The background features a dark, textured surface with faint, light-colored sketches of various scientific and laboratory-related items. These include a globe in the upper left, a microscope on the left side, a test tube, a petri dish, and several geometric shapes like rectangles and circles scattered throughout. The overall aesthetic is that of a chalkboard or a technical drawing background.

Are You Ready: Preparing for Clinical Rotations and Solidifying your Spot as a Laboratory Professional

Robert McManus, MS, MLS(ASCP)

Content outline

- **Professionalism**
- Preparing for Clinical Rotations
- Getting Hired
- Questions

Objectives

Upon completion of the session, the participant will:

- 1) be able to derive a plan of action for clinical rotations.
- 2) be able to analyze behaviors of self/others and demonstrate professionalism, accordingly.
- 3) be able to recognize what characteristics employers are looking for and how to stand out amongst other applicants.



Professionalism



What is Professionalism?

- The conduct, aims, or qualities that characterize or mark a professional person
- The competence or skill expected of a professional
- The display of a courteous, conscientious, and general businesslike manner in the workplace
- The strict adherence to courtesy, honesty and responsibility when dealing with individuals or other companies in a work environment
- The demonstration of a high level of excellence going above and beyond basic requirements

What does professionalism mean to you?



<https://youtu.be/K3L-Nbki0Q>

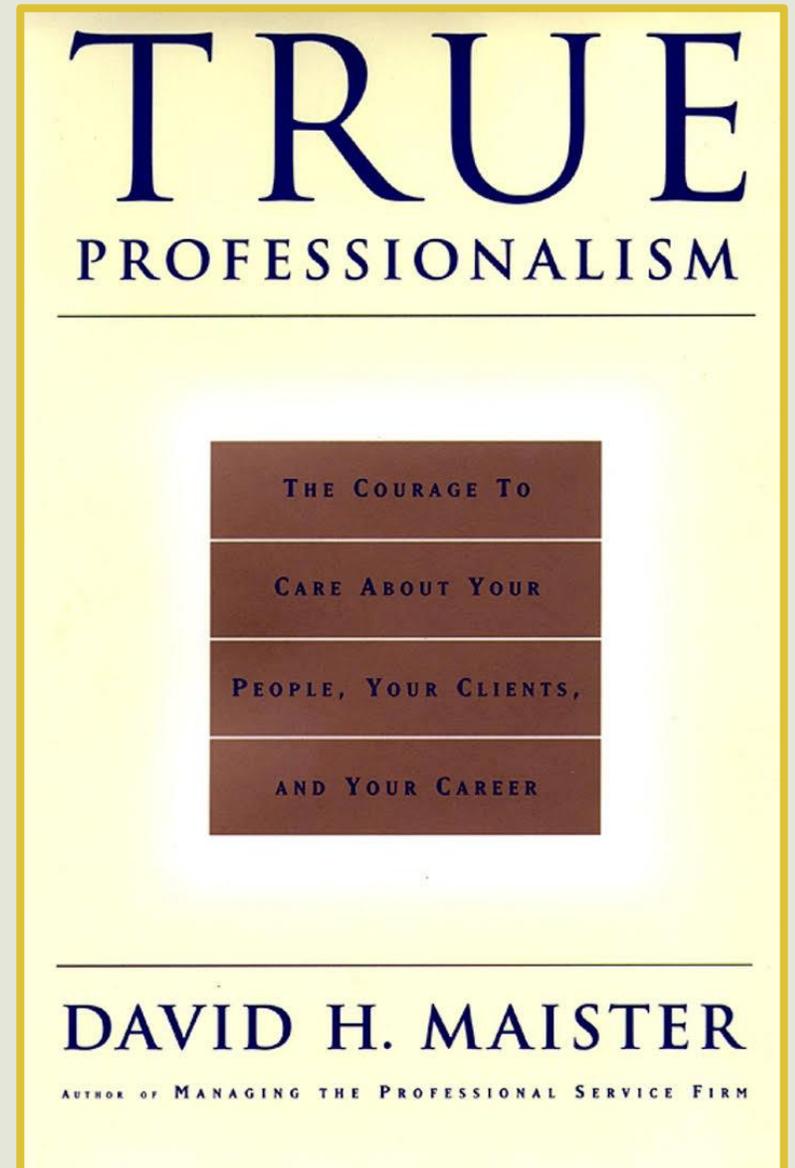
Showing professionalism during clinicals and work

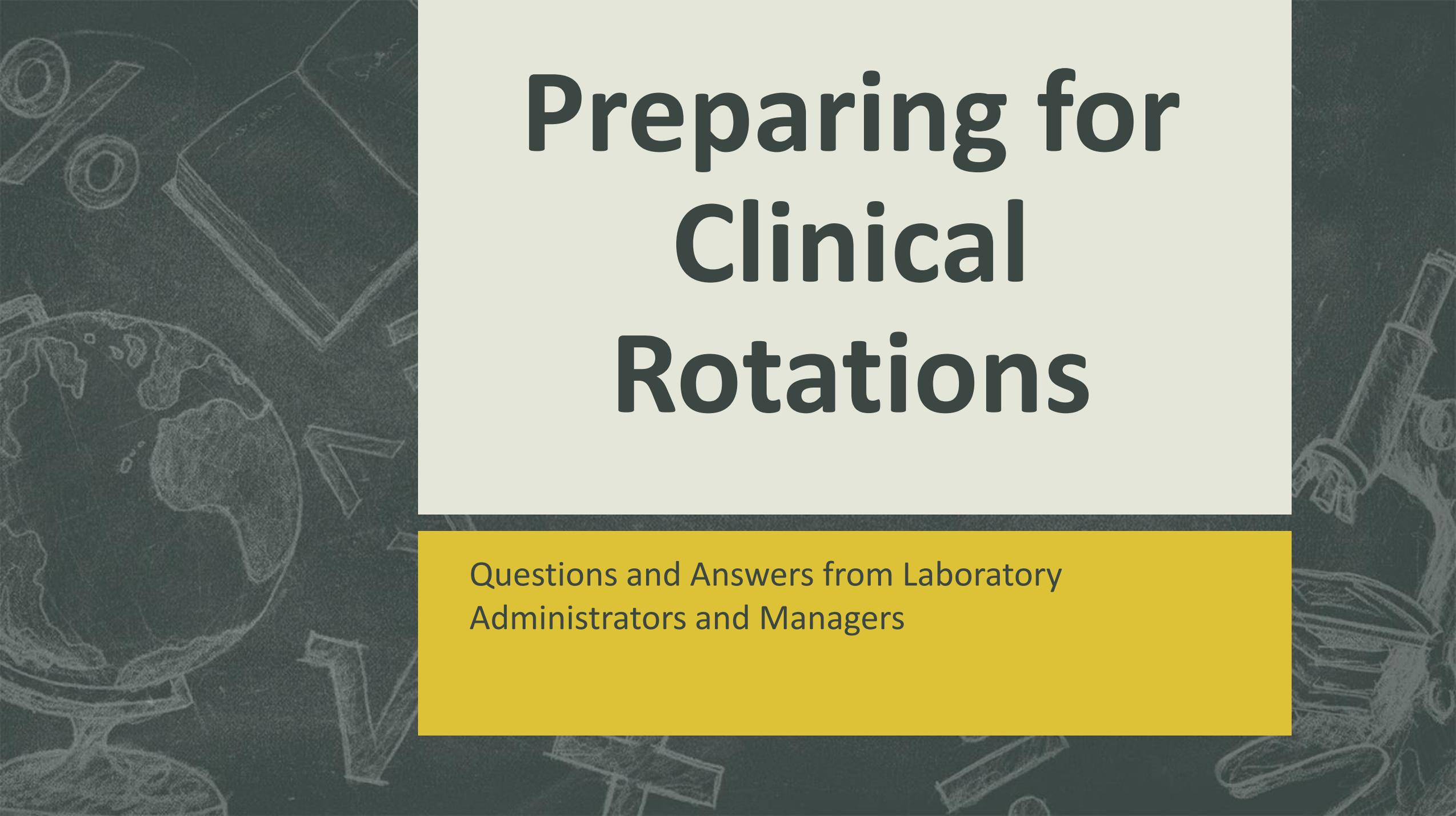
- Make being on time a priority
- Do not be on your phone unless you are on break
- Be respectful and have a good attitude; leave the “grump” at the door
- No foul language
- Dress appropriately
- Offer to help
- Do not gossip
- Stay positive
- Do not hide from your mistakes
- Always fight fair
- Do not lie
- Do not air your dirty laundry

Dressing like a professional



“Professional is not a label you give yourself
-It’s a description you hope others will
apply to you.”





Preparing for Clinical Rotations

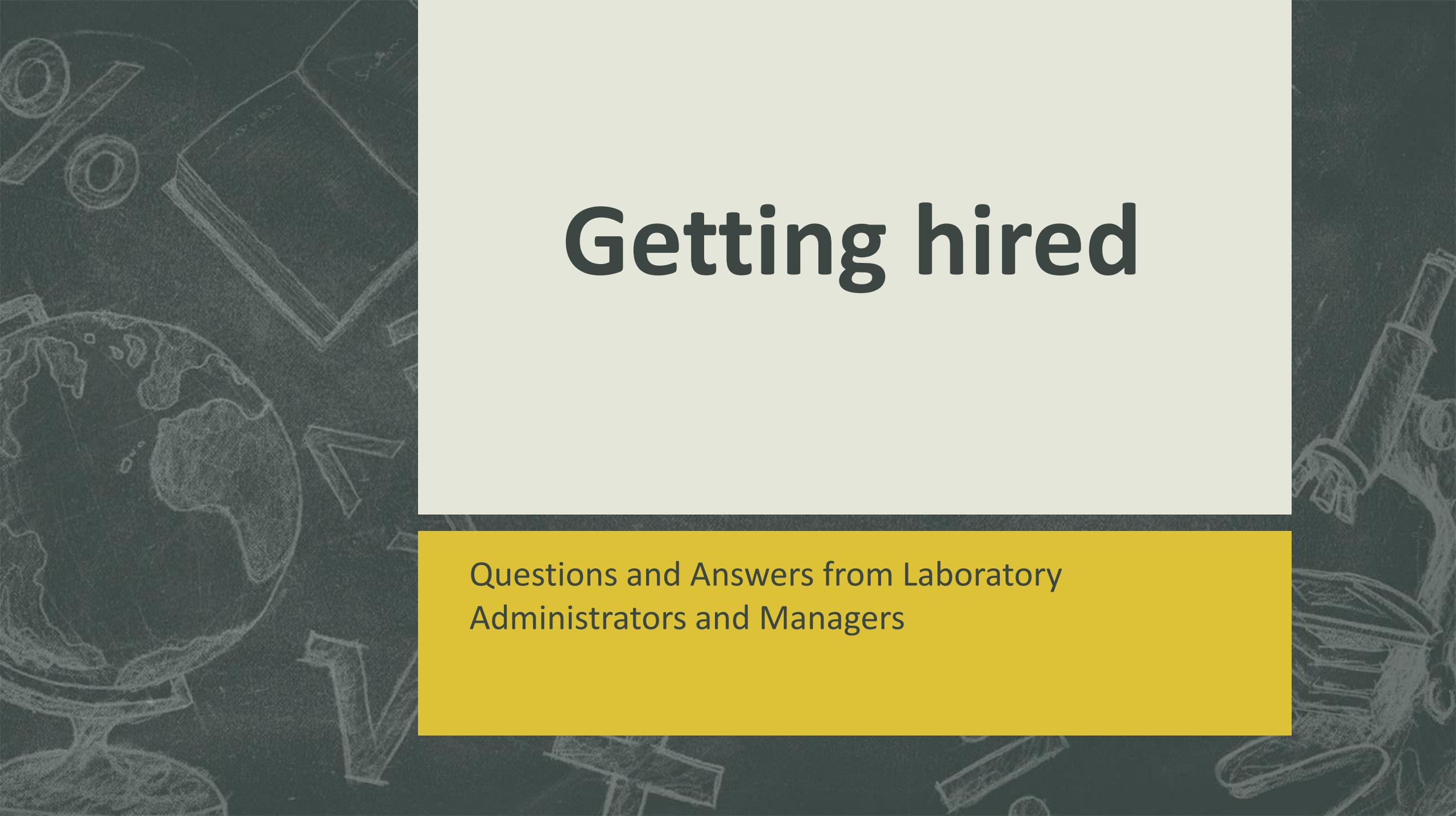
Questions and Answers from Laboratory
Administrators and Managers

What do you like to see in students during their clinicals?

- **“Initiative, enthusiasm, eagerness to learn, responsibility.”**
- **“We like to see INITIATIVE. There is nothing worse than seeing a student just sitting there, looking bored and not looking for stuff to do. Students should show interest in the bench work and offer to help the teaching tech - there are a lot of things the student can do without actually signing out results that can be a learning experience. The students should read through manuals and ask questions.”**
- **“Be on time. Treat your rotations like an extended interview. Show us that you’re excited about being here and ready to learn. This is the time to use and abuse experienced techs for their knowledge, don’t just sit there and look bored.”**

How can students be better prepared for each rotation? (from an administrator point of view)

- “Read your rotation checklist ahead of time. Ask questions. Own it and get the most out of the rotation that you can.”
- “Students should review their coursework before each rotation and refresh with the ‘book-learning’ part.”
- “If possible, familiarize yourself with the rotation checklist and review each content area before starting the rotation. Treat each rotation like starting a new job. You wouldn’t walk into a job on your first day completely clueless on what you’ll be doing, so don’t do that here either.”



Getting hired

Questions and Answers from Laboratory
Administrators and Managers

What qualities do you look for in a prospective employee?

- “Good work ethic, good personality with ability to get along with others, good attitude, dependability, reliability, responsibility, and takes initiative. Think about if you were the business owner – what type employee do you want working for you? Be that employee!!!”

What qualities do you look for in a prospective employee?

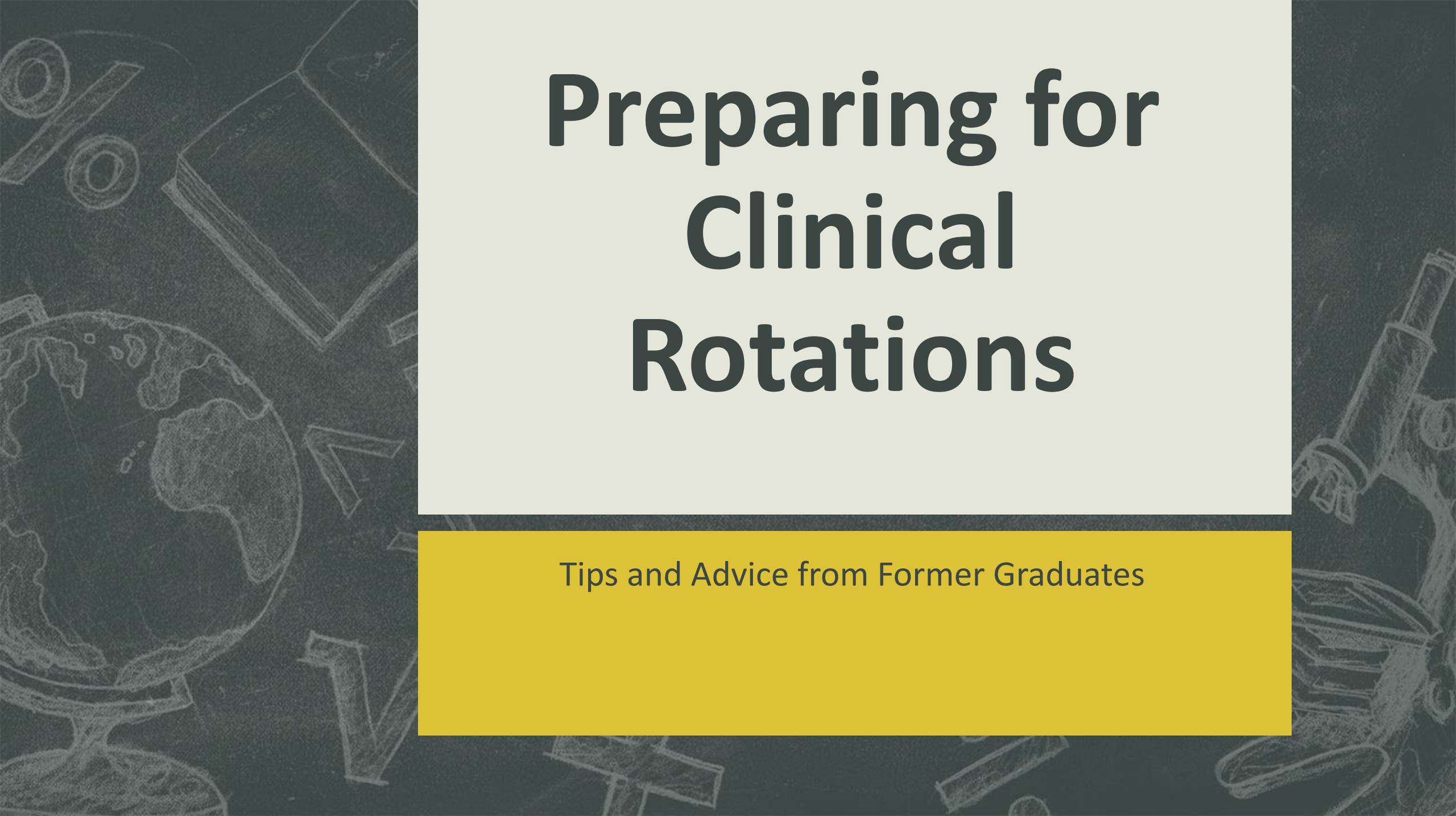
- “We often hire students over more experienced candidates, if we had a good experience with the student in their clinicals. Students who looked for extras to do, asked a lot of questions, seemed to be prepared and engaged, are a good gamble for us, compared to someone we do not know. We also like to hire someone who knows what they are getting into - they tend to stay longer than someone who is not familiar with our lab. Students who are "fast-learners" are impressive and often a good-catch for us.”

What qualities do you look for in a prospective employee?

- “If you didn’t do your clinicals at our hospital, that doesn’t mean that you aren’t a competitive candidate. The lab world is like a community, so chances are we will contact whoever you did your clinicals with and ask how you were as a student. We like hiring students because they are fresh spirited, up-to-date on materials and usually very eager to start their career. I also want to point out that this situation is a perfect example of why you want to be your best no matter where you do your rotations. Your actions can follow you and prevent you from getting a job or they could guarantee you a job, that’s up to you!”

How big of an impact does appearance make in an interview?

- “Pretty big. I once had someone come in wearing flip flops, shorts, and a Hawaiian shirt. He assumed he was a shoe in because his wife worked for us.”
 - “No. You don’t have to wear a really expensive outfit, but a ‘suit and tie’ helps. How you choose to present yourself shows your respect for the job in consideration.”
- “I can’t stress enough how big of an impact appearance makes in an interview. There’s the old saying, ‘Dress to impress.’ This is not limited to clothes.”
 - “The interviewee should also be well groomed (hair, beard, nails, etc.) Anything less than business casual is never appropriate for an interview. You should have the appearance of a professional.”



Preparing for Clinical Rotations

Tips and Advice from Former Graduates

- **Use your time wisely during your rotations.**
 - It is the perfect time to prepare for your certification exam.
 - Pay attention, ask questions, and study during any downtime.
- **Treat every single day like it is an interview.**
 - Interact with as many people as possible.
 - Make sure people know your name and that you are good.
- **Arrive at least 5-10 minutes early every day.**
 - Don't take advantage of break times.
 - You should treat your day just like if you were an employee.

- **Don't be on your phone, even if they are allowed in your lab.**
 - It shows that you are not interested in what is going on.
- **Not everything you were taught in school will apply 100% to the hospital you are in.**
 - Know reference ranges, but also know that some reference ranges will be broader, more narrow, etc.
 - Do not say things like “Well I was taught....”
- **Show that you are intelligent but do not come across as a know-it-all.**
 - There is a fine line between the two, so be aware of that.
 - You can actually come across more annoying than intelligent to a busy tech.
 - Choose the time to impress with knowledge wisely.

- **Show initiative.**
 - Ask to perform tasks, QC, etc.
 - Get the most out of the rotation as possible.
- **You have to keep your head up and stay positive.**
 - Some techs will have bad attitudes and some will be hard to get along with.
 - Try to radiate your positivity towards them.
- **Even if you do not plan on working at the hospital where you did your clinicals, you should still treat it like it is your job.**
 - Your rotations will be the only experience you have fresh out of school.
 - You want them to be a recommendation for you because the hospital you are applying to may contact them with questions.

The background features a dark grey collage of white line-art icons representing various educational fields: a globe, a microscope, a book, a pencil, a ruler, a compass, a percent sign, and a stack of papers.

Getting Hired

Tips and Advice from Former Graduates

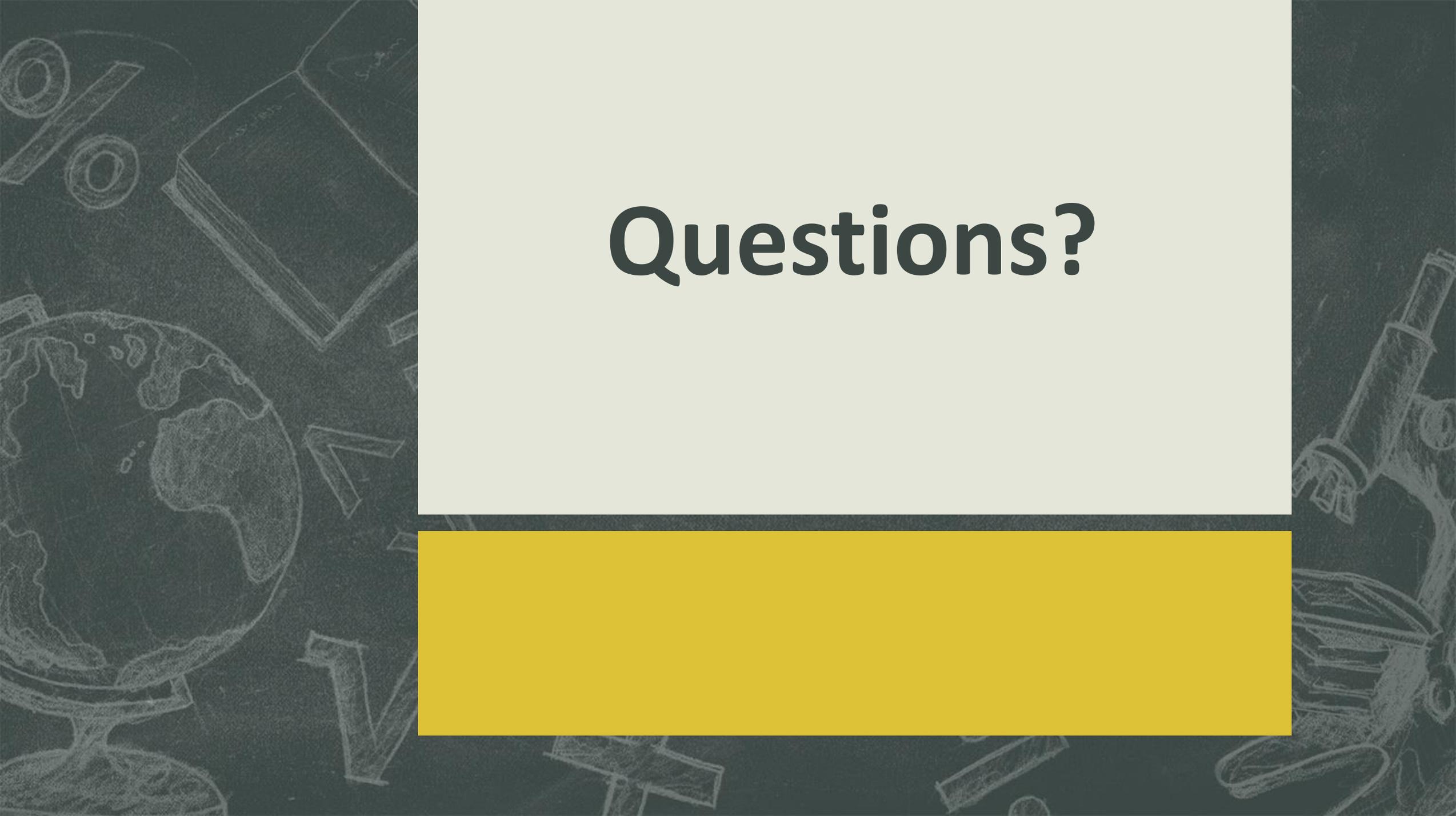
- **Dress professional. Act professional. BE professional.**
- **When interviewing, be yourself and be confident.**
 - **You want to leave an interview either having the job or with the company wanting you to join their team.**
- **Remember, you only have approximately 30 minutes to show someone who you are during an interview.**
- **References can and will play a big part in whether you get a job or not.**
- **Don't make a bad name for yourself in school or in your rotations.**

- **Be ready for all types of questions.**
- **Questions can range from:**
 - **If you had one red crayon and you could do anything with it, what would you do?**
 - **If you had to describe yourself as an animal, what type of animal would you be and why?**
 - **A patient arrives at the ER with a GI bleed, blood cultures are ordered. 24 hours later, the BacT/Alert gives a positive result.**
 - **Generally speaking, what might be growing in the bottles?**
 - **Patient X types A+, what type blood products can they receive? Red cells? Plasma?**

- **Your resume should be updated regularly and you should always carry an extra to an interview.**
- **Be active in your profession.**
 - **Join organizations and societies pertaining to your profession.**
- **Always remember, YOU are making a difference in healthcare. Without the lab, physicians are only guessing.**

References

- Huntsville Hospital- Huntsville, AL
- Grandview Medical Center- Birmingham, AL
- UAB- Birmingham, AL
- Vanderbilt University Medical Center- Nashville, TN
- Emory University Hospital- Atlanta, GA
- Crestwood Medical Center- Huntsville, AL
- St. Vincent's- Birmingham, AL
- Children's of Alabama- Birmingham, AL
- Memorial Hospital- Chattanooga, TN
- Piedmont Atlanta Hospital- Atlanta, GA



Questions?