

The SIUE Pre-Pharmacy Association and the SIUE Career Development Center Interviewing Skills and Preparation

Preparation Tips

Remember these three simple rules:

1. First impressions are lasting impressions.
2. There are no second chances to make a good first impression!
3. It pays to be prepared.

Practice your interviewing techniques by participating in mock interviews. Do as many mock interviews as necessary to help you feel comfortable with the process. You might want to practice in front of the mirror or with family and/or friends.

Be Focused

1. Develop a sound resume that outlines your experience and skills and that supports your objective of entering the School of Pharmacy. It is not necessary for you to bring a resume to the interview. However, putting your academic and employment experience on paper may help you get a clear picture of your accomplishments. This exercise could remind you of your best characteristics.
2. Review information about pharmacy as a career. Websites to help you do this include:
 - The American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy www.aacp.org
 - The Occupational Outlook Handbook www.bls.gov
 - SIUE School of Pharmacy www.siu.edu/PHARMACY
3. Think about what you can offer the SIUE School of Pharmacy. Consider the unique skills and abilities that you bring.
4. Prepare a 1-2 minute mini script about yourself; include your educational background, experience, and the reasons why you are interested in becoming a pharmacist.
5. Bring a note pad and pen.

Dress/Hygiene

1. Dress in professional attire; it is best to be conservative.
2. Do wear deodorant, but don't wear perfume or cologne. If the interviewer is allergic to perfumes, your interview will likely end prematurely.
3. Cosmetics should be conservative.
4. Wear a minimal amount of jewelry.

Non-Verbal Communication

1. Greet the interviewer with a firm handshake and a smile.
2. Stand and sit-up straight.
3. Make and maintain eye contact.
4. Talk loud enough to be heard but not too loudly.
5. Communicate with pride, honesty and confidence about your accomplishments and potential.
6. Be energetic and enthusiastic.

During the Interview

1. Keep in mind that the interviewers are interested in how you respond. They want to see that you are logical and that you give thoughtful consideration to your answers.
2. Try not to hurry responses, take time to formulate your thoughts. There may be a few seconds of silence as you prepare your answer.
3. It is appropriate for you to discuss your academic and employment experiences. Focus on your skills and abilities.
4. Be honest about what you do not know. Emphasize your ability to learn and adapt.

Successful preparation for the School of Pharmacy interview must include anticipating and rehearsing answers to commonly asked questions. The following list is intended to give a general understanding of the types of questions that interviewers may ask. It is not intended to be inclusive.

Standard Questions

1. Tell us about yourself.
2. How did you choose SIUE?
3. Why do you want to become a pharmacist?
4. What is your greatest strength?
5. What is your greatest weakness?
6. What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?

7. How would you define success?
8. What are your career goals?
9. Why should you be admitted to the SIUE School of Pharmacy?

Behavior-Based Questions

1. What do you feel have been your most significant school/work related accomplishments?
2. Discuss an instance when you felt most pressured and stressed in school. How did you handle it? What was the outcome?
3. Describe the most valuable criticism you have received and what you did with it.
4. Tell us about the last time you made a decision that backfired. How did you resolve the dilemma?
5. Give an example of a project/situation that demanded attention to detail. How did you handle the details?
6. Describe what you liked best about the pre-pharmacy courses you have taken. What did you like the least?

Find a partner and practice answering these questions.