**University of Alabama**

**MIS Program**

Mock Interviews

Interviewer Manual

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Welcome

Welcome to the University of Alabama MIS Spring Mock Interviews. Thank you for helping prepare the next generation of UA MIS students as they head into the workforce! Your participation in this event is extremely valuable. We are seeking to provide our students with a competitive advantage while job-hunting by polishing their resumes and interviewing skills.

Within this packet we have provided you with instructions and guidelines for your student interaction, whether you are conducting for us:

* a behavioral interview/resume review or
* a technical interview

**General Instructions:**

* The students should treat this session as they would an actual interview or professional mentoring session. They should be professionally dressed and be prepared to communicate and promote their skills and capabilities.
* If they act as if they are not taking this seriously or are not prepared, please call them on it and demand that they take responsibility for their own career preparation.
* Be frank about the student’s ability to promote themselves. Ask yourself: would you hire this person based on this interview (or resume)? If not, why?
* We ask that during these sessions you take the last 10 minutes to provide the students with the most constructive feedback possible. During this debrief, the students should take notes, and ask questions to clarify your feedback.

Thank you again for helping our students – your future colleagues!

Sincerely,

The University of Alabama MIS Faculty

Daily Schedule

The students will participate in two interviews, one behavioral and one technical. Each interview will last a total of 30 minutes. The first 20 minutes will be an interview, with the last 10 minutes reserved for performance feedback and questions. The schedule will be the same both days and is detailed below. Please note that all times are in central time.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Time** | **Activity** |
| 8:30 – 9:00 am | Arrive (Breakfast provided for in-person interviewers) |
| **9:00 – 12:00 pm** | **Morning Interview Session** |
| 12:00 – 1:00 pm | Break (Lunch provided for in-person interviewers) |
| **1:00 – 4:00 pm** | **Afternoon Interview Session** |

Resumes

All UA MIS students have been provided with a resume template. These templates have been included for your reference at the end of this manual. There is one template for undergraduate MIS students (page #14), and a second template for graduate MIS students (page #15).

****Behavioral Interview****

Topic-Based Behavioral Interview Questions

**Problem Solving**

* **When was the last time you solved a difficult problem that would have significant impact?**
* **What was the situation?**
* **How did you go about analyzing the problem?**
* **What additional information did you gather?**
* **What alternative solutions did you consider?**
* **Tell me how you implemented your solution.**
* **What was the outcome?**

**Decision Making**

* **What was the most difficult decision you have made in the last six months?**
* **What was the situation?**
* **What made it difficult?**
* **What factors or variables did you consider?**
* **What did you decide?**
* **What was the result?**

**Initiative**

* **Describe your best example of taking the initiative to do something that needed to be done, even though it wasn't really your responsibility.**
* **What was the situation?**
* **What circumstances required you to act?**
* **What actions did you take?**
* **What impact did your initiative have on the situation?**

**Achievement /Drive**

* **Describe a situation in which you believe you were effective in achieving an aggressive goal.**
* **What caused you to work hard to meet this objective?**
* **What methods or skills did you use to meet your goal?**
* **What were the results?**
* **What feedback did you receive?**

**Handling Details**

* **Tell me about the most significant project you have worked on in which it was crucial to keep track of details while still managing the “big picture.”**
* **What was the project?**
* **What skills did you utilize in managing it?**
* **How did you make sure the work got done?**
* **How did you keep focused on the overall goal of the project while still managing all of the specific parts?**
* **How did the project turn out?**
* **What feedback did you receive on your management of the task?**

**Oral Communication**

* **Describe a time when you had great difficulty communicating your thoughts clearly to another person or group.**
* **What was the situation?**
* **What message were you trying to convey?**
* **Where did the difficulty in communicating effectively lie?**
* **What did you do to get your point across more clearly?**
* **What was the outcome?**

**Conflict Management**

* **Tell me about a time when you voiced a concern or disagreement to a co-worker, supervisor, or professor.**
* **Where did the disagreement originate?**
* **What did you say to the other person?**
* **What was his/her reaction?**
* **What was the outcome of the disagreement?**

**Coordinating/Leading Others**

* **Tell me about a situation in which you had to coordinate several people to achieve a goal.**
* **What prompted you to take the lead?**
* **How did you go about coordinating and leading the group?**
* **How did they respond?**
* **What tools did you use to measure the progress of the group?**
* **What was the outcome?**

**Managing Stress**

* **Describe your most disappointing experience.**
* **How did you cope with it?**
* **What did you do to move beyond it?**

**Technical Expertise**

* **Tell me about a time you were effective in putting your technical expertise to use to solve a problem.**
* **What was the problem?**
* **In what ways did you draw upon your technical knowledge to solve it?**
* **What was the outcome?**

**Creativity**

* **What is the most creative thing you have ever done?**
* **Or: Describe a situation where you came up with a creative solution to a problem.**

**Risk Taking**

* **How do you deal with risk on the job?**
* **Name the greatest risk that you've taken.**
* **Or: Name the greatest risk that you've taken which resulted in failure.**

****Situational Behavioral Interview Questions****

1. Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
2. Summarize a situation where you took the initiative to get others going on an important issue and played a leading role to achieve the results wanted.
3. What steps do you follow to study a problem before making a decision?
4. Describe an instance when you had to think on your feet to extricate yourself from a difficult situation.
5. What was the most complex assignment you have had? What was your role?
6. Provide an example of how you acquired a technical skill and converted it into a practical application.
7. 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).
8. Describe a creative/innovative idea that you produced which led to a significant contribution to the success of an activity or project.
9. What kind of supervisor do you work best for? Provide examples.
10. Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
11. Describe a situation that required a number of things to be done at the same time. How did you handle it? What was the result?
12. How do you determine priorities in scheduling your time? Give examples.
13. Give me an example of an important goal which you had set in the past and tell me about your success in reaching it.
14. Give an example of when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. Why was this person difficult? How did you handle that person?
15. Describe a problem situation where you had to seek out relevant information, define key issues, and decide on which steps to take to get desired results.
16. We can sometimes identify a small problem and fix it before it becomes a major problem. Give an example of how you have done this.
17. Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
18. Tell me about a time in which you had to use your written communication skills in order to get an important point across.
19. Describe the most significant or creative presentation which you have had to complete.
20. Give me a specific occasion in which you conformed to a policy with which you did not agree.
21. Describe a time on any job that you held in which you were faced with problems or stresses that tested your coping skills.
22. By providing examples, convince me that you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations and environments.
23. Give an example of a time in which you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision.

Technical Interview Questions

Critical Thinking

Example: How many golf balls you can fit into a school bus.

Brain Teasers

Example: Suppose you are given eight balls of the same size. These balls are all the same weight except for one, which is a little heavier. You are given a balance (a weighing machine that tells you which of two weights is heaviest) and asked to find the heaviest ball with just two weighings. Assuming this is possible, how can you do it?

To answer the example above:

To crack this problem you need to realize that if you were given just three balls then you could find the heaviest in a single weighing: If two of the three balls are weighed and found to be equal then the third (unweighed) ball must be the heaviest. If they are unequal, then the scale will indicate the heaviest.

From here it isn't much of a stretch to see how you can find the heaviest of eight balls with just two weighings.

To find the heaviest ball, you must divide the eight balls into three groups (one of these having just two balls). You then compare the weight of the two three-ball groups.

If both three-ball groups have the same weight then you know that the heaviest ball is one of the balls in the remaining two-ball group and you just need one more weighing to determine which ball it is.

If the three-ball groups have unequal weight then you now know that the heaviest ball is in the heavier of these two groups.

Choose any two balls from the heaviest group and compare their weights. If they are equal then you know that the remaining ball from that group (the one you didn't weigh) is the heaviest. If they are not equal then the balance will indicate which is heaviest.

Programming

Example: Write a program to print the numbers 1 to 100, replacing multiples of three with “Fizz,” multiples of five with “Buzz,” and multiples of both three and five with “Fizz Buzz.”

Many possible solutions exist for this simple problem.

Here is a straightforward solution in C#:

static void FizzBuzz()

{

for (int i = 1; i <= 100; i++)

{

if (i % 3 == 0 && i % 5 == 0)

Console.WriteLine("Fizz Buzz");

else if (i % 5 == 0)

Console.WriteLine("Buzz");

else if (i % 3 == 0)

Console.Write("Fizz");

else

Console.Write(i);

}

}

Additional Technical Interview Questions

1. **What are your IT strengths and weaknesses?**
2. **Tell me about the most recent project you worked on.**
   1. **What were your responsibilities?**
   2. **What is the technology and architecture of the system?**
   3. **What value did you add to that system?**
3. **Tell me about the project you are most proud of, and what your contribution was.**
4. **Describe the project or situation that best demonstrates your coding (analytical) skills?**
5. **Tell us about your current project, and your role on that project?**
   1. **What was one of the major hurdles you had to overcome, and what did you do to resolve the issue?**
6. **Tell us about one of the technical problems you had to solve recently?**
7. **What part(s) of the project life cycle have you worked with?**
8. **How would you describe your approach to software development?**
9. **How do you rate yourself in each of the major technologies mentioned in the job description or advertisement?**
10. **Can you name someone, not necessarily someone well-known, who has influenced the way you approach software development?**
11. **Describe a bug or a problem that you couldn't resolve.**
12. **What is your worst technical skill?**
13. **What experience do you have that is relevant to building large-scale web applications?**
14. **Do you prefer to work on the front-end or back-end of applications?**
15. **What is your most-used software development environment?**
16. **What version control tools have you used? Which do you prefer and why?**
17. **Write a program to concatenate two strings.**
18. **Write a program to sum all the even numbers within N.**
19. **Write a program to reverse all characters in an array.**
20. **How important is it to work directly with your business users? Why?**
21. **Give an example of where you applied your technical knowledge in a practical way.**
22. **Describe a time when you were able to improve upon the design of a technical product**
23. **Have you used Visual Studio? Tell me how you have used it and when.**
24. **When is it appropriate to de-normalize database design?**
25. **What operating system do you prefer and why?**
26. **What is peer-to-peer networking?**
27. **What is data mining?**
28. **What is an ERD?**
29. **What is normalization and give me an example.**
30. **Create a simple SQL Query that selects the first name and last name from table User where the first name is equal to John.**
31. **Create an Entity-Relationship-Diagram for an automated system that allows campers to sign up for activities throughout their week. The camp has campers, supervisors, and counselors. Campers can sign up to participate in activities and counselors can sign up to work different activities. Campers can sign up for multiple activities and counselors can instruct multiple activities. An activity has one counselor and is created by one supervisor. Only supervisors can create or discard activities. An activity has a subject, time, date, and counselor. Each counselor is assigned to one supervisor. There are more counselors than supervisors. First name and last name are tracked for campers, counselors, and supervisors.**
32. **Walk me through an example of data mining.**
33. **Given the array, a a b b a a c c b b, of unknown length, write an algorithm that figures out which occurs most frequently and with the most continuous repetition.**
34. **How many ping-pong balls can fit into a school bus?**
35. **How would you measure out 4 gallons of water with a 3 gallon and 5 gallon bucket?**
36. **In SQL, what is the difference between an inner join and a left join?**
37. **What is revision/version control?**
38. **What does the V in MVC stand for, and what does it signify?**
39. **What is the difference between a class and an object?**
40. **What is unit testing?**
41. **Name and briefly describe three different kinds of testing that might be performed on an application before it is released to live.**
42. **What is the difference between iteration and recursion?**
43. **What is loose-coupling?**
44. **What is a stateless system?**
45. **What is the difference between an interface and an abstract class?**
46. **What is SQL injection?**
47. **What are some important differences between a linked list and an array?**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Joe A. Example Jr II**  [student@crimson.ua.edu](mailto:student@crimson.ua.edu)  123 Main Street  Tuscaloosa, AL 35404 (205) 333-3333  [www.linkedin.com/in/joestudent](http://www.linkedin.com/in/joestudent) | | |
| **EDUCATION** | Candidate for **Bachelor of Science in Commerce & Business Administration,** The University of Alabama  **Graduation** **Date**: December 2014 **GPA**: 3.25/4.00  **Major**: Management Information Systems **Specialization:** Business Communications | |
| **EXPERIENCE** |  | |
| *Month Year – Month Year* | **Descriptive Title,** *Company Name, Location City, Location State*  *Goal:* State the goal (as you did on WCAs) It should be the major objectives of the organization/your project.  *Value:* State the organizational benefits from achieving the goal (as you did for WCAs).  *My Contribution:*   * Be Specific on what difference you presence (deliverable) made to achieving the goal * Quantify if possible * Remember CAR (use context—in the *Goal*, action—in the *My Contribution*, result—in the *Value*) | |
| **Examples**  *Month Year – Month Year* | **Software Developer,** *Sealy Realty, Tuscaloosa, AL*  *Goal:* To design a dashboard metric system for a property management company.  *Value:* After implementation managers will have timely status of repair tags and allocate resources to ensure renters issues are resolved thereby reducing rental turnover and have utilization rates for maintenance staff.  *My Contribution:*   * Gathered and verified business requirements * Translate business requirements into functional specifications and then to coding & database designs * Construct application in C#, MVC dot.net * Document and test application | |
| *Month Year – Month Year* | **President,** *University of Alabama Sporting Club, Tuscaloosa, AL*  *Goal:* Create high-performance environment and support structures for team members.  *Value:* Recruit goal-oriented, motivated, high capability individuals that will learn the UA process, and provide an additional retention mechanism to the university.  *My Contribution:*   * Developed a recruiting program through contacts with high school coaches * Led strategic planning initiative to standardize club processes * Established a player mentor program that improves player retention and next class recruiting | |
| *Month Year – Month Year* | **Project Manager,** *University of Alabama MIS Program, Tuscaloosa, AL*  *Goal:* To follow a methodology to create a website to meet client specific requirements and expectations.  *Value:* By creating a website for the client, customer retention and compensation increases.  *My Contribution:*   * Scheduled team meetings with client * Gathered client’s that would better suit the client needs * Delegated tasks appropriately throughout the team based on member strengths | |
| **TECHNICAL EXPERIENCE** | **Languages:** List in order of technical knowledge depth. Don’t have to be an expert, but must have knowledge now.  **Frameworks:** < MIS 320 students and above only > (ex: MVC 4, Cocoa Touch)  **Operating Environments:** List in order of knowledge depth. No specific version (ex: MS Windows, UNIX)  **Business Tools:** List in order of knowledge depth, skip the obvious (ex: Minitab, Visual Studio, .NET, Visio) | |
| **HONORS AND ACTIVITIES** | **President’s List**  **National Merit Scholarship Recipient** | **Health Hut Intern/Project Health**  **Alpha Gamma Delta Sorority** |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Joe A. Example Jr II**  student@crimson.ua.edu | (205) 333-3333 | linkedin.com/in/joestudent | | |
| **EDUCATION** | Candidate for **Master of Science in Management Information Systems,** The University of Alabama  **Graduation** **Date**: December 2023 **GPA**: 3.5/4.0  Candidate for **Bachelor of Science in Commerce & Business Administration,** The University of Alabama  **Graduation** **Date**: December 2023 **GPA**: 3.3/4.0  **Major**: Management Information Systems **Minor:** Statistics | |
| **EXPERIENCE** |  | |
| *Month Year – Month Year* | **Descriptive Title/Role,**Company Name *| Location City, Location State*  *Goal:* State the goal; it should be the major objectives of the organization/your project  *Value:* State the organizational benefits from achieving the goal  *My Contribution:*   * Be Specific on what difference your presence (deliverable) made to achieving the goal * Quantify if possible; Focus on the outcome and the “so what” of your contribution * Begin each bullet point with an action verb | |
| **Examples**  *Month Year – Month Year* | **Software Developer,**Sealy Realty *| Tuscaloosa, AL*  *Goal:* To design a dashboard metric system for a property management company  *Value:* After implementation managers will have timely status of repair tags and allocate resources to ensure renters issues are resolved thereby reducing rental turnover and have utilization rates for maintenance staff  *My Contribution:*   * Gathered and verified business requirements * Translate business requirements into functional specifications and then to coding & database designs * Construct application in C#, MVC dot.net * Document and test application | |
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| *May 2020 –*  *Aug 2020* | **Project Manager,** TheUniversity of Alabama MIS Program *| Tuscaloosa, AL*  *Goal:* To follow a methodology to create a website to meet client specific requirements and expectations  *Value:* By creating a website for the client, customer retention, and compensation increases  *My Contribution:*   * Scheduled team meetings with client * Gathered client’s that would better suit the client needs * Delegated tasks appropriately throughout the team based on member strengths | |
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| **HONORS AND ACTIVITIES** | **President’s List**  **National Merit Scholarship Recipient**  **Study Abroad in El Escorial, Spain**  **Mission Trip to Managua, Nicaragua** | **Health Hut Intern/Project Health**  **Alpha Gamma Delta Sorority**  **Assistant Editor for *The Odyssey* Greek Newspaper**  **Greek Ambassador** |