

Interviewing for graduate school –

Many students and student organizations have asked me to do ‘mock’ interviews for them, however, I always decline. There are many different formats that are used for interviewing. I do not know which format they will use or which questions they will ask. Therefore, I worry that a ‘mock interview’ might give the student a false sense of security with the result that the student is actually MORE upset in the interview when they are not asked those specific questions in that format.

One student/one professor

One student/one current graduate student

One student/several professors

Several students/one professor

Instead of conducting mock interviews, I make other recommendations that will help in any situation.

- Make sure you are sitting comfortably. If you have a bad back and need a firm chair, ask for one. (Also, do not sit on a chair that sits lower than the chair of the interviewer as you are put at a psychological disadvantage. Just claim you need a firmer chair and wait for them to get one.)
- If you are uncomfortable looking someone directly in the eye, look at a spot right above the bridge of their nose and it will **APPEAR** you are looking them directly in the eye.
- Be able to describe your work/research clearly and concisely in 4 or 5 sentences. Just like you do in an ‘Elevator Speech’. (See video on ‘The Elevator Speech’.) If you do not know how long of an explanation the interviewer wants, give the clear, concise version and then **ASK** if they would like you to continue.
- Always go to the interview with some ‘good’ questions ready, so if there is a lull in the conversation and you are uncomfortable, ask the question.

What is a ‘good’ question? You can always ask the professor about her/his research. (**PROFESS**-or. They love to talk. Just get them going.) Or you can ask if graduate students can also complete Certificates in Entrepreneurship?

Do not ask questions that reflect poorly on you or make you appear naïve/shallow, like ‘How many of your graduates get jobs?’

- Never quit interviewing until you are on the plane headed home. I have seen students become bored or exhausted and just ‘quit’ before the day is over.
- When you get back to your home institution, always write a thank you letter or email. Just thank them for the opportunity to interview and maybe reiterate your interest, but don’t keep giving them a hard sales pitch about your virtues.