Ten Tips For Interviewing and Finding the Right Job

1. **Demonstrate Enthusiasm**
   - No one wants to work with someone who seems tentative and disinterested.

2. **Your Appearance Is Part of the Presentation**
   - Think about your appearance: clothing, accessories, and what you carry.
   - You are entering a professional environment, where clients and employers expect a professional appearance. Architects are typically not as formal as lawyers, but they do not usually dress like students.
   - Clothing: Offices have different standards, but:
     - A safe bet for men is a shirt and tie.
     - A safe bet for women is a suit with skirt or pants: Avoid party clothing.
     - Expensive briefcases are not essential, but a backpack is definitely a student icon.
     - Avoid a student appearance (jeans and tee shirt) unless this is definitely the type of office you will want: typically very small, informal, with unusual clients.

3. **Your Portfolio Is a Personal Statement of Identity**
   - Include a variety of work, so that you show a variety of skills:
     - SKETCHES are essential.
     - Process drawings are very appropriate.
     - Final design projects are important, but should not be the only item.
     - Model and study model photos are good.
     - Wall section from integration, materials, or technical courses are very good.
     - Some non-architecture work (photography, painting, etc.) is acceptable.
     - At least one computer image will be important, since most firms expect this.
   - End on a strong project.
   - Include a brief description for each project.
   - Indicate what is hand drawn and what is computer drawn.
   - If you fill your portfolio with computer drawings, you will get the job as a cad operator.

4. **Pace The Portfolio Review:**
   **Talk About Your Work With Enthusiasm**
   **Highlight Your Strengths**
   - If you turn the pages (or click on the computer), do not move too fast, not too slow.
   - There is no need to rush, nor is there any need to explain everything.
   - The interviewer will ask questions about what he/she wants to know.
   - Be sure to concentrate on at least one really good project.
   - If the interviewer turns the pages (or computer), answer questions.
   - If the interviewer overlooks something important, say something like: “There is one project I wanted you to see… Something I wanted to point out…”
   - Highlight your strengths:
     - “I always generate many alternative sketches, these are just a few…”
     - “I really enjoy building models…”
     - “My sketches are better than my models…”
     - “I’m probably more comfortable with the computer…”
     - “I like to set up quick interior perspectives on the computer…”
     - “I really spent a great deal of time analyzing the program and discussing…”
5. Don’t Apologize
- Architects, and later, clients, do not want to hear excuses for what is wrong. Do NOT say:
  - “I wasn’t sure what to include…”
  - “I’m sorry the photograph is out of focus in the corner…”
  - “This site plan isn’t so good…”
  - “My professor made me…”
  - “I don’t like the entry, it doesn’t work…but I didn’t have time to work it out…”

6. Ask Perceptive Questions
- Ask about the firm: What kind of work is going on? How is the firm organized? Etc.
- Ask about what your responsibilities will be.
- Ask about how much turnover there has been in the firm.
- Ask about performance review process; is there a trial period?
- Ask about opportunity for advancement and increased responsibility.
- Ask about the IDP structure in the firm.
- Be ready to answer the question about “what are your pay requirements?”
  (Compare notes with classmates and with recent graduates in the region.)
- After discussing salary/pay, ask about other benefits.
  (Insurance package, holidays, membership fees, parking, etc.)

7. Research The Firm on the Web
- This will really impress a potential employer.

8. Your Resume Must Integrate Format and Content
- A good resume will be clear, informative, and well composed.
- A poor resume will be sloppy and filled with mistakes.
- Sometimes, a poor resume can be over-designed and hard to read.
- Many architects are increasingly using desktop publishing skills in their resumes.

9. Writing Skills Are Extremely Important: Send a Thank-You Note
- Send a well-written thank-you letter. A one-hour interview costs the firm about $150.
- Architects value writing skills in communicating with clients.
  - Marketing proposals.
  - Outlining and describing design concepts.
  - E-mail about simple questions regarding the design and construction.
- Architects will not let you communicate with clients if your writing is an embarrassment.

10. Demonstrate Confidence
- You have had an excellent education and have a great deal to offer.
- You will have a great deal to learn, but your abilities to think and to ask the right questions are intellectual skills that you will use throughout your career.
- University of Tennessee graduate are very successful in the profession.
- Architecture firms value our alumni.
- Our alumni are performing very well on the licensing exams:
- The average score of UT alumni places our school in the top 80th percentile of all schools of architecture in the country. This is a tribute to the basic education, but also to the fact that employers are working well with our graduates. Our graduates are able to accept responsibility in the firm.