



 PART 6 OF 9

# INTERVIEW MASTERY

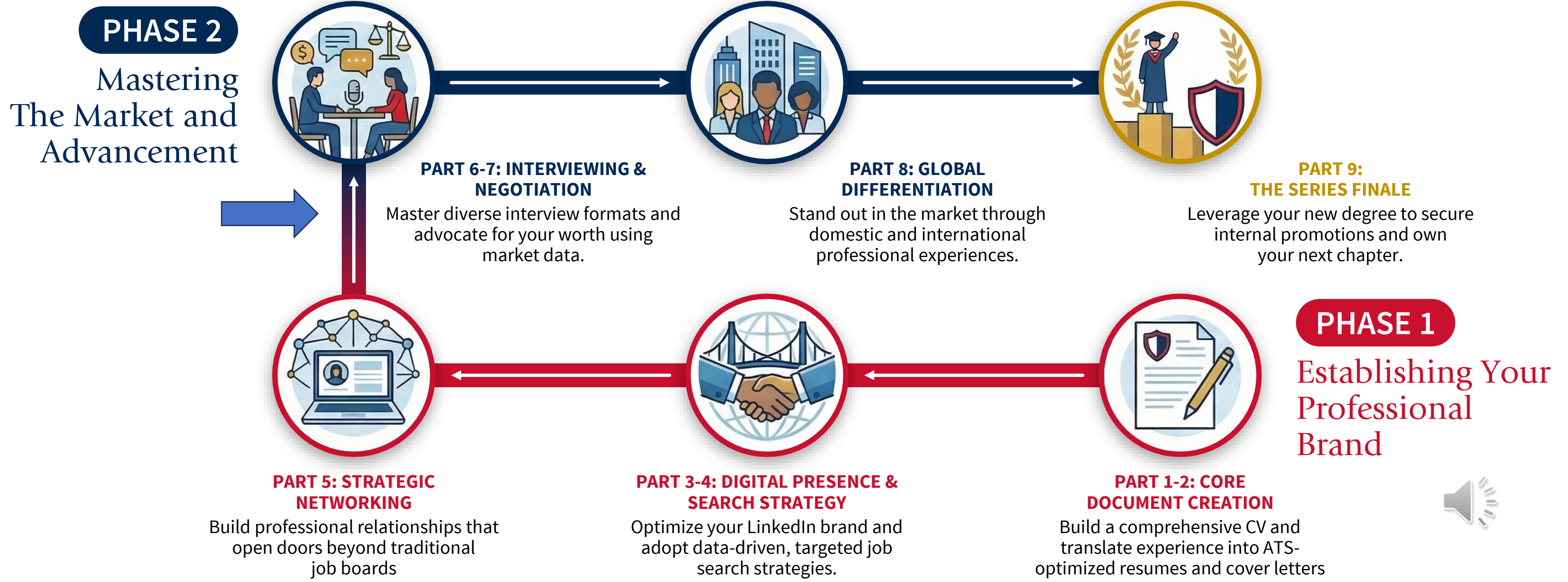
— AI-Powered Preparation for Behavioral & Technical Interviews —

Presented by USI Career Success Center

 [usi.edu/career-success](https://usi.edu/career-success)



# ROADMAP TO EXCELLENCE: THE USI GRADUATE STUDENT CAREER WEBINAR SERIES



# THE MODERN INTERVIEW LANDSCAPE

## Phone Screen

15-30 min with Human Resources

*Basic qualifications, salary expectations, availability*

## Behavioural

45-60 min with hiring manager

*Past experiences predict future performance*

## Technical/Case

30-60 min skills assessment

*Problem-solving, technical knowledge*

## Panel

60-90 min with multiple interviewers

*Multiple perspectives, team fit assessment*

**73%**

of interviewers use behavioral interviews

**69.6%**

of hiring decisions made in first 90 seconds

**47%**

of interviews fail due to a lack of preparation by the candidate



## Key Insight

Interviews are predictable. The same questions are asked repeatedly. Preparation is the single biggest differentiator between candidates who get offers and those who don't.



# THE STAR METHOD FOR BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWS

- S** **Situation**  
Set the context. When? Where? What was happening?
- T** **Task**  
Your specific responsibility. What were YOU asked to do?
- A** **Action**  
What YOU did. Be specific. Use “I” not “we”.
- R** **Result**  
Measurable outcome. Quantify when possible.

## Question

*“Tell me about a time you had to manage a difficult project under a tight deadline.”*



## Timing Tip

Keep answers to 90-120 seconds.  
Practice with a timer!



### Star Response Example

**S:** “During my practicum at Regional Hospital, our team was tasked with implementing a new patient scheduling system in just 3 weeks.”

**T:** “I was responsible for training 25 staff members while maintaining daily operations.”

**A:** “I created a phased training schedule, developed quick-reference guides, and held daily 15-minute check-ins to address questions.”

**R:** “We completed implementation 2 days early with 100% staff competency and reduced scheduling errors by 35%.”



# AI-POWERED INTERVIEW PREPARATION

## Predict Question

“Based on this job description, what are the 10 most likely behavioral interview questions I'll be asked? Include questions about [key requirements from posting].”



## Company Research

“Tell me about [Company]: their mission, recent news, challenges in their industry, and what someone interviewing there should know.”



## Practice Feedback

“Here's my STAR answer to [question]. Rate it on a scale of 1-10 and tell me specifically how to improve it. Is it too long? Missing details?”



### 24 Hours Before

- ✓ Research company news (last 30 days)
- ✓ Review job description keywords
- ✓ Prepare 8-10 STAR stories
- ✓ Write 3-5 questions to ask
- ✓ LinkedIn stalk your interviewers

### Day of Interview

- ✓ Review your STAR stories
- ✓ Check company news one more time
- ✓ Arrive 10-15 min early
- ✓ Bring copies of resume
- ✓ Bring notepad for questions

### Virtual Interview Tips

- ✓ Test tech 30 min before
- ✓ Professional background
- ✓ Eye contact = look at camera
- ✓ Good lighting on your face
- ✓ Notes visible but off-screen

# TOP BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS BY FIELD

---

## Healthcare (MHA/MSN)

“Describe a time you handled a difficult patient/family situation”

“How have you improved a process or workflow?”

“Tell me about managing competing priorities”

## Public Admin (MPA)

“How have you engaged stakeholders with competing interests?”

“Describe a policy you helped implement”

“Tell me about managing with limited resources”

## Sociology (MASOC)

“How have you translated research findings into actionable recommendations?”

“Describe a project where you engaged a diverse or underserved community”

“How do you approach data collection with vulnerable populations?”

## Business (MBA)

“Tell me about a time you led a team through change”

“Describe a difficult decision with incomplete data”

“How did you handle a conflict with a colleague?”

## Education (MSE)

“How do you differentiate instruction for diverse learners?”

“Describe a time you worked with a struggling student”

“How do you handle parent concerns?”

## Sport Management (MSSM)

“Tell me about managing a large-scale event under pressure”

“How have you worked with sponsors, donors, or community partners?”

“Describe a time you drove revenue, attendance, or fan engagement”

## Social Work (MSW)

“Describe your approach to working with resistant clients”

“How do you practice self-care to prevent burnout?”

“Tell me about an ethical dilemma you faced”

## Criminal Justice (MACJ)

“Describe a situation where you balanced policy with individual circumstances”

“How do you build trust with skeptical communities?”

“Tell me about an ethical dilemma you resolved”

## English (MAE)

“Describe a time you communicated complex ideas to a non-expert audience”

“Tell me about a research or writing project you led from start to finish”

“How have you adapted your communication style for different contexts?”



### Copilot Tip

“Act as an interviewer for a *[job title]* position. Ask me behavioral questions one at a time and give feedback.”



# HANDLING DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

## “Tell me about yourself”



Use the Present-Past-Future formula:

- Present:** Current role/program
- Past:** Relevant Background
- Future:** Why this role

*Keep to 90-120 second's max*

## “What's Your Greatest Weakness?”



Name a REAL weakness, then show growth:

- Identify:** Genuine area for growth
- Action:** Steps you're taking
- Progress:** Results so far

*Never say “perfectionist” or “work too hard”*

## “Salary Expectations”



Research first, then use a range:

- Research:** Glassdoor, Payscale, LinkedIn
- Range:** “Based on my research...”
- Flexibility:** “I'm open to discussing”

*Know your minimum before negotiating*

## Techniques For Any Difficult Question

- PAUSE:** Take 2-3 seconds to think — silence is okay
- CLARIFY:** “Could you tell me more about what you're looking for?”
- BRIDGE:** Redirect to a strength when appropriate

## Illegal Questions

You don't have to answer questions about age, religion, marital status, children, disability, or national origin.

**REDIRECT:** “I'm not sure how that relates to the role, but I'd be happy to discuss my qualifications...”



# QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR INTERVIEWER

**47%**  
of candidates

are rejected for not knowing enough about the company. Your questions show you've done your homework.

## Power Closing Question

“Based on our conversation today, do you have any concerns about my qualifications that I could address?”  
This gives you a chance to overcome objections before leaving.



## Don't Ask

Salary/benefits in first interview (wait for offer), anything easily found on website, “What does your company do?”, vacation time, or questions that sound like you're already planning to leave



## About The Role

“What does success look like in this position in the first 90 days?”  
“What are the biggest challenges someone in this role will face?”  
“How would you describe the team I'd be working with?”



## About Growth

“What professional development opportunities are available?”  
“How have others in this role progressed within the organization?”  
“What skills are most important to develop here?”



## About Culture

“How would you describe the work environment here?”  
“What do you enjoy most about working here?”  
“How does the organization support work-life balance?”



# RESOURCES & YOUR ACTION PLAN

## USI CAREER SUCCESS CENTER



Orr Center, Room 1051



(812) 464-1865



Mock Interviews via Career Launch

### Practice Tools

- Big Interview (free via Career Launch)
- Interview Warmup by Google (free)
- Microsoft Copilot for practice feedback

### Company Research

- Glassdoor - Interview questions + reviews
- LinkedIn - Interviewer backgrounds
- Company news via Google Alerts

### Your 7-Day Action Plan

Day **1-2**

Write your “Tell me about yourself” answer (90-120 sec)

Day **3-4**

Develop 8-10 STAR stories for common questions

Day **5-6**

Practice with Copilot or Big Interview (record yourself)

Day **7**

Schedule mock interview via Career Launch

Coming Up Next:

**PART 7**

SALARY NEGOTIATION  
AND OFFER EVALUATION

Maximizing Your Worth & Making Informed Career Decisions



# THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!

---

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN INDIANA<sup>®</sup>



**CAREER  
LAUNCH**

## NEED CAREER SUPPORT??

- ▶ You can visit us in the Career Success Center (located in the Orr Center) or book an appointment on Career Launch!
- ▶ Questions? Email us at [career.center@usi.edu](mailto:career.center@usi.edu) or give us a call to schedule an appointment (812) 464-1865!

