



DETERMINING & VERIFYING YOUR PROFICIENCY

Competencies for Clemson University Students to Develop and Articulate

Even though someone demonstrating a competency is one of the best ways to authenticate proficiency, using behavioral questions can serve as an alternative. Behavioral questions ask applicants to describe a situation when they had to carry out a specific task or exhibit a certain behavior. It's more effective than asking a hypothetical question – what would you do if...? Use the STAR method as a guide to talk through an experiences in a brief but effective manner.

USING THE STAR METHOD TO ANSWER BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The STAR Method is a systematic structure to follow when answering behavioral-based questions during an interview. For example, when an interviewer asks you to share a time when you set a goal and accomplished it, you can use the STAR Method as an outline for discussing this experience. It is important that you “tell the story” of your experience by including the situation, task, action and result. Below is a sample behavioral interview question and STAR response.

S	Situation	Detail the background. Provide a context. Where? When?
T	Task	Describe the challenge and expectation. What needed to be done? Why?
A	Action	Elaborate your specific action. What did you do? How? What tools did you use?
R	Results	Explain the results: accomplishments, recognition, savings, etc. Quantify

Tell me about a time that you had to prioritize tasks to ensure that work was completed in a timely manner.

Situation (S): Advertising revenue was falling off for my college newspaper, The Tiger, and many of the long-term advertisers were not renewing contracts.

Task (T): My goal was to assemble a marketing team to generate new ideas, create an action plan and discuss incentives that would result in at least a 15% increase in advertisers from the year before.

Action (A): As a result of the marketing team’s suggestions, I designed a new promotional packet to go with the rate sheet and compared the benefits of The Tiger circulation with other ad media in the area. I also set-up a special training session for the account executives with a College of Business and Behavioral Sciences professor who discussed competitive selling strategies.

Result (R): We signed contracts with 15 former advertisers for daily ads and five for special supplements. We increased our new advertisers by 20 percent over the same period last year.

Adapted from www.depauw.edu/files/resources/star-method.com

USING THIS PACKET

The behavioral interview questions are organized by the five proficiency levels of Awareness, Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, and Expert. Read through the five behavioral interview questions for a competency and reflect on previous experience(s) that could serve as the basis for a STAR response. The “answer” space can be used to make notes on a response.

Remember competency development occurs over a life-time thus no one expects undergraduate or graduate students to reach the expert level by the time they graduate. If answering the intermediate or higher proficiency level questions is a challenge, develop goals and identify future experiences that would allow for a STAR response in the future. The CCPD also has [behavioral interview questions](#) that are not organized by proficiency levels.



VERIFYING YOUR PROFICIENCY – COMMUNICATION

Answer a behavioral interview question based on your experience(s) to help verify your level of proficiency

Engagement		
Communication	Collaboration	Leadership
Engaging in dialogue that leads to productive outcomes and points of connection by effectively articulating one's self to individuals within and outside of one's industry or area of expertise.	Developing authentic and mutually beneficial relationships by valuing everyone and taking responsibility for one's role within a team.	Being able to recognize, respect, develop, and capitalize on the unique strengths of individuals from all backgrounds and being an active member in a group that achieves a shared vision.
Level of Proficiency	Behavioral Interview Questions	
Awareness <i>theoretical knowledge</i>	Tell me about a time when you had to compose a message that provided ideas and supporting information.	
Basic <i>limited experience</i>	Tell me about a time when you tailored your communication style or message to different audiences while maintaining your intended outcome.	
Intermediate <i>practical application</i>	Tell me about a time when you adapted your message to others' learning styles, languages, cultural backgrounds, and/or levels of understanding to foster dialogue and productive outcomes.	
Advanced <i>extensive experience and application</i>	Tell me about a time when you anticipated others' reactions and prepared for questions and counter-arguments when presenting complex or sensitive information.	
Expert <i>recognized for mastery and attainment in all areas</i>	Tell me about a time when you modeled inclusive communication (e.g. taking into account others' learning styles, languages, cultural backgrounds) and assisted others in developing strategic communication plans.	
Answer:		



VERIFYING YOUR PROFICIENCY – COLLABORATION

Answer a behavioral interview question based on your experience(s) to help verify your level of proficiency

Engagement		
Communication	Collaboration	Leadership
Engaging in dialogue that leads to productive outcomes and points of connection by effectively articulating one’s self to individuals within and outside of one’s industry or area of expertise.	Developing authentic and mutually beneficial relationships by valuing everyone and taking responsibility for one’s role within a team.	Being able to recognize, respect, develop, and capitalize on the unique strengths of individuals from all backgrounds and being an active member in a group that achieves a shared vision.
Level of Proficiency	Behavioral Interview Questions	
Awareness <i>theoretical knowledge</i>	Tell me about a time when you understood the importance of building genuine relationships with individuals you had to work with in an academic or non-academic setting.	
Basic <i>limited experience</i>	Tell me about a time when you contributed to a team-based initiative and observed how different teams function and value its members.	
Intermediate <i>practical application</i>	Tell me about a time when you formed relationships with people outside of your immediate area/department and contributed to an organization or company goal.	
Advanced <i>extensive experience and application</i>	Tell me about a time when you led a team and created a positive and supportive team environment by accepting responsibility, meeting team commitments, valuing others, and sharing relevant information or resources to help others.	
Expert <i>recognized for mastery and attainment in all areas</i>	Tell me about a time when you served as a connector for individuals seeking to build networks and learning how to leverage networks in mutually beneficial ways.	
Answer:		



VERIFYING YOUR PROFICIENCY – LEADERSHIP

Answer a behavioral interview question based on your experience(s) to help verify your level of proficiency

Engagement		
Communication	Collaboration	Leadership
Engaging in dialogue that leads to productive outcomes and points of connection by effectively articulating one’s self to individuals within and outside of one’s industry or area of expertise.	Developing authentic and mutually beneficial relationships by valuing everyone and taking responsibility for one’s role within a team.	Being able to recognize, respect, develop, and capitalize on the unique strengths of individuals from all backgrounds and being an active member in a group that achieves a shared vision.
Level of Proficiency	Behavioral Interview Questions	
Awareness <i>theoretical knowledge</i>	Tell me about a time when you observed a supervisor, advisor, professor, other employee or student developing a group and leading them towards achieving a shared vision or goal.	
Basic <i>limited experience</i>	Tell me about a time when you observed a supervisor, advisor, professor, other employee or student recognize, respect, develop, and capitalize on the unique strengths of individuals from all backgrounds.	
Intermediate <i>practical application</i>	Tell me about a time when you encouraged discussion where individuals could express different points of view to develop a shared vision or achieve a common goal.	
Advanced <i>extensive experience and application</i>	Tell me about a time when you empowered others to achieve a shared vision and communicated group accomplishments to stakeholders.	
Expert <i>recognized for mastery and attainment in all areas</i>	Tell me about a time when you served as a conduit to assist groups in aligning objectives with broader organizational or global objectives.	
Answer:		



VERIFYING YOUR PROFICIENCY – ADAPTABILITY

Answer a behavioral interview question based on your experience(s) to help verify your level of proficiency

Innovation

Adaptability

Analytical Skills

Technology

Taking the initiative to further enhance one's skill set and being creative with ways of thinking or approaches that allow for action, reflection, failure, and resilience in an ever-changing world.

Seizing the opportunity for organizational improvement that prompts critical thinking and problem solving by obtaining, processing, and synthesizing information.

Employing current and emerging software and tools to solve general and industry-specific challenges.

Level of Proficiency

Behavioral Interview Questions

Awareness
theoretical knowledge

Tell me about a time when you observed a supervisor, advisor, professor, other employee or student acknowledging that new approaches and ways of thinking can be beneficial.

Basic
limited experience

Tell me about a time when you incorporated feedback and considered new approaches to problems when the current methods were not yielding desired outcomes.

Intermediate
practical application

Tell me about a time when you voluntarily sought feedback from a variety of individuals to determine if skill proficiency had increased.

Advanced
extensive experience and application

Tell me about a time when you promoted creative solutions to conquer challenges and recognized that failure is part of the learning experience.

Expert
recognized for mastery and attainment in all areas

Tell me about a time when you anticipated changes in industries and in an ever-changing world that demand long-range planning, creative solutions, and flexibility.

Answer:



VERIFYING YOUR PROFICIENCY – ANALYTICAL SKILLS

Answer a behavioral interview question based on your experience(s) to help verify your level of proficiency

Innovation		
Adaptability	Analytical Skills	Technology
Taking the initiative to further enhance one's skill set and being creative with ways of thinking or approaches that allow for action, reflection, failure, and resilience in an ever-changing world.	Seizing the opportunity for organizational improvement that prompts critical thinking and problem solving by obtaining, processing, and synthesizing information.	Employing current and emerging software and tools to solve general and industry-specific challenges.
Level of Proficiency	Behavioral Interview Questions	
Awareness <i>theoretical knowledge</i>	During an experience, how would you obtain, process, and synthesize different kinds of information?	
Basic <i>limited experience</i>	Tell me about a time when <u>your supervisor, professor, or advisor identified a problem</u> and then how you obtained, processed, and synthesized different kinds of information to solve the problem.	
Intermediate <i>practical application</i>	Tell me about a time when <u>you identified a problem</u> and then obtained, processed, and synthesized different kinds of information to solve the problem.	
Advanced <i>extensive experience and application</i>	Tell me about a time when you weighed the pros and cons of a plan to solve the problem and made a recommendation for a course of action.	
Expert <i>recognized for mastery and attainment in all areas</i>	Tell me about a time when you promoted and maintained a culture where others were able to imagine alternatives and were empowered to identify and solve problems that led to organizational improvement.	
Answer:		



VERIFYING YOUR PROFICIENCY – TECHNOLOGY

Answer a behavioral interview question based on your experience(s) to help verify your level of proficiency

Innovation		
Adaptability	Analytical Skills	Technology
Taking the initiative to further enhance one's skill set and being creative with ways of thinking or approaches that allow for action, reflection, failure, and resilience in an ever-changing world.	Seizing the opportunity for organizational improvement that prompts critical thinking and problem solving by obtaining, processing, and synthesizing information.	Employing current and emerging software and tools to solve general and industry-specific challenges.
Level of Proficiency	Behavioral Interview Questions	
Awareness <i>theoretical knowledge</i>	Tell us about how you learned about current and emerging software and tools that are used in an experience to solve general and industry-specific challenges.	
Basic <i>limited experience</i>	Tell me about a time when you used basic software and tools <u>with the assistance of others</u> to solve general and industry-specific challenges.	
Intermediate <i>practical application</i>	Tell me about a time when you used basic software and tools and were able to troubleshoot issues independently <u>before asking for assistance from others</u> .	
Advanced <i>extensive experience and application</i>	Tell me about a time when you articulated strengths and shortcomings of current and emerging software and tools in solving sophisticated general and industry-specific challenges and made recommendations for adoption.	
Expert <i>recognized for mastery and attainment in all areas</i>	Tell me about a time during your internship when you were recognized as a resource on current and emerging software and tools and were sought out by others on how technology can help solve general and industry-specific challenges.	
Answer:		



VERIFYING YOUR PROFICIENCY – SELF-AWARENESS

Answer a behavioral interview question based on your experience(s) to help verify your level of proficiency

Professionalism

Professionalism		
Self-Awareness	Integrity & Ethics	Brand
Understanding one’s strengths, limitations, emotions, and biases in a variety of situations and articulating how one’s interests, skills, and values align with educational and professional goals.	Making choices and consistently acting in a manner that displays integrity (following internal principles, morals, and values) and ethics (following external laws, rules, and norms) in personal and professional settings.	Demonstrating the continual development of a positive impression or image in every facet of life while seeking feedback from others to ensure congruence between one’s intended and perceived reputation.
Level of Proficiency	Behavioral Interview Questions	
Awareness <i>theoretical knowledge</i>	Tell me about a time when you sought out opportunities to learn about how your interests, skills, and work values intersect.	
Basic <i>limited experience</i>	Tell me about how your experience(s) helped you learn about your interests, skills, and work values and how they align with your educational and professional goals.	
Intermediate <i>practical application</i>	Tell me about a time when you applied strengths, acknowledged limitations, managed emotions, and overcame biases during a part-time job, internship, co-op, volunteer or leadership opportunity, academic project, etc....	
Advanced <i>extensive experience and application</i>	Tell me about a time when you recognized your emotions or biases when working with others and how you adjusted to remain productive in achieving goals in an inclusive environment.	
Expert <i>recognized for mastery and attainment in all areas</i>	Tell me about a time when you adjusted educational and professional goals based on your interests, skills, and work values even when doing so was difficult or disappointing.	
Answer:		



VERIFYING YOUR PROFICIENCY – INTEGRITY & ETHICS

Answer a behavioral interview question based on your experience(s) to help verify your level of proficiency

Professionalism		
Self-Awareness	Integrity & Ethics	Brand
Understanding one’s strengths, limitations, emotions, and biases in a variety of situations and articulating how one’s interests, skills, and values align with educational and professional goals.	Making choices and consistently acting in a manner that displays integrity (following internal principles, morals, and values) and ethics (following external laws, rules, and norms) in personal and professional settings.	Demonstrating the continual development of a positive impression or image in every facet of life while seeking feedback from others to ensure congruence between one’s intended and perceived reputation.
Level of Proficiency	Behavioral Interview Questions	
Awareness <i>theoretical knowledge</i>	Describe the difference between integrity and ethics.	
Basic <i>limited experience</i>	Tell me about some of the rules and policies that guide you in different environments and how you learned them.	
Intermediate <i>practical application</i>	Tell me about a time when you exhibited a commitment to integrity and ethics – “walked the talk” – and sought feedback from others to guide decisions and actions.	
Advanced <i>extensive experience and application</i>	Tell me about a time when you evaluated implications of different courses of action (e.g. likely consequences) that could have had an impact on others or the organization as well as yourself (e.g. character/brand).	
Expert <i>recognized for mastery and attainment in all areas</i>	Tell me about a time when you focused on the greater good by challenging others when integrity and ethics were not being considered.	
Answer:		



VERIFYING YOUR PROFICIENCY – BRAND

Answer a behavioral interview question based on your experience(s) to help verify your level of proficiency

Professionalism		
Self-Awareness	Integrity & Ethics	Brand
Understanding one’s strengths, limitations, emotions, and biases in a variety of situations and articulating how one’s interests, skills, and values align with educational and professional goals.	Making choices and consistently acting in a manner that displays integrity (following internal principles, morals, and values) and ethics (following external laws, rules, and norms) in personal and professional settings.	Demonstrating the continual development of a positive impression or image in every facet of life while seeking feedback from others to ensure congruence between one’s intended and perceived reputation.
Level of Proficiency	Behavioral Interview Questions	
Awareness <i>theoretical knowledge</i>	Tell me how your supervisor, professor, or advisor would describe you as a result of your time interacting with them.	
Basic <i>limited experience</i>	Tell me about a time when you tried to intentionally align your intended and perceived reputation by applying feedback from others.	
Intermediate <i>practical application</i>	Tell me about a time when you initiated a conversation to gain feedback from your supervisor, professor, or advisor.	
Advanced <i>extensive experience and application</i>	During your experience(s), how did you develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes that led you to make a positive impression in every facet of your life?	
Expert <i>recognized for mastery and attainment in all areas</i>	Tell me about a time when you served as a resource to and supported others as they sought help with developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that led to making a positive impression in the workplace.	
Answer:		