

Q&A with a Career Consultant

Did you ever have a job-related question that you were too afraid to ask? Well, now you don't have to be! We interviewed Michigan State University's Karin Hansen, the Interim Executive Director of Career Services and Director of Employer Relations and Professional Transitions for Communication Arts and Sciences, and got the inside scoop on all the questions that students are aren't typically discussed.

Q: What should you negotiate when you are offered a job?

Karin: "Salary, vacation days, benefits and sometimes even your hours can be negotiated. However, in a lot of entry level jobs, these components are not up for negotiation. I think it is good to always be aware of what your options but might be. If it is your first job and someone offers you a position, it is important to know ahead of time what the normal range of salary might be for that same position."

Q: In order to negotiate, how would you know what the normal range of salary or benefits would be a position?

Karin: "You can go to Glassdoor and check. You can also go to the career services office. 80 percent of Michigan State University graduates actually respond to a survey that we send out that tells us where they are working and what their salary is. Therefore, we have an idea for certain ranges for jobs in different parts of the country. Also, there is a new feature on Handshake where students are putting in information with regards to jobs and internships that they have had so that other students can get a handle on what is the norm for certain types of jobs."

Q: How do you negotiate a salary?

Karin: "For example, if you are not happy with the starting salary of \$39,000, you can say, 'Based on my skills and experience, and based on my research, I found that someone in a similar type of a situation would usually have a salary that is closer to \$44,000.' You should be ready to bring up the specific skills and experiences that you believe qualify you for the larger salary. Then, the employer may say, 'Well, unfortunately, this salary is not negotiable.' or they might say, 'Well, we will think about it and come back to you.' But you do not just ask, 'Is this negotiable?' You would make sure you have a reason for suggesting why it would be negotiable based on your skills, experience and research. If they say they can raise the salary, then that is great. If they cannot raise the salary you can say, 'I'm flattered for the opportunity but unfortunately, I've gone through my budget and I truly cannot be below this amount.'" If you still need some time to think about it, you can say, 'You know what, let me see if I can rework my budget. Would it be possible to have 48 hours to think about it?' You can also ask about opportunities to advance within the company. Either way, make sure you always end on a good note."

Comment [1]: Title ideas:
"Career Q&A"
"Burning Questions for the Future #GirlBoss"
"Career Crystal Ball"

Comment [2]: I would rephrase this to, "Have you ever had a job-related question..."

Comment [3]: I don't think these questions should be portrayed as things to be afraid of, but rather good, urgent questions that haven't been answered for us yet. I recommend changing this to something like, "Have you had career questions that haven't been answered?" or, "Do you have a burning question that could make or break your first big-kid job search?"

Comment [4]: To shorten this section a little bit, I recommend re-wording and breaking the sentence into two separate ones to say, "We interviewed MSU's Interim Executive Director of Career Services and the Director of Employment Relations and Professional Transitions for Communication Arts and Sciences, Karin Hansen. She gave us the inside scoop on all the questions that..."

Comment [5]: This wording is a little confusing. Do you mean, "questions that students don't typically ask?"

Comment [6]: In order to help the reader go through the process of asking questions, I think these should be re-ordered. Usually, in a job search, salary negotiations come last and company research comes first. I'll comment on the number that I recommend for each question. This question should be question #5.

Comment [7]: Question #4

Comment [8]: Question #3

Q: Should you print your resume on special paper? (Thicker, colored, scented i.e. Legally Blonde)

Karin: "I talk to recruiters about this and generally, paper does not matter. Every once in a while, I will hear a recruiter say, 'I kind of like it when it is on a heavier or colorful piece of paper.'" For the most part, they say that it does not matter. They just want students to make sure it is a clean copy and that the experiences are easily able to be seen."

Comment [9]: Question #2

Q: What is the best way to learn about the culture of a company?

Karin: "Michigan State University has the largest number of living alumni in the entire world out of any other institution. Usually, you can find someone that has worked or is working in an organization that you're considering. You can ask them for an informational interview. You should be prepared with the specific questions that you would ask them. Also, Handshake has a new feature where students can put in feedback about their work experience. There are over 400 schools across the country that are utilizing Handshake so that is a great tool."

Comment [10]: Question #1

If you have more career questions, you can schedule appointment with Karin Hanson via her email: Hanson39@msu.edu

Comment [11]: Adding more information about Handshake would be valuable too. Something like, "Sign up for Handshake at msu.joinhandshake.com."

Breaking the STI/STD Stigma

By [redacted]

Let's pretend you've been talking to someone for a while and its getting to the point where you *both* want to get intimate. You know they're not a virgin and that they've slept with a number of people in the past. You want to ask them if they've been tested, but you're afraid they'll take it the wrong way and you just don't know how to muster up the strength to ask.

They could accuse you of thinking they're dirty or they could say that you think they sleep around.

The reality is, if someone reacts this way to a such a serious question, you probably shouldn't have sex with them.

We live in a society where asking your partner about STIs, STDs and being tested is more terrifying and awkward than asking about their body count, or their number, but it shouldn't be!

We need to be asking our partners about their history with STIs/STDs and testing, as well as telling them our own history, in order to ensure the health and safety of both people.

In 2017, STD's in America reached a record high. There was a total of 2,295,739 cases according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

A study done at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill found that one in two sexually active people will contract an STI/STD by the age of 25.

Part of the reason so many young people are contracting STIs/STDs could be because of the sex education they received while in school.

Only 24 of the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia require their schools to teach sex education classes to their students. 21 of those schools are required to teach HIV education and only 20 states require that if sex ed classes are provided, they must be medically, factually or technically accurate.

The Michigan Department of Education says that "school districts are required to teach about dangerous communicable diseases, including, but not limited to, HIV/AIDS." Sex education is not mandatory, but is a choice that is left up to the school's discretion.

They also state "instruction in HIV/AIDS and sex education must stress that **abstinence** from sex is a responsible and effective method of preventing unplanned or out-of-wedlock pregnancy, and that it is the only protection that is 100 percent effective against unplanned pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease and sexually transmitted HIV infection and AIDS."

Comment [1]: Title ideas:
"Breaking the Stigma: the Normality of STIs and STDs"
"Let's Get Real: Breaking the STI/STD Stigma"
"More Important than Finals: Get Tested for STIs/STDs"

Comment [2]: Since you mention they've already slept with a number of people, deleting this section would make the sentence shorter and stronger.

Comment [3]: I would add, "too much" to the end of this.

Comment [4]: "Serious" could be interpreted a positive or negative way, so I recommend changing this to "important" so the reader knows exactly what you mean.

Comment [5]: rephrase to say, "asking your partner about being tested for sexually transmitted infections and diseases (STIs and STDs)."

Comment [6]: I recommend deleting this because "body count" is a phrase that most of our readers will either know or easily infer.

Comment [7]: Change to "or" because they mean two separate things. I would even add a small paragraph that clarifies the difference between the two, because not that many people know.

Comment [8]: "or"

Comment [9]: I would add, "while in school, or lack thereof."

And yes, they absolutely *did* bold the word “abstinence.”

Yes, abstinence is the only way to completely avoid contracting an STI or an STD. No, it does not mean we should *only* teach this method to young adults.

Even the CDC’s first recommended way to prevent STIs and STDs is none other than abstinence.

It’s no wonder so many young people are contracting STIs/STDs and they’re at a record high in the country. They’re either getting misinformation or no information at all, which also leads to a stigma around not only having sex, but asking your partner if they’ve been tested or if they have an STI/STD.

Comment [10]: To make the sentence flow better, I would recommend changing this section to, “contracting STIs and STDs at a record-high rate in the U.S.” And add the number or percentage associated with this statement.

Comment [11]: “or”

Hopefully, by now we all know that if we’re having sex, using a condom will help in avoiding STIs and STDs. They don’t guarantee we won’t contract one. Even when using a condom, you can get Herpes or HPV.

Comment [12]: Spell out “Human Papilloma Virus” and put HPV in parentheses.

Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) is the most common STI, but it can be prevented by getting vaccinated, which most people do when they are young. If you weren’t vaccinated as a child, doctors offer catch up vaccinations for young women and men ages 13 to 26.

Comment [13]: Change to “HPV” once you reference “Human Papilloma Virus” in the previous paragraph.

Regardless of what precautions you might take, you should always ask your partner if they’ve been tested. Starting the conversation can be difficult, but it needs to be done, and your partner is probably going to be glad you brought it up because they wanted to ask as well.

Getting an STI/STD is not something that should be shameful. It happens, just like a common cold.

Comment [14]: “or”

If you think you might have an STI or an STD, MSU’s Olin Health Center offers free and anonymous HIV testing and counseling as well as confidential STI screenings.

It’s just as important to inform your partner if you have an STI/STD as it is to ask. While it’s not mandatory to do so in all states, it’s your moral obligation.

Comment [15]: “or”

While it may be daunting or awkward to talk about, it’s important that we work to break the stigma and create a conversation with our partners.

After all, the only way to know if you have an [STI or](#) STD is to be tested.