the interviewer, and imagining what type of a response would impress you. A question may be phrased in any number of ways so memorizing responses to specific questions may leave you unable to generalize your personal information to an unexpected question. Your best strategy is to review such questions, and become comfortable discussing yourself and your related skills.

### CONSIDER THE ANSWER TO THESE QUESTIONS:

1. What do you see yourself doing five years from now? (This really means, what are your goals within this faculty/unit/department? They want someone who is willing to stay and grow within them).
2. What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
3. In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company? (Remember the Power of 3's - tell them your 3 most relevant skills you can contribute to their company!).
4. Do you think that your grades / work evaluations are a good indication of your ability in \_\_\_?
5. What have you learned from participation in extra-curricular activities?
6. In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
7. Why are you seeking a position with this company?
8. What do you know about this company?
9. What are your strengths? What is your greatest weakness?
10. How do you spend your spare time? What are your hobbies?
11. In what type of position are you most interested?
12. What jobs have you held? How were they obtained and why did you leave?
13. What qualifications do you have that make you feel that you will be successful in your field?
14. Do you prefer any specific geographic location? Why?
15. What have you learned from some of the jobs you have held?
16. What interests you about our product (or service)?
17. Define co-operation.
18. What jobs have you enjoyed the most? What jobs have you enjoyed the least? Why?
19. What are your own special abilities?
20. What job in our company do you want to work toward?
21. What have you done which shows initiative and willingness to work?
22. Why should I hire you?
23. How would your present/former manager describe you?
24. What would your co-workers tell me about you?
25. What are/were some aspects of your work you did not enjoy and why

## Appendix D: Behavioural Interview Questions Grouped by Competency

### ADAPTABILITY

- Tell me about a situation in which you have had to adjust to changes over which you had no control. How did you handle it?
- Tell me about a time when you had to adjust to a classmate's or colleague's working style in order to complete a project or achieve your objectives.
- How was your transition from high school to college? Did you face any particular problems? How did you handle them?

### ANALYTICAL SKILLS / PROBLEM SOLVING

- Describe the project or situation that best demonstrates your analytical abilities. What was your role?
- Tell me about a time when you had to analyze information and make a recommendation. To whom did you make the recommendation? What was your reasoning? What kind of thought process did you go through? Why? Was the recommendation accepted? If not, why?
- Tell me about a situation where you had to solve a difficult problem. What did you do? What was your thought process? What was the outcome? What do you wish you had done differently?
- What steps do you follow to study a problem before making a decision? Why?

### COMMUNICATION

- Tell me about a recent successful experience in making a speech or presentation? How did you prepare? What obstacles did you face? How did you handle them?
- Have you ever had to "sell" an idea to your classmates or co-workers? How did you do it? Did they accept your idea?
- Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa). How did you handle the situation? What obstacles or difficulties did you face? How did you deal with them?
- Tell me about a time in which you had to use your written communication skills in order to get an important point across.

### CREATIVITY

- When was the last time you thought "outside the box" and how did you do it? Why?
- Tell me about a problem that you've solved in a unique or unusual way. What was the outcome? Were you happy or satisfied with it?
- Give me an example of when someone brought you a new idea that was odd or unusual. What did you do?

### DECISION MAKING

- Tell me about a time when you had to make a decision without all the information you needed. How did you handle it? Why? Were you happy with the outcome?
- Give me an example of a time when you had to be quick in coming to a decision. What obstacles did you face? What did you do?
- What is the most difficult decision you've had to make? How did you arrive at your decision? What was the result?

### GOAL SETTING

- Give me an example of an important goal which you have set and tell me how you reached it. What steps did you take? What obstacles did you encounter? How did you overcome the obstacles?
- Tell me about a goal that you set that you did not reach. What steps did you take? What obstacles did you encounter? How did it make you feel?

**INITIATIVE**

- Describe a project or idea (not necessarily your own) that was implemented primarily because of your efforts. What was your role? What was the outcome?
- Describe a situation in which you recognized a potential problem as an opportunity. What did you do? What was the result? What do you wish you had done differently?
- Tell me about a project you initiated. What did you do? Why? What was the outcome? Were you happy with the result?
- Tell me about a time when your initiative caused a change to occur.
- What was the best idea you came up with during your professional or college career? How did you apply it?

**INTEGRITY/HONESTY**

- Discuss a time when your integrity was challenged. How did you handle it?
- Tell me about a time when you experienced a loss for doing what is right. How did you react?
- Tell me about a business situation when you felt honesty was inappropriate. Why? What did you do?
- Give a specific example of a policy you conformed to with which you did not agree. Why?

**INTERPERSONAL SKILLS**

- Give an example of when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. How/why was this person difficult? How did you handle it? How did the relationship progress?
- Describe a situation where you found yourself dealing with someone who didn't like you. How did you handle it?
- Describe a recent unpopular decision you made. How was it received? How did you handle it?
- What, in your opinion, are the key ingredients in guiding and maintaining successful business relationships? Give me examples of how you have made these work for you.
- Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa). How did you handle the situation?
- Tell me about a time when you had to work on a team with someone you did not get along with. What happened?
- Describe a situation where you had a conflict with another individual, and how you dealt with it. What was the outcome? How did you feel about it?

**LEADERSHIP**

- Tell me about a team project when you had to take the lead or take charge of the project? What did you do? How did you do it? What was the result?
- Describe a leadership role of yours. Why did you commit your time to it? How did you feel about it?
- What is the toughest group that you have had to get cooperation from? What were the obstacles? How did you handle the situation? What were the reactions of the group members? What was the end result?

**PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION / TIME MANAGEMENT**

- Describe a situation that required you to do a number of things at the same time. How did you handle it? What was the result?
- How do you prioritize projects and tasks when scheduling your time? Give me some examples.
- Tell me about a project that you planned. How did you organize and schedule the tasks? Tell me about your action plan.

**TEAMWORK**

- Describe a situation where others you were working with on a project disagreed with your ideas.
- Tell me about a time when you worked with a classmate or colleague who was not doing their share of the work. How did you handle it?
- Describe a situation in which you had to arrive at a compromise or help others to compromise. What was your role? What steps did you take? What was the result?
- Tell me about a time when you had to work on a team that did not get along. What happened? What role did you take? What was the result?

## Appendix E: Thank You Note After The Interview

Sending a thank you note by email is a great way to show your appreciation to your interviewers and make sure they continue to think of you in a positive light. This should be done within 24 hours, otherwise it may be too late to impact their decision. Some job seekers prefer to send a handwritten note or card. This can be effective, but be sure this arrives in a timely manner and is not tied up in the postal system. Especially if you are applying to a high tech or newer industry, an email is usually your best bet.

Dear Ms. Habit:

I would like to thank you and Mr. Larbit for granting me the opportunity to discuss the Research Assistant position with you. The interview was both thorough and informative and increased my interest in this position.

I am especially interested in assisting with the development of preventative vaccines. My experience as a Research Assistant at the University of Manitoba Animal Research Labs, and my Agriculture Degree in Animal Science have provided me with the skills and knowledge required to succeed in this position. The combination of working with animals and conducting research in a team atmosphere constitute an excellent work environment for me, one in which I excel.

Thank you again for your time. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

John Mack

## Appendix F: Letter of Decline

Dear Ms. Chau:

It was indeed a pleasure meeting with you and your staff to discuss your needs for an Engineer in Training. Our time together was most enjoyable and informative.

After careful consideration, I have decided to withdraw from consideration for this position. My decision is based upon the fact that I have accepted a position elsewhere that is very suited to my qualifications and experiences.

I want to thank you for interviewing me and giving me the opportunity to learn more about your facility. You have a fine team and I would have enjoyed working with you.

Best wishes to you and your staff.

Sincerely,

Karen Redmond

## Appendix G: Letter of Acceptance

Dear Ms. Smith:

I would like to express my appreciation for your letter offering me the position of Student Advisor with the Department of Family Social Sciences at a starting salary of \$xxx annually. I was very impressed with the discussion I had with the panel and am excited to confirm my acceptance of your offer. As requested, I am able to start work on May 1, 2017.

Let me once again express my appreciation for your offer and my excitement about joining your team. I look forward to my association with the Department of Family Social Sciences and feel my contributions will be in line with your goals of growth and continued success for the Department.

Sincerely,

Robert Obi